Міністерство освіти і науки, молоді та спорту
Херсонський державний університет
Інститут іноземної філології
Кафедра романо-германських мов

Затверджено
Вченою радою ХДУ
Протокол № 2 від 25.11.2011

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ЛІТЕРАТУРА АНГЛІЇ ТА США

Курс лекцій для студентів ІІІ курсу напряму підготовки: 6.020303. Філологія.
Мова та література (англійська)
денної, заочної та екстернатної форм навчання

Херсон
2011

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Обговорено на засіданні кафедри романо-германських мов
Протокол № 2 від 10.10.2011 р.

Розглянуто на засіданні науково-методичної ради Інституту іноземної філології
Протокол № 2 від 13.10.2011 р.

Схвалено науково-методичною радою ХДУ
Протокол № 2 від 12.11.2011 р.

Ткаченко Л.Л. Література Англії та США. Курс лекцій для студентів ІІІ курсу напряму підготовки: 6.020303. Філологія. Мова та література (англійська) денної, заочної та екстернатної форм навчання. Частина 2. – Херсон: Видавництво РВВ «Колос»» ХДАУ, 2012. – 106 с.
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Module 2
Development of English and American literature in the 19th -20th centuries

Lecture 1. Victorian age in English literature

1. Historical outline of the Victorian period.
2. Distinctive features of Victorian literature.
3. Dickens' method as a mixture of realism, romanticism and sentimentalism. The theme of upbringing in *David Copperfield*.
4. Charlotte Bronte's work. *Jane Eyre*: story and the themes explored.
5. Objective realism in Thackeray's work. *Vanity Fair*: the meaning of the title and the subtitle, composition, characters.
6. Hardy's work and method. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles:* the story of a pure woman or a social novel?
7. Tennyson's work.
8. Browning's work and influence.
9. Lewis Carroll. *Alice in Wonderland*.
10. The Aesthetic movement and Oscar Wilde.
11. Rudyard Kipling.

1. Victorian Age is the time span of the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). Queen Victoria, although a symbol of the age, interfered little in the running of the country, preferring to set a moral example to the nation, through the publication of her book *Our Life in the Highlands*, a kind of family diary. Her simple and virtuous behaviour made the monarchy more popular than it had ever been before. In the 20th century the word "Victorian" began to mean "prudish", "repressed", and "old-fashioned". The Victorian Age was, however, a second English Renaissance. Like Elizabethan England, Victorian England saw great expansion of wealth, power, and culture. In religion the Victorians experienced a great age of doubt: the Catholicism of the Oxford movement, the Evangelical movement, the rise of the Unitarianism. In ideology, politics, and society, the Victorians created astounding innovation and change: democracy, feminism, unionization of workers, socialism, Darwinism, and scientific agnosticism.

Domestic problems and reform. Two key issues – trade policy and electoral reform – dominated domestic politics during the first half of the Victorian era. Trade debate centred on the Corn Laws, which had long slapped high tariffs on "corn" (grain). This discouraged food imports and helped British landlords and farmers. However, it also kept food prices high, which angered the poorer classes. At stake was life itself, as in 1845, when a failure of Ireland's potato crop caused a famine in which one million Irish people died. In 1846 Parliament repealed the Corn Laws, and over the following decades it changed other trade laws, putting an end to the policy of protectionism. Instead, a policy of free trade was adopted. It reflected the interests of rising British industries, which prospered by importing raw materials and exporting finished goods. Britain was fast becoming an industrial rather than an agricultural nation.

The second issue – electoral reform – was not settled in 1832, when the Reform Law gave the vote to middle-class males. The working class wanted further reform, and in 1837, a group of radicals drew up "People's Charter" demanding universal suffrage for men. Chartist movement stopped to exist after a decade but new demands for electoral change led to the Second Reform Bill of 1867 and to almost complete male suffrage of 1885. In 1838 the organization of working men, Chartists, drew up a "**People's Charter**" advocating the extension of right to vote, the use of secret balloting, and other legislative reforms. For ten years the Chartist leaders engaged in agitation to have their program adopted by Parliament.

The urge for reform affected many other areas of social life. Women, although still not eligible to vote, began to attend universities. Parliament passed laws to reduce the working day for women and children, to establish a system of free grammar schools, and to legalize trade unions. It voted to improve public sanitation and to regulate factories and housing.

One of the most important issues left unresolved in the Victorian Age was the future of Ireland, where widespread poverty had bred bitter opposition to British control. In the 1880s and 1890s the liberal leader William Gladstone supported Irish demand for self-government. However, a hard-line faction of Liberals joined Conservatives to block Gladstone's proposals.

The imperialistic urge. The reign of Queen Victoria marked the climax of Britain's imperial ambitions. The loss of the American colonies in 1783 had made the idea of further empire building unpopular. However, by 1850, in the face of fierce competition from its commercial rivals in Europe, Britain once more began to fight colonial wars, such as the Crimean War against Russia (1854-1856), the suppression of the Indian mutiny (1857) and, in particular, expansionism in Africa, aided by great explorers such as Livingstone. The invasion of Egypt and Sudan in the 1880s and the Boer Wars in South Africa (1899-1902) were other instances of the contradictions between Liberal ideas at home and brutal expansionism abroad. The clinching argument was Rudyard Kipling's notion of "the white man's burden": the belief that Western civilization was superior to all other cultures. This attitude led many Victorians look condescendingly on non-Westerners as people in need of assistance and protection of the British Empire.

2. The Victorian Age was unique for its **solidity of purpose** and outlook, and its tremendous energies and achievements. For perhaps the first time there was a considerable community of interests and opinions between writers and their readers, as well as the sense of common existence and shared direction. A characteristic feature of the Victorians is their **sense of responsibility**, which differentiates them from their immediate predecessors, the Romantics. The Victorian literature is addressed to the **needs of the age**. It was predominantly a **literature of ideas** directly related with the daily concerns of the public. Many original thinkers in the period turned aside from their fields of special knowledge to adapt their theories to the level of the general public. The writers chose themes taking into account their social significance. Though Romantic forms of expression in poetry and prose continued to dominate English literature through much of the century, the attention of many writers was directed to such issues as the growth of English democracy, the education

of the masses, the progress of industrial enterprise and the consequent rise of a materialistic philosophy, and the plight of the newly industrialized worker. The unsettling of religious belief by new advances in science and the historical study of the Bible drew many writers away from the immemorial subjects of literature into considerations of problems of faith and truth.

The reading public was increasingly growing in number. One reason for this was the enormous growth in the middle classes. These sections of society, although consisting of many strata and heavily criticized on many sides for their complacency and vulgarity, were avid consumers of literature. Circulating libraries continued to play an important role in the spread of literature, not all of which has stood the test of time on account of excessive sentimentality and crude moralizing. On the other hand, the age abounded in serious periodicals dealing increasingly with political and social issues. A great deal of Victorian literature was first published in the pages of periodicals. Reviewers had a strong influence on the reception given to literary works and contributed greatly to the formation of public opinion. There was a **sense of partnership between Victorian writers and readers**. This close relationship is demonstrated by the admiration, love and awe which writers of the age commanded in their readers.

However, in much of literature of the final phase of Victorianism one can sense an overall change of attitudes. Some of the late Victorian writers expressed the change openly by attacking the major mid-Victorian idols. Samuel Butler, for example, set about demolishing Darwin, Tennyson, and Prime Minister Gladstone. In his novel *The Way of All Flesh* Butler satirizes family life, in particular the tyranny of a Victorian father. The changes in attitude became much more conspicuous in the 1890s. Although throughout the empire at its outposts in India and Africa the English were working with the same energy as in the mid-Victorian period (the stories of such people are variously recorded by Kipling and Conrad), back in England Victorian standards were breaking down on several fronts. Artists representing **Aesthetic movement** cultivated a deliberately fin-de-siecle (“end-of-century”) pose: a studied languor, a weary sophistication, a search for new pleasures. In 1893 an Austrian critic, Max Mordan, summed up what seemed to him to be happening, in a book that was as sensational as its title: ***Degeneration***. From the perspective of the twentieth century, however, it is easy to see in the 1890s the beginning of the modernist movement in literature.

The **biography** was a genre in which the Victorians excelled, although to modern eyes these biographies seem to be extremely reticent about the details of private life while placing too much emphasis on the qualities considered “noble“ during the period.

But it was the **novel** that gradually became the dominant genre in literature during the Victorian age. One of the overall trends of the period was the development, under the influence of the nineteenth-century French and Russian novels, of the English novel from an episodic structure, seemingly without a plan, to what Henry James called “an organized, moulded, balanced composition, gratifying the reader with a sense of design and construction”. A fairly constant accompaniment of this development was the yielding of Romanticism to literary realism, the accurate

observation of individual problems and social relationships. The close observation of a restricted social milieu in the novels of Jane Austen early in the century had been a harbinger of what was to come.

3. Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the greatest English writers of all times. Critics have had extreme difficulty in putting their finger on the secret of his greatness, since his work seems to defy any rational analysis. On the other hand, he is the most typical writer of the Victorian era. He was conscious of his social responsibility, and his novels depicted the hypocrisy and contradictions inherent in the system and were important in the creation of pressure for social reform. The early social-problem novels of the Victorian age tended to be didactic in their overall effect and it was only with the advent of Dickens that a truly satisfying blend of social criticism, humour and compassion appeared.

Dickens was born near Portsmouth on the southern coast on England into the family of a clerk of the naval station. Later the family moved to Chatham and then, in 1822, to London. Soon the father lost his job and was imprisoned for debt in the Marshalsea debtors' prison where he was joined by all the family except Charles, the eldest son. Charles Dickens was put to work in Warren's Blacking Factory. Later he described his experience at the factory in *David Copperfield*, while his impressions of the prison where he visited his family on Sundays, served as the material for *Pickwick Papers* and *Little Dorrit*. His brief stay at the Blacking Factory haunted him all of his life – he spoke of it only to his wife and to his closest friend, John Forster – but the dark secret became the source both of creative energy and of the preoccupation with the themes of alienation and betrayal. The following year the family inherited a small sum of money after the death of a relative and was able to pay all the debts. For a short time Charles Dickens could go to school again. But at the age of 15 he was sent to a lawyer's office to study law. There he learnt shorthand, which later helped him find a job of a newspaper reporter. To compensate for the lack of formal education Dickens regularly studied at the British Museum reading-room. In 1832 he became a parliamentary reporter and in 1833 he began contributing stories and descriptive essays to magazines and newspapers. In 1836 they were reprinted as ***Sketches by "Boz".*** Some weeks later the first instalment of ***Pickwick Papers*** appeared**.**

Soon *Pickwick* was the rage and Dickens, the most popular writer of the day. *Pickwick* began as a farce and had many conventional comic butts and traditional jokes. It is indebted to his contemporary theatre, the eighteenth-century English novelists, and a few foreign classics. But besides giving new life to old stereotypes, *Pickwick* displayed many of the features that were to be blended throughout Dickens' fiction: attacks on social evils and inadequate social institutions, an encyclopaedic knowledge of London, pathos, and inexhaustible powers of character creation. Dickens seemed to see things differently, in an amusing and exaggerated way. He dashed character after character, rejoicing in the language he put in their mouths, a language so rich in comic invention as to have a lyrical quality almost of poetry. Mr. Pickwick undergoes trial for breach of promise, he is robbed by rogues, charlatans and snobs run riot through the book. Yet the world of *Pickwick* is the world of fairy-tale. Crudities and miseries of the real world are sterilized by humour. Though *Pickwick Papers* contains many weak passages, the novel not only established

Dickens overnight and created a new tradition of popular literature, but also survived as one of the best-known books in the world due to its expression of a comic view of life.

In the books that followed pathos began to intrude on humour. Dickens, appalled by the cruelty of his time, felt that he must convey a message through fiction to his hard-hearted generation. Though still containing much comedy ***Oliver Twist***, serialized in 1837-39, is more concerned with social and moral evil presented in the pictures of the workhouse and the criminal world and culminating in Sykes's murdering Nancy and Fagin's last night in the condemned cell at Newgate. In 1838-39 Dickens serialized ***Nicholas Nickleby***, in 1840-41, ***The Old Curiosity Shop*** and in 1841, ***Barnaby Rudge***. *Nicholas Nickleby* reverted to the *Pickwick* shape and atmosphere, though the indictment of the brutal Yorkshire schools continued the important innovation seen in *Oliver Twist* – the spectacle of the lost and oppressed child as an occasion for pathos and social criticism. This was amplified in The *Old Curiosity Shop*, where the death of Little Nell, overwhelmingly powerful at the time, a few decades later became a byword for "Victorian sentimentality". In *Barnaby Rudge* Dickens attempted a historical novel set in the late eighteenth century.

On the whole, **the first period** of Dickens creative work (1833-41) is characterized by humour and optimism. His heroes and heroines are remarkable for their fortitude. To remain true to their principles of honour they are willing to live in poverty and to work hard. Finally evil is conquered and their virtue is rewarded.

The novels of the first period were published in instalments. Sometimes Dickens had to work at two or three books at a time. Exhausted at last, he took a five-month vacation in America. A radical critic of British institutions, he had expected more from "the republic of my imagination", but he found more vulgarity and sharp practice to detest than social arrangement to admire. Some of these feelings appear in ***American Notes*** (1842) and ***Martin Chuzzlewit*** (1843-44) that initiate the **second period** of his work. Among the other books of this period are ***The Christmas Books*** (beginning with *A Christmas Carol* of 1843), ***Dombey and Son*** (1846-48), and ***David Copperfield*** (1849-50). In the novels of the first period published in serials it was difficult to create an artistic unity. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens tried to "keep a steadier eye upon the general purpose and design", as he stated in the Preface. But it was the shorter *Christmas Books* that helped him obtain greater coherence. His view of life as presented in the *Christmas Books* was later to be described as "Christmas philosophy". *A Christmas Carol* immediately entered the general consciousness. Thackeray, in a review, called it "a national benefit, and to every man and woman who reads it a personal kindness". Other Christmas Books followed annually through 1867.

Dombey and Son was a crucial novel in Dickens's development, a product of a more thorough planning and a mature thought. It poses eternal moral and religious questions as suggested by the child Paul's first words in the story: "Papa, what's money?" In the novel the symbol of the power of money is Mr. Dombey himself to whose pride of an English merchant everything must be sacrificed: affections, wife, children.Virtue and human decency are discovered (as elsewhere in Dickens) among

the poor, humble, and simple. In Mr. Dombey is made a more serious internal characterization. Paul's early death is another famous pathetic episode.

In the middle of 1840s Dickens began to hanker after more direct literary expression of what weighed upon his heart. He was, he said, "famous and careless and happy". The darling of the public, with "a dear wife and children", a splendid house, and troops of devoted and admiring friends, yet he often found himself "wandering desolately back to that time of my life". He felt more and more need to tell his readers about his childhood suffering and to come to terms with his painful private memories by doing so. He began working on ***David Copperfield.***

At the same time *David Copperfield* was for Dickens a "holiday" from larger social concerns and is most notable for its childhood chapters, "an enchanting vein which he had never found before and which he was never to find again", as a critic said. For this reason and for its autobiographical interest, it has always been among his most popular novels and Dickens himself called it his "favourite child". Leo Tolstoy said that if you sifted the world prose there would remain Dickens, and if you sifted Dickens there would remain *David Copperfield*.

David Copperfield is the most poetic of all Dickens' novels. Written in the present tense and relating of the events long since past and of many who are dead but still present to the narrator, the novel is a great celebration of the permanence of the past in the present. The novel is a narration in the first person, a new technique for Dickens. When it was first published, the public believed it to be completely autobiographical. David, however, differs from his creator in many ways, though Dickens used many of his early experience – his period of work at the factory, while his father was jailed, his schooling and reading, his emergence from parliamentary reporting into successful novel writing. The Micawbers are much like Dickens's own parents: John Dickens like Mr. Micawber had to move from place to place accompanied by failures and poverty, but he never was exasperated. Dora's prototype was Maria Beadnell with whom Dickens had been desperately in love. Mr.Crickle was prompted by the headmaster of the school where Dickens studied after his father left the jail. In spite of all the hardships, David Copperfield does not lose faith in people. His instructor in life is the clever Betsy Trotwood who governs his actions and at the same time gives him the possibility to choose his own road. His true friends are common people – his nurse Peggoty and Mr. Peggoty, Emily and Ham.

David Copperfield is a novel about formation of a personality, written in the genre of Bildungsroman, a novel of reminiscence. It is an "educational" novel portraying the hero's emotional, moral and spiritual development from the imprudence, romanticism and undisciplined passion of youth to the supposed emotional stability and wisdom of maturity – an artistic ordering of life which had obvious appeal to the Victorians with their cult of earnestness and self-improvement. The theme of upbringing in the novel is connected not only with the life story of David, but is also developed in Steerford and Uriah Heap, Emily and Ham. Their fates are different but they are all victims of the existing educational systems and legalized social injustice.

The novel is built on complex patterns of paralleling, doubling and contrasting of characters and roles. Uriah Heep, like David, is fatherless and doted on by his

mother, both rise in the world by industry and diligence. Among other contrasting or doubling figures are the two women called Clara (his real mother and his nurse, Clara Peggoty); Dora and Agnes; Agnes and Steerford; Steerford and Traddles; Steerford and David; Betsy Trotwood and Miss Murdstone, Emily and Martha Endell, Clara Copperfield and Dora Spenlow.

During the second period of Dickens' work he was actively involved in public work. He was reckoned to be the best afterdinner speaker of the age and the best amateur actor. In R. H. Horne's *New Spirit of Age* (1844) Dickens occupies the first and longest chapter: "His influence upon his age is extensive –pleasurable, instructive, healthy, reformatory…" Dickens also loved family life. He had married in 1836 Cathrine Hogarth. To his nine children he was a delightful father, at least when they were young; relations with them proved less happy during their adolescence.

The 1850s-1860s form the **third period** of Dickens's creative activity. The novels of this time were much "darker" than their predecessors. The satire is harsher, the humour less genial and abundant, the happy endings more subdued than in the early fiction. Technically the later novels are more coherent, themes are often expressed through imagery or symbols, such as the fog in ***Bleak House*** (1853), or the prison in ***Little Dorrit*** (1857). Characterization is more subordinate to the general purpose and design and is more complex. Dickens uses fiction as a vehicle for more concentrated sociological argument. The plot enabled him to represent in the mirror of his own world a fuller picture of the society of his day than any English novelist had achieved before or has achieved since.

A Tale of Two Cities (1859), like *Barnaby Rudge* of the first period, is devoted to the French Revolution and presents with vigour and ambivalence of attitude the spectacle of large–scale mob violence. It has less characterization, dialogue and humour than other novels by Dickens.

Great Expectations (1861) is Dickens' second semi-autobiographical novel (though written in a much more melancholy mood than *David Copperfield*) and another variant on the theme of money as the agent of isolation. The main hero, Pip, is cut off from those nearest and most loyal to him, by the expectation of money. It's the final irony of his fate that the money to which he owns everything is ill-gotten. Pip`s mind is explored with great subtlety. His development through a childhood and youth beset with hard tests of character is traced critically but sympathetically. Various "great expectations" in the book prove to have been ill-founded – both personal and social.

Our Mutual Friend **(**1864-65) continues the critique of monetary and class values. London is presented grimmer than ever before; the corruption and complacency of "respectable" society are furiously attacked.

From 1861 till 1870 Dickens regularly undertook public readings. Dickens's last novel, ***The Mystery of Edwin Drood***, was left unfinished. He suffered a stroke after a full day's work on the novel and died the next day. Dickens was buried at Westminster Abbey.

Dickens continues to be viewed as one of the major English writers. What is the secret of his success? His work is inconsistent: passages of great mastery, supreme

originality ad comic genius can be found alongside some of the cheapest and tedious sentimentality. Certainly, the demands of writing a novel in instalments put on him irresistible pressure Besides there was his social commitment: his vision of the workhouse in *Oliver Twist* or the educational system and the industrial town in *Hard Times* were instrumental in creating public pressure for reform. The originality of his novels cannot be denied. True to his general character of independence he owes hardly anything to any predecessor with the possible exception of Smollett. He had no regular education and never became a man of wide learning but he carried the feeling of independence into art and politics. Some critics remark that Dickens's knowledge was limited, his logical faculties not very strong; while attempting to satirize the upper classes, he never drew a single aristocrat, high government official or "big-wig" generally, who presents the remotest resemblance to a living being. But he knew the lower and lower middle classes of his day with wonderful accuracy and moreover he possessed an imagination, now humorous, now terrible, now simply grotesque, of a range and volume rarely equalled, and of a quality which stands entirely by itself. His characters are not quite real in the sense that we never meet anybody like them in the actual world. But they behave according to their own laws, they are consistent with their own surrounding. And in this way they acquire reality in the world that Dickens created.

4. With the exception of Dickens, **the Brontës** have proved the most popular of English novelists. One reason for this is the story of their lives with its circumstances of loneliness and tragedy. A novel of their life would appear too romantic to be convincing: four geniuses and four tragic deaths are too many for one novel. The three Brontë sisters and their brother Branwell were artistic and died young. They grew up in isolation of the rectory at Haworth in the private world of daydreams.

Despite the isolation the Brontë family shared a rich literary life. Mr. Brontë discussed poetry, history, and politics with his children, and the children themselves created an extraordinary fantasy world together. When Mr. Brontë gave his son a box of wooden soldiers, each child seized one and named it. The soldiers became for them the centres of an elaborate set of stories that they first acted out in plays and later recorded in a series of book-length manuscripts, composed for the most part by Charlotte and her brother, Branwell, and devoted to a fictional world they named Angria. The two younger children, Emily and Anne, later started a separate series, a chronicle about an imaginary island called Gondal. The Brontës have become the object of cult.

Charlotte (1816-1855), Emily **(**1818-1848**)**, Anne and Branwell Brontë were born in Yorkshire to Maria Branwell and Patrick Bronte, a clergyman. After their mother's death her sister, a devout Methodist, helped her brother-in-law raise his children. In 1824 Charlotte and three of her sisters, Maria, Elizabeth, and Emily, were sent to Cowan Bridge, a school for clergymen's daughters. When an outbreak of tuberculosis killed Maria and Elizabeth, Charlotte and Emily were brought home. Several years later, Charlotte returned to school, this time in Roe Head. She became a teacher at the school in 1835 but decided after several years to become a private governess instead. The job was a misery to her and she soon left it. Finding herself equally disappointed with governess work Charlotte recruited her sisters to join her

in preparation for the establishment of a school. Although the Brontës' school was unsuccessful, their literary projects flourished. Charlotte suggested that she, Anne, and Emily collaborate on a book of poems. The three sisters published under male pseudonyms: Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, respectively. When the poetry volume received little public notice, the sisters decided to work on separate novels but retained the same pseudonyms. Anne and Emily produced their masterpieces in 1847: *The Professor* by Charlotte, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily and *Agnes Grey* by Anne. *The Professor* never found a willing publisher during Charlotte Bronte's lifetime. She wrote ***Jane Eyre*** later that year. The book, a critique of Victorian assumptions about gender and social class, became one of the most successful novels of its era, both critically and commercially.

Autobiographical elements are recognizable throughout *Jane Eyre*. Jane's experience at Lowood School, where her dearest friend dies of tuberculosis, recalls the death of Charlotte's sisters at Cowan Bridge. The hypocritical religious fervour of the headmaster, Mr. Brocklehurst, is based in part on that of the Reverend Carus Wilson who ran Cowan Bridge. John Reed's decline into alcoholism and dissolution is most likely modelled upon the life of Charlotte Bronte's brother Branwell, who slid into opium and alcohol addictions in the years preceding his death. Finally, like Charlotte, Jane becomes a governess.

The plot of *Jane Eyre* follows the form of a Bildungsroman, which is a novel that tells the story of a child's maturation and focuses on the emotions and experiences that accompany and incite his or her growth to adulthood. In *Jane Eyre*, there are five distinct stages of development, each linked to a particular place: Jane's childhood at Gateshead, her education at the Lowood School, her time as Adele's governess at Thornfield, her time with the Rivers family at Morton and at Marsh End (also called Moor House), and her reunion with and marriage to Rochester at Ferndean. From these various experiences, Jane becomes the mature and steady-headed woman who narrates the novel retrospectively.

Besides *Jane Eyre* is filtered through a third literary tradition - that of the Gothic horror story that became popular in England in the late eighteenth century. It generally describes supernatural experiences, remote landscapes, and mysterious occurrences, all of which are intended to create an atmosphere of suspense and fear. Jane's encounters with ghosts, dark secrets, and sinister plots add a sense of fantasy and mystery to the novel.

Jane Eyre is often considered the first Romantic novel in English literature. It is as subjective as Byron's *Childe Harold* and Jane as much a projection of her author as Harold is of his. Everything in the novel is staked on the validity of its author's feelings. With Charlotte Bronte passion entered the English novel: passion as the romantic poets have expressed it, a blending of the spiritual with the physical.

After the success of *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte revealed her identity to her publisher and went on to write several other novels, most notably *Shirley* in 1849 and *Violette* in 1952. In the years that followed, she became a respected member of London's literary set. But the deaths of Emily and Branwell in 1848, and of Anne in 1849, left her emotionally isolated. In 1854, she wed the Reverend Arthur Nicholls,

despite the fact that she did not love him. She died of pneumonia, while pregnant, the following year.

Jane Eyre: story overview: Young Jane Eyre was orphaned and sent to live with her uncle, who dies shortly after her arrival. Her step-aunt despises her and sends her to Lowood School so that she can become a governess. She wins the friendship of everyone there, but her life is difficult because of the poor conditions at the school. Not until typhus kills many of the students do conditions improve. Jane completes her education there and obtains a position as governess at a house called Thornfield. Jane's student is Adele Varens, a petulant but loving illegitimate child of the master of the house, Edward Rochester. Rochester is rarely at home and Jane spends most of her time with Adele and the housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax. When Rochester does come home, he is often moody and imposing. One night, Jane wakes to strange noises and the smell of smoke. She finds Rochester unconscious in his bed, which is on fire. Other odd things happen in the house: Jane often hears strange laughter and thuds. Jane has meanwhile realized that she loves Rochester but in her pride refuses to confess it.

When Rochester invites a group of friends to the house, including Blanche Ingram whom he is expected to marry, Jane is treated like a servant by the guests. One of the guests, Mr. Macon, is mysteriously injured. Jane is also troubled when her former guardian, Mrs. Reed, calls her to her deathbed and admits that several years earlier she had received a letter from one of Jane's distant relatives, John Eyre, a wealthy man who lives in Jamaica. Mr. Eyre had offered to adopt Jane, but Mrs. Reed maliciously told him that Jane had died in the typhus epidemic. When Jane returns from this visit, Rochester asks her to marry him and Jane joyfully assents. The night before their wedding, she wakes to find someone in her room, wearing her wedding veil. She screams and runs, but Rochester convinces her it is her imagination. At the wedding, a man interrupts the service, saying Rochester is already married. Rochester admits it and takes the wedding party to the attic. His wife is a Creole, Bertha Macon, who went mad immediately after their wedding fifteen years before. Now she is imprisoned in the attic.

Jane decides she must run away. Penniless, she becomes a beggar until Reverend St. John Rivers and his two sisters generously take her in. She lives with them under an assumed name, and it is only by accident that she learns that John Eyre has died and left her his fortune and that the Rivers are her cousins. They share the fortune. St.John Rivers presses her to marry him and join him as a missionary. He admits that he does not love her, but he thinks Jane smart and useful. Jane feels she must do her duty, but she does not want to marry Rivers. One night, Jane hears Rochester's voice calling her. She returns to Thornfield and finds the house burned to the ground. Bertha had set fire to it and Rochester became blinded in his unsuccessful attempt to save her life. Jane and Rochester marry. Rivers dies gloriously for his cause.

The development of Jane Eyre's character is central to the novel. From the beginning, Jane possesses a sense of her self-worth and dignity, a commitment to justice and principle, a trust in God, and a passionate disposition. Her integrity is continually tested over the course of the novel, and Jane must learn to balance the

frequently conflicting aspects of her self so as to find contentment. An orphan since early childhood, Jane feels exiled and ostracized at the beginning of the novel, and the cruel treatment she receives from her Aunt Reed and her cousins only exacerbates her feeling of alienation. Afraid that she will never find a true sense of home or community, Jane feels the need to belong somewhere, to find "kin", or at least "kindred spirits". This desire tempers her equally intense need for autonomy and freedom.

In her search for freedom, Jane struggles with the question of what type of freedom she wants. While Rochester initially offers Jane a chance to liberate her passions, Jane comes to realize that such freedom could also mean enslavement; by living as Rochester's mistress, she would be sacrificing her dignity and integrity for the sake of her feelings. St. John Rivers offers Jane the freedom to act on her principles. He opens to Jane the possibility of exercising her talents fully by working and living with him in India. Jane eventually realizes, though, that this freedom would also constitute a form of imprisonment, because she would be forced to keep her true feelings and her true passions always in check.

Whereas Rochester is passionate, St. John is austere and ambitious. Jane often describes Rochester's eyes as flashing and flaming, whereas she constantly associates St. John with rock, ice, and snow. Marriage with Rochester represents the abandonment of principle for passion, but marriage to St. John would mean sacrificing passion for principle. Edward Rochester wins Jane's heart, because she feels they are kindred spirits, and because he is the first person in the novel to offer Jane lasting love and a real home. Although Rochester is Jane's social and economic superior, and although men were widely considered to be naturally superior to women in the Victorian period, Jane is Rochester's intellectual equal. Moreover, after their marriage is interrupted by the disclosure that Rochester is already married Jane is proven to be Rochester's moral superior.

The themes explored in the novel:

Love versus Autonomy – *Jane Eyre* is very much the story of a quest to be loved. Jane searches, not just for romantic love, but also for a sense of being valued. Jane says to Helen Burns: "to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest". Yet, over the course of the book, Jane must learn how to gain love without sacrificing and harming herself in the process. Only after proving her self-sufficiency to herself can she marry Rochester and not be dependent upon him as her "master". The marriage should be between equals. As Jane says: "I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine… To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company".

Religion – Throughout the novel, Jane struggles to find the right balance between moral duty and earthly pleasure, between obligation to her spirit and attention to her body. She encounters three main religious figures: Mr. Brocklehurst, Helen Burns, and St. John Rivers. Each represents a model of religion that Jane ultimately rejects as she forms her own ideas about faith and their practical consequences. Mr. Brocklehurst illustrates the dangers and hypocrisies that Charlotte

Bronte perceived in the nineteenth-century Evangelical movement. He adopts the rhetoric of Evangelicalism when he claims to be purging his students of pride, but his method of subjecting them to various privations and humiliations is entirely un-Christian. His hypocritical support of his own luxuriously wealthy family at the expense of the Lowood students shows Bronte's wariness of the Evangelical movement. Helen Burns's meek and forbearing mode of Christianity, on the other hand, is too passive for Jane to adopt as her own, although she loves and admires Helen for it. St. John Rivers provides another model of Christian behaviour. His is a Christianity of ambition, glory, and extreme self-importance. St. John urges Jane to sacrifice her emotional deeds for the fulfilment of her moral duty. Although Jane ends up rejecting all three models of religion, she does not abandon morality, spiritualism, or a belief in a Christian God. For Jane, religion helps curb immoderate passions, and it spurs one on to worldly efforts and achievements. These achievements include full self-knowledge and complete faith in God.

Social Class – Jane Eyre is critical of Victorian England's strict social hierarchy. Bronte's exploration of the complicated social position of a governess is perhaps the novel's most important treatment of this theme. Jane is a figure of ambiguous class standing and, consequently, a source of extreme tension for the characters around her. Jane's manners, sophistication, and education are those of an aristocrat, because Victorian governesses, who tutored children in etiquette as well as academics, were expected to possess the "culture" of the aristocracy. Yet, as paid employees, they were more or less treated as servants. Jane's understanding of the double standard crystallizes when she becomes aware of her feelings for Rochester; she is his intellectual, but not his social, equal. Even before the crisis surrounding Bertha Mason, Jane is hesitant to marry Rochester because she senses that she would feel indebted to him for "condescending" to marry her. Jane's distress is Bronte's critique of Victorian class attitudes.

Jane herself speaks out against class prejudice. For example, she chastises Rochester: "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! I have as much soul as you and as much heart! And if God had given me some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you". However nowhere in *Jane Eyre* are society's boundaries bent. Ultimately, Jane is able to marry Rochester as his equal because she has almost magically come into her own inheritance from her uncle.

Gender Relations – Jane struggles continually to achieve equality and to overcome oppression. In addition to class hierarchy, she must fight against patriarchal domination, against those who believe women to be inferior to men and try to treat them as such. Three central male figures threaten her desire for equality and dignity: Mr. Brocklehurst, Edward Rochester, and St. John Rivers. All three are misogynistic on some level. Each tries to keep Jane in a submissive position, where she is unable to express her own thoughts and feelings. In her quest for independence and self-knowledge, Jane must escape Brocklehurst, reject St. John, and come to Rochester only after ensuring that they may marry as equals. In Chapter 12, Jane articulates what was for her time a radically **feminist philosophy**: "Women are

supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex".

5. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) is often compared with Dickens. They were different in temperament: Dickens was excitable and energetic, while Thackeray was lethargic and had to drive himself to composition. Dickens is magnificently successful in depicting common people, while Thackeray is a penetrating analyst of both middle class and aristocratic society. Thackeray's realism is less combined with fantasy and lyricism; it is more exact and objective. While Dickens idealizes his positive characters, Thackeray portrays his characters more realistically. They are described as natural results of their environment and the society which bred them. Thackeray seems to view his characters from afar. This was a new feature in literature which was assimilated by many other writers, and was later called **objective realism**. Thackeray's characterization and all his effects are more subtle than in Dickens. He is less troubled by presenting a moral solution than by evoking an image of life as he has seen it. Dickens was more optimistic than Thackeray. He believed that people could be reformed. Thackeray's pessimism marks the beginning of the crisis of bourgeois humanism which found its full expressions in the literature of the second half of the age.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in a prosperous middle-class family. His father was an East India Company official in Calcutta, India. At the age of six he was taken to England to be educated. First he studied at Charterhouse School, then at Cambridge. He left Cambridge without graduation as his ambition was art, which he studied in Germany, Italy, and France. He returned to England in 1833 to complete his education. Meanwhile, the Indian bank in which his father had invested money for him went bankrupt and Thackeray was left penniless. After hesitating whether to take up art or literature he finally chose journalism.

In 1836 he married Isabella Shawe who bore him three daughters. After giving birth to the third child she got mentally ill. Thackeray travelled with his wife from one health resort to another but she never regained her health; however, she outlived her husband by many years.

The early period of Thackeray's literary activity are the years 1830s – the first half of the 1840s. His articles and sketches, literary parodied were published in the weekly *Punch*. In the poem ***Georgiuses*** he gave a satire of four English kings. In ***Miss Tickletoby's Lectures on the History of England*** (1842) he displayed a lack of respect for the traditional authorities in English history and his disagreement with the idea that history is made by kings and heroes. Thackeray uses the device of a double parody: the parody of the lecturer's style and historical novels or works by historians who established "the cult of the hero".

Thackeray's first notable book was ***The Book of Snobs*** (1846-1847). It is a satirical description of different circles of English society. It is made up by sketches, each dedicated to a certain phenomenon of social or private life and together presenting a panorama of the English life of the period. The characteristic feature of English society in Thackeray's work is snobbishness. A snob is the one who looks up with adoration at his superiors and down with despise at his social inferiors. There are snobs among all social classes: aristocratic and military snobs, clerical snobs and Great City Snobs, University snobs and others. At the top of the pyramid of snobbery is the king George IV. The gallery of snobs in the book convinced the reader that "snobbishness" was one of the most characteristic features of the ruling classes of England at that time: "How can we help snobbishness, with such prodigious national institutions erected for its worship ... whose heart would not throb with pleasure if he could be seen walking arm in arm with a couple of Dukes down Pall-Mall? No; it's impossible, in our condition of society, not to be sometimes a snob…You who despite your neighbour, are a snob; you who forget your own friends, merely to follow after those of a higher degree, are a snob; you who are ashamed of your poverty, and blush for your calling, are a snob; as are you who boast of your pedigree or are proud of your wealth".

The Book of Snobs may be regarded as a prelude to his masterpiece, *Vanity Fair*, which can be called the peak of critical realism in England. It first appeared in 24 monthly parts which Thackeray illustrated himself. In 1848 it came out as a book, ***Vanity Fair (A Novel Without a Hero).*** In theme and range *Vanity Fair* can be compared to *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy. The novel attracted much attention, but it did not sell. The public did not know what to make of it, as one reader recalled after Thackeray's death. It was difficult to reach the public after Dickens's effects. Just after the second number of *Vanity Fair* was issued Thackeray read the latest instalment of *Dombey and Son* describing the death of Paul Dombey. "There's no writing against such power as this", he exclaimed in despair.

Vanity Fair is difficult to categorize: it has satire, realism, parody, history, and morality tale. The book was found by the public cynical and unpleasant. It is a pitiless investigation of lives balanced on the edge of moral, social and financial disaster. Perhaps only a man well acquainted with the fall from prosperity and the struggle up to it could have written such a book.

First Thackeray thought about episodic satire rather than a novel with fully developed characters. The first working title was *Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society*. The shift in the intentions took place when a second working title was adopted: *A Novel Without a Hero*. Later it became a subtitle. The title *Vanity Fair* was prompted by John Bunyan's novel, *Pilgrim's Progress*. The hero of Bunyan's novel, Christian, comes to a fair, wherein should be sold all sorts of vanity: "…at this fair there are all such merchandise sold as houses, countries, kingdoms, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, lusts, pleasures and delights of all sorts as … wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, blood, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not … at this fair there are at all times to be seen jugglings, cheats, games, plays, fools, apes, knaves, and rogues, and that of every kind."

Bunyan's vision becomes the **controlling metaphor** of Thackeray's novel. Everything in Bunyan's fair can be found in Thackeray's novel, and also in the real world of his readers, as Thackeray repeatedly reminds them. One inevitably passes through the Vanity Fair: "He that will go to the City, and yet not go through this Town must go out of the world." Not even the supposedly good characters of the novel are immune.

Bunyan took the name of his town from Ecclesiastes: Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, Vanity of vanities: all is vanity. "Vaenitas vanitatum", one of Thackeray's favourite phrases, brings the novel to a close. "**Vanity**" is used in the novel in **two meanings**: love of oneself and the things of the world and emptiness and world-weariness. The two meanings are brought together in the image of the looking-glass, the instrument of vanity in the worldly sense. The image of the looking-glass is also an adaptation of Swift's definition of satire: "… a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it".

The cover illustration for the monthly numbers shows the metamorphosed Preacher of Ecclesiastes. He is a clown standing on a tub and speaking to a congregation, representing the characters of the novel. All are wearing long-eared caps, as is the Preacher himself. The crowd is mostly cheerful and inattentive. The Preacher obviously does not expect to have any effect. Although Thackeray said it was a novelist's duty to be a "weekday preacher" the novel is too indirect and ambiguous to be a sermon and does not deliver a simple moral message.

Thackeray sets the novel in the Napoleonic period. *Vanity Fair* tells the story of two girls from the time they leave school to their middle age, a few years before the time the novel was written. In the opening sentence Thackeray says: "The present century was in its teens". For the first readers it was recent history. "In the month of March, Anno Domini 1815, Napoleon landed at Cannes, and Louis XVIII fled, and all Europe was in alarm, and the funds fell, and old John Sedley was ruined". The readers would have remembered the time, and to make his story more authentic Thackeray accumulated period detail. By the late 1840s the world was different but the readers could see the origins of their contemporary society in his novel. Using a narrative commentary, which related past to present, Thackeray did not only show the changes in attitudes that had taken place over a generation, but also the similarities. He was the first to show the effect of a historical event on the life of an individual. The war is shown off stage. But the Battle of Waterloo, where George was killed, ruined Amelia's happiness: "No more firing was heard at Brussels – the pursuit rolled miles away. Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart".

The novel is built up on a **system of contrasts** at the centre of which are Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp. The interrelation between these sharply opposed women, who are yet intimately linked, sets the plot in motion. Satirising upper middle-class Victorian London, its societal mores, decadence and corruption, Thackeray contrasts the life of amoral social climbing Becky Sharp, who can cry or blush at will, with the sheltered and naive Amelia Sedley's.

Round Amelia and Becky are grouped different other characters who make up balanced opposites: old Sedley and old Osborne, George and Rawdon, old Sir Pitt and Marquis of Steyne. To avoid the monotony of a too formal pattern Thackeray introduces cross-groupings: George Osborne and Dobbin, Rawdon and young Sir Pitt, etc. At the same time there is a symmetry and balance of action. When one set rises on the Wheel of the Fortune, the other goes down. The characters are drawn mainly from the City merchant class with Indian nabobs as their offsprings, and partly from the landed and titled gentry with military officers as their offsprings in their turn. The author attacks the corruption and pretentions of the aristocracy (the Crawleys and Marquis Steyne), the narrow-mindedness and greed of the bourgeoisie (the Osbornes, the Sedleys), exposes the snobbishness, hypocrisy, money-worship of all those who form the bulwark of society.

Though Thackeray is indebted to the English novelists of the 18th century (Fielding, first of all) he broke away from them as no other novelist before him. He swept away the whole mechanism of mystery as dubious births, missing heirs, suppressed wills, etc. The **movement of the plot** comes entirely from the characters and their interrelations. Thackeray concentrated on the complexity of character rather than plot. It is impossible to sum up any of the characters and rest in certainly about them. Early readers and critics objected to that complaining that the bad characters were too attractive, the good ones, stupid and dreary; not only was there no hero, but one of the heroines had no heart and the other no head.

The **subtitle** shows the author's intention not to describe separate individuals, but English bourgeois-aristocratic society as a whole. This "Novel without a Hero" was designed to do away with the idea of the hero as a romantic ideal. The idea of the hero is replaced by the idea of the gentleman. In *Vanity Fair* the gentleman is not identified by breeding, wealth, good looks, polished manners or elevated status in life. The Crawleys are coarse and insensitive. George Osborne, who is taken by Amelia for a hero, is shown to be in Becky's words "a selfish humbug … who had neither wit, nor manners, nor heart." The new model of the true gentleman in the novel is William Dobbin with a yellow face and lisp. The major was a "spooney", but "his thoughts were just, his brains were fairly good, his life was honest and pure, and his heart warm and humble." This bundle of unalluring attributes could never be mistaken for a romantic hero.

The lady of the novel is Amelia who is kind to children and servants, and cares for her poor old parents. Her failing, which is viewed as very grave, is her elevation of George Osborne into a hero. Her romanticism prevents her from making sensible judgment and blights her own life and that of Dobbin. Amelia is a lady but not a heroine. Becky is certainly not a lady; she is self-seeking, hypocritical and hard-hearted. But she can be good-natured and takes life as it comes. After her fall from a higher society she enjoys the life of an exile more than the heights of social success. She is a gamble and needs danger for stimulation. She is witty and amusing. She knows better than Amelia how to make a man happy providing a good dinner and witty conversation. She is capable of disinterested kindness: she sings to poor Lady Steyne and tells Amelia the truth about her husband. She is attractive due to her talents, self-knowledge and self-mockery. The reader is assured she could be different

were the life more gracious to her. Becky muses: "It isn't difficult to be a country gentleman's wife. I think I could be a good woman if I had five thousand pounds a year. I could dawdle about in the nursery, and count the apricots on the wall. I could water plants in a green house, and pick off dead leaves from the geraniums, I could ask old women about their rheumatism and order half a crown's worth of soup for the poor. I shouldn't miss it much out of five thousand a year."

Thackeray undermines the status of fiction as a representation of reality, saying the story might have taken a different turn. Direct appeals to the reader's experience draw him into the action, and dissolve the boundaries between past and present, fiction and reality.

Thackeray's mordant wit and fierce critique of his times caused much controversy but in the end his novel was a best-seller and remains in print today. It has also been adapted for television and the screen numerous times.

The novels of the later period of Thackeray's creative activity include ***The History of Pendennis*** **(1850),** ***The Newcomes*** **(1854),** ***Henry Esmond*** **(1852),** ***The Virginians*** **(1859) (**a sequel of *Henry Esmond*).

6. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is an outstanding representative of the 19th-century realism in England, "the last of the Victorians". In his works Hardy lived in the past yet in many ways he was ahead of his times. He was a feminist, critical of social conventions that could make marriage a prison for a woman; he was modern enough to take an unsentimental, un-Victorian view of life, love and religion. His masterful evocation of life in the rural south and west of England and his rather fatalistic point of view, outside the mainstream of Victorian intellectual life, combine to produce some of the most memorable novels of the age.

Hardy was born in Dorcherster, Dorsetshire, in the south of England into the family of a stonemason. At 16 he became apprenticed to an architect. At 22 he went to London and worked under Sir Reginald Bloomfield, who specialized in Gothic architecture. He also attended evening classes of King's College. At 27 he returned to his native countryside, worked as an architect for several years, got married to a local girl and settled near Dorchester in a house that he himself had designed. The first story that he published was a success and in 1874 he gave up architecture and began to live on the income from his novels.

Hardy first became famous with ***Under the Greenwood Tree*** (1872). It is a simple love story set up in an apparently untroubled village peopled by simple and rather amusing peasants. It is his "happiest" novel. The other novels are more tragic. Hardy criticizes philistine complacency and false morality reigning in society. But he does not believe in any radical changes. According to Hardy, mankind is under the sway of an arbitrary mysterious force, which predetermines the fate of people and plays havoc with their lives. Hardy's novels are almost all tragic love stories and the lovers are tragic heroes and heroines of a timeless, classical kind.

The most important group of his novels Hardy is called ***Novels of Character and Environment***. They are also known as "**Wessex novels**". The scene is laid in what Hardy called Wessex, using the ancient name for Dorsetshire, Wiltshire and some other peculiarly English southwest counties. The novels truthfully depict the impoverishment and decay of small farmers who became hired field hands and

roamed the country in search of seasonal jobs. Hardy was pained to see the deterioration of the patriarchal mode of life in rural England. This was one of the reasons for the growing pessimistic vein in his novels.

The Wessex theme begins in ***Far From Madding Crowd***. The scene of is the prosperous farm of the beautiful Bathsheba Everdene. The story tells of three loves for her on the part of three different men: Gabriel, her loyal shepherd, a wealthy neighbour and the handsome, wayward Sergeant Troy.

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) is the second of the great "Wessex novels". It shows the downfall of a respectable man, Henchard, the Mayor. The story has a country-town setting. Henchard has been called Hardy's grandest hero but one with a fatal weakness of character for which he is judged by Nature and brought down.

Woodlanders (1887) testifies an increase in Hardy's pessimism. The hero, Marty South, does not tempt Fate. He only wants to be happy – and for this he is judged.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1890) is the summit of Hardy's work, and one of the saddest novels ever written. The novel depicts farm-life such as it was in Dorsetshire in the early Victorian days, and tells the story of a noble-minded country girl, Tess Durbeyfield (of the d'Urbervilles). The tragedy of her life has social motivation, but Hardy sets down her ruin to the forces of fate.

The **subject** of *Tess* is stated clearly by Hardy as, the fate of a "**pure woman**"; in fact it is the **destruction of the English peasantry**. More than any other 19th-century novel it has the quality of a **social document**. It is a novel with a thesis, and the thesis is that in the course of the 19th century the disintegration of the peasantry reached its final and tragic stage. With the extension of capitalist farming the old yeoman class of small holders or peasants with their traditions of independence, was bound to disappear. *Tess* is the story and the symbol of the destruction. There is an insistent emphasis on historical processes already in the opening chapters of the novel. The discovery of John Durbeyfield of his ancestry is not just a comic scene. It states the basic theme of the novel – what the Durbeyfields were and what they have become. They have fallen on hard times, their horse is killed in an accident and the sense of guilt over this accident allows Tess to be persuaded by her mother into visiting the Trantridge D'Urbervilles to "claim kin" with a more prosperous branch of the family. And from this visit the whole tragedy derives. The sacrifice of Tess is symbolic of the historical process at work. The D'Urbervilles are in fact the nouveau riches Stoke family, capitalists who have bought their way into the gentry. When Tess sees their estate she cries out: "I thought we were an old family; but this is all new", the cry carries a world of irony.

From the moment of her seduction by Alec D'Urberville, Tess's story becomes a hopeless struggle against overwhelming odds to maintain her self-respect. After her child's death she becomes a labourer at a dairy form. She falls in love with Angel Clare and through marriage to him thinks to escape her fate. But the intellectual Angel turns out more cruel than D'Urberville, the sensualist. When his dream of rustic innocence is shattered he abandons Tess and her degradation continues. With the death of her father the Durbeyfields are expulsed from their cottage: John Durbeyfield had been a life holder. The need to support her family forces Tess back

to Alec D'Urberville. And when the penitent Angel returns Tess kills Alec. The policemen take her from the alter at Stonehedge and the black flag, signifying an execution, is run up on Winchester jail.

For Hardy country life is not merely a setting for his characters. From his standpoint the unity of Man and Nature in rural life is the only way to true morality and happiness. His love of nature and simple people combined with a keen eye for exact and concrete detail heighten the realistic effect of his descriptive passages. Although it is *Under the Greenwood Tree* that Hardy called "a rural painting of the Dutch school", this definition suits many passages in his other novels as well. In *Tess* he describes with great precision harvesting: every participant, either living or inanimate, receives an appropriate share of the writer's attention: the mist, the sun, the cottages, the reaping-machine and its attendants, the field animals that are put to death as the wheat falls, the sheaf-binders and the heroine of the novel toiling among them. Such passages reveal the extreme richness of Hardy's vocabulary.

An architect by profession, he gave to his novels a design that was almost architectural, employing each circumstance in the narrative to one accumulated effect. The final impression was of a malign Fate functioning in men's lives, corrupting their possibilities of happiness, and beckoning them towards tragedy. But while he sees life as cruel and purposeless, he does not remain a detached spectator. He has pity for the puppets of Destiny. It is a compassion which extends from man to the earthworms and the diseased leaves on the trees.

Jude the Oscure (1895) is Hardy's only novel with a contemporary setting. Jude Fawley, a self-educated stonemason is anxious to better himself and his decidedly "modern" cousin, Sue Bridehead. Jude is a working-class intellectual whose ambition is to study at Oxford. Disappointment is inevitable. His attempts to escape from obscurity brought the gods down upon Jude's head. Sue's "advanced" opinions about the needlessness of a formal marriage brought the critics down on Hardy's head. Hardy's last novels – *Tess* and *Jude* - were given a hostile reception by the public. It discouraged the author to such an extent that he ceased writing prose altogether. By that time he had written 14 novels.

In the late 90s, almost at the age of 60, he turned entirely to poetry. He achieved great masterly in the field of philosophical lyrics. In his philosophical lyrics Hardy treated mainly the same problems as those of his prosaic works. ***Wessex poems*** (1898) and ***Winter Words*** (1928) are written in the rhythm of old ballads and folk songs. Hardy presents the memories and reflections of a past long gone. ***The Dynasts*** (1904, 1906, 1908) is an epic drama of Napoleonic wars, the logical extreme of Hardy's philosophy. The events are related to longer-term history, so what seems to be major happenings and great men are reduced in size and importance: men are no bigger than ants and all their work is the building of little hills.

In the last years of his life Hardy was awarded honorary degrees from Oxford and Cambridge Universities. He is buried in Westminster Abbey and remains one of the best-loved English writers.

6. Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) was the most famous poet of the Victorian age. He was born in Somersby, Lincolnshire, fourth of twelve children in the family. The poet's grandfather had violated tradition by making his younger son, Charles, his

heir, and arranging for the poet's father to enter the ministry. The contrast of his own family's relatively straitened circumstances to the great wealth of his aunt and uncle (who lived in castles) made Tennyson feel particularly impoverished and led him to worry about money all his life. He also had a lifelong fear of mental illness, for several men in his family had a mild form of epilepsy. In the late 20s his father became paranoid, abusing, and violent. His brother Edward was confined in a mental institution after 1833, and he himself spent ten weeks under doctor's care in 1843.

In 1827 Tennyson entered Trinity College, Cambridge, following his two elder brothers. The same year with his brother he published *Poems by Two Brothers*. In 1829 he joined The Apostles, an undergraduate club which met to discuss philosophical and literary issues. All the members of the club – Arthur Henry Hallam, James Spedding, Edward Lushington – eventually became famous. Hallam was going to marry Emily Tennyson, but died at the age of 22. The death shocked Tennyson and caused periodical depressions throughout his lifetime.

In 1832 he published a collection of ***Poems.*** The mixed reception of critics hurt the poet deeply. The success of the *Poems* of 1842 made him a popular poet. In 1845 he received a Civil List (government) pension. The appointment in 1850 as Poet Laureate finally established him as the most popular poet of the Victorian era. In 1853 as the Tennysons were moving into their new house on the Isle of Wight, Prince Albert dropped in unannounced. Tennyson returned the favour by dedicating ***The Idylls of the King*** to his memory. Queen Victoria later summoned him to court several times, and at her insistence he accepted the title of the lord, which he had declined when it was offered to him by Disraeli and Gladstone, English prime-ministers.

Tennyson suffered from extreme short-sightedness – without a monocle he could not even see to eat. This disability in part accounts for his manner of creating poetry. He composed much of his poetry in his head, occasionally working on individual poems for many years. At Cambridge he often did not bother to write down his compositions, later he worked on his poems many times to achieve perfection. Revising his works he diminished merely descriptive passages and substituted one or two significant details for a fully drawn picture. His style is mannered and decorative. English poetry had produced nothing since Milton that is so obviously the result of strenuous pursuit of perfection of form. His topics were the common topics of his Romantic predecessors: nature, English pastorals ballad themes, medieval romance, classical legend, love and death. He was not as much a poet of passion as of moods, in which it is sometimes difficult to separate waking from dreaming. Like Coleridge, Tennyson from the start was a metrist, bold in experiment and happy in achievement. The metre of each poem was designed to convey a single, definite mood. Among the most famous poems are ***The Lady of Shallot, The Palace of Art, The Lotus-Eaters, Morte d'Arthur, Ulysses, Locksley Hall, In Memoriam***.

Towards the end of his life the tide of criticism began to turn against Tennyson, who was accused of being superficial and conformist. In the twentieth century his reputation was re-established by T.S. Eliot, who wrote that Tennyson had "the finest ear of any English poet since Milton".

7. During the years of his marriage **Robert Browning** (1812-1889) was sometimes referred to as "Mrs. Browning's husband." Elizabeth Barrett, who was regarded later as a lesser figure, was at that time a famous poet while her husband was a relatively unknown experimenter whose poems were met with misunderstanding or indifference. Not until the 1860s did he at last gain a public and become recognized as the rival or equal of Tennyson.

The personal life of Robert Browning falls into three phases: his years as a child and young bachelor, as a husband, and as a widower. Each of these phases is considered in relation to his development as a poet.

He was born in Camberwell, a London suburb. His father, a bank clerk, was a learned man with an extensive library. His mother was a kindly, religious-minded woman, interested in music. Until the time of his marriage, at the age of 34, Browning was rarely absent from his parents' home. He attended a boarding school near Camberwell, travelled a little (to Russia and Italy), and was a student at the University of London for a short period, but he preferred to pursue his education at home, where he was tutored in foreign languages, music, boxing, and horsemanship and where he read omnivorously. From this unusual education he acquired a store of knowledge on which to draw for the background of his poems. The "obscurity" of which his contemporaries complained in his earlier poetry is partly due to his overreliance on the erudition of his readers. Besides he avoided exposing himself too explicitly before his readers.

One way of reducing the personal element in his poetry was to write plays instead of soul-searching narratives or lyrics. His first play, ***Strafford,*** was a historical tragedy that lasted only four nights when it was produced in London in 1837. For ten years, the young writer struggled to produce other plays that would better hold the attention of an audience, but as stage productions they all remained failures. However, writing dialogue for actors led him to explore another form more congenial to his genius, the dramatic monologue. His first collection of such monologues, ***Dramatic Lyrics***, appeared in 1842 but was as poorly received by reviewers and public as his plays had been.

Browning's love affair with Elizabeth Barrett has been retold by novelists, dramatists, and movie producers. She was six years older than he was, a semi-invalid, jealously guarded by her possessively tyrannical father. But love swept aside all obstacles. After their elopement to Italy, the former semi-invalid was soon enjoying good health and a full life. The husband likewise seemed to thrive during the years of this remarkable marriage as his memorable volume of poems, ***Men and Women*** reflects.

The happy fifteen-year sojourn in Italy ended in 1861 with Elizabeth's death. The widower returned to London with his son. During the twenty-eight years remaining to him, the quantity of verse he produced did not diminish. ***Dramatis Personae*** (1864) is a volume containing some of his finest monologues, such as ***Caliban upon Setebos***. In 1868 he published his greatest single poem, ***The Ring and the Book***, which was inspired by his discovery of an old book of legal records concerning a murder trial in 17th century Rome. His poem tells the story of a brutally sadistic husband, Count Guido Franceschini. The middle-aged Guido

grows dissatisfied with his young wife, Pompilia, and accuses her of having adulterous relations with a handsome priest who had tried to rescue her from the dragon's den in which her husband confined her. Eventually Guido stabs his wife to death and is himself executed. In a series of twelve books, Browning retells this tale of violence, presenting it from the contrasting points of view of participants and spectators. Because of its vast scale, *The Ring and the Book* is like a Victorian novel, but in its experiments with multiple points of view it anticipates later novels such as Conrad's *Lord Jim*.

During his London years, Browning became abundantly fond of social life. He dined at the homes of friends and at clubs. He would talk about many topics – except his own poetry, about which he was usually reticent. Browning's character is thus not so clearly known as that of other poets of the time.

When he died, in 1889, he was buried in Westminster Abbey. On the occasion of his burial his friend and writer Henry James reflected that many oddities and many great writers have been buried there, "but none of the odd ones has been so great and none of the great ones has been so odd."

Just as Browning's character is harder to identify than that of Tennyson, so also are his poems more difficult to relate to the age in which they were written. Bishops and painters of the Renaissance, physicians of the Roman empire, musicians of eighteenth-century Germany seem to be in a world remote from the world of steam engines and disputes about human beings' descent from the ape. Yet many of these portraits explore problems that confronted Browning's contemporaries, especially problems of faith and doubt, good and evil, and problems of the function of the artist in modern life. Browning is considered to be an optimist but few writers, have been more aware of the existence of evil. His gallery of villains – murderers, sadistic husbands, mean and petty manipulators – is an extraordinary one.

What mostly separates Browning's poetry from the Victorian age is its style. Victorian poets wrote in the manner of Keats, Milton, Spenser, and of classical poets such as Virgil. This is the central stylistic tradition in English poetry, one that favours smoothly polished texture, elevated diction and subjects, and pleasing liquidity of sound. Browning draws from a different tradition, more colloquial and discordant, a tradition that includes the poetry of John Donne, the soliloquies of Shakespeare, the comic verse of the early 19th-century poet Thomas Hood, and certain features of the narrative style of Chaucer. If Browning seems out of step with other Victorian poets, he is by no means out of step with his contemporaries in prose. The grotesque, which plays such a prominent role in the style and subject matter of Dickens is equally prominent in Browning's verse: "Fee, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!/ Blessedest Thursday's the fat of the week./ Rumble and tumble, sleek and rough, / Stinking and savoury, smug and gruff".

The link between Browning and the Victorian prose writers is not limited to style. With the later generation of Victorian novelists, George Eliot, George Meredith, and Henry James, Browning shares a central preoccupation. Like Eliot in particular, he was interested in exposing the complexity of our motives. "My stress lay on incidents in the development of a human soul," he wrote; "little else is worth

study". His psychological insights can be illustrated by such poems as ***The Bishop Orders His Tomb*** or ***Dîs Miter Visum***.

Browning's poetry requires from the reader an intellectual effort. The dramatic monologue, as Browning uses it, separates the speaker from the poet in such a way that the reader must work through the words of the speaker to discover the meaning of the poet. In the well-known early monologue ***My Last Duchess***, we listen to the duke as he speaks of his dead wife as if we were overhearing a man talking into the telephone in a booth adjacent to ours. From his one-sided conversation we piece together the situation, both past and present, and we infer what sort of woman the duchess really was and what sort of man the duke is. Ultimately, we may also infer what the poet himself thinks of the speaker he has created.

In addition to his experiments with the dramatic monologue, Browning also experimented with language and syntax. The grotesque rhymes and jaw-breaking diction that he often employs have been repugnant to some critics. But to those who appreciate Browning, the incongruities of language are functional, a humorous and appropriate counterpart to an imperfect world. Ezra Pound's who called him "Old Hippety-Hop o' the accents," addresses Browning, affectionately:

"Heart that was big as the bowels of Vesuvius/ Words that were winged as her sparks in eruption, / Eagled and thundered as Jupiter Pluvius / Sound in your wind past all signs o' corruption".

In the 20th century Browning's poetry was admired by two groups of readers widely different in tastes. To one group, his work is a moral tonic. Such readers appreciate him as a man who lived bravely and as a writer showed life to be a joyful battle. Typical of this group are the Browning societies in England and America. Members of these societies usually regard their poet as a wise philosopher and religious teacher. A second group of readers enjoy Browning more for his attempt to solve the problems of how poetry should be written. Such poets as Ezra Pound and Robert Lowell have valued him as a major artist; they have recognized that more than any other 19th-century poet, Browning energetically hacked through a trail that subsequently become the main road of 20th century poetry. In *Poetry and the Age* (1953) Randall Jarrell remarked how "the dramatic monologue, which once had depended for its effect upon being a departure from the norm of poetry, now became in one form or another the norm". Another critic ranks Browning as "the most effective creator of character in English, after Dickens and Shakespeare."

However, in spite of Browning's role as a forerunner of 20th century literature he is essentially a Victorian. Energy is the most characteristic aspect of his writing and of the man (Turgenev compared Browning's handshake to an electric shock). And energy is perhaps the most characteristic aspect of Victorian literature in general.

8. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, better known to the world by his pen-name **Lewis Carroll**, was a deacon in the Anglican church and a lecturer in mathematics at Oxford as well as pioneer in the art of portrait photography. Most of his publications were mathematical treatises, but his fame rests on the strange pair of

books he wrote for children, ***Alice in Wonderland*** (1865) and ***Through the Looking-Glass*** (1871), both published under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll. Like *Gulliver's Travels,* these narratives have long been enjoyed, at different levels, by both children and adults. The various songs scattered through the stories are sometimes parodies, as, for example, *The White Knight's Song,* but more often they are classic examples of nonsense verse.

Lewis Carroll (1832-1898) was born in Daresbury in northwest England. He was the first of eleven children. As a child Charles would entertain his brothers and sisters with invented games and puzzles, put on marionette shows and stories. He was to continue to be an entertainer of children for the rest of his life. Still, the influence of his father, a rector in the Anglican Church, who loved classics and mathematics, was strong too, and Charles followed in his father's footsteps in all ways except that of becoming an active churchman. Instead, after being educated in public schools, where he always won numerous prizes and awards, he went on to Christ Church College of Oxford University in 1850, where he would remain for the rest of his life. There he lived the exemplary life of an Oxford don, teaching and writing books on mathematics and carrying out his duties with the utmost precision and care. He was, by all accounts, a most fastidious and conservative man. Rules and propriety were everything to him. His students would never have described their teacher as humorous or personable. But this exemplary life was only part of the picture. He had another side to him: his great love of children and childhood. He saw his childhood as the happiest time of his life. As an adult, he truly enjoyed the company of small children. What is more, his friendship with them hardly ever lasted past puberty, because "the child-friends, once so affectionate, became uninteresting acquaintances, whom I have no wish to see again."

There was one child in particular whom he loved above all –Alice Liddell, one of the three daughters of the dean of Christ Church, Henry Liddell. In April 1856 Dodgson was invited to the Deanery gardens to photograph the three Liddell sisters, including the three-year-old Alice. This photography session was not a success – the three little girls would not sit still - but Charles and the Liddell girls became friends. As always, Dodgson took on the role of children's entertainer with his stories, games and puzzles. He also took the children on many outings. One outing, on 4 July 1862, has become legendary. Dodgson himself wrote of that summer day: "I made an expedition up the river with the three Liddells, we had tea on the bank there, and did not reach Christ Church till half-past eight.... on which occasion I told them the fairy tale of Alice's Adventures Underground, which I undertook; to write out for Alice." This was the afternoon which saw the beginnings of what was to become ***Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*** (1865), and together with its companion volume ***Through the Looking-Glass*** (1871) destined to become one of the best-loved books in English literature and an odd masterpiece of Victorian writing. Besides all the millions of children who have loved these books, they have inspired many of the best later writers, including James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, the French Surrealists and Vladimir Nabokov. The poet W.H. Auden explained how a children's book could be so appealing to adults by saying that "there are good books which are only for adults,

because their comprehension presupposes adult experiences, but there are no good books which are only for children. After all, every adult has been a child."

In the Alice books Lewis Carroll manages to see the upper-class Victorian world of severe rules and order through the child's eyes. In both of these books, Alice is constantly meeting rather bossy adults who tell her to repeat her lessons, recite poems (one of the standard activities of Victorian schoolchildren) and respond to difficult, often absurd, questions. But for all this harassment and bossing around, Alice stands her ground. She may be confused by the absurdities of the adult world and she may even cry, but she is never stupid or helpless or sweetly innocent, and in the end she becomes Queen Alice. Besides these absurd adults, who appear in the form of chess pieces, mythological beasts, fairy-tale characters and so on, Alice must face terrible changes. She herself grows in bizarre ways after drinking from bottles labelled **"DRINK ME"** or after eating pieces of a magic mushroom; and death and the threat of being eaten are constants in these books which at times take on the semblance of nightmares. Lewis Carroll's acute representation of childhood without a trace of the moralism so characteristic of much of Victorian writing for both children and adults, revolutionized the writing of children's books. The various song scattered through the stories are sometimes parodies, as, for example, The *White Knight's Song*, but more often they are classic examples of nonsense verse. Poems such as *Jabberwocky* exhibit a mathematician's fondness for puzzles combined with a literary person's fondness for word games. At this level, *Jabberwocky* can be enjoyed as a small-scale *Finnegans Wake.* Carroll's art has obviously many affinities with that of another eccentric Victorian, Edward Lear, although the two men never met and (so far as we know) never referred to each other. Despite these affinities, Carroll's nonsense, often on the brink of satire, is more pointed than Lear's.

Even though the great success of the Alice books brought Lewis Carroll fame and financial rewards, his life changed little, except for the fact that he now had the chance to frequent and photograph the famous artists and writers of his day, such as Ruskin, Tennyson and the Rossettis.

9. In his essay *The Nineties* Helmut Herber offers a useful generalization to the feelings at the turn of centuries: "human beings, but artists in particular, are infected by a sense of death, decay, agony, old gods falling, cultural decline, on the one hand, or by a sense of degeneration… on the other".

A change of attitudes in the late-Victorian period was vividly demonstrated by the **aesthetic movement** of Walter Pater and his followers. They concluded that the strivings of their predecessors were ultimately pointless, that the answers to our problems are not to be found, and that our role is to enjoy the fleeting moments of beauty in "this short day of frost and sun".

The aesthetic movement began as a reaction to the prevailing utilitarian social philosophies and to what was perceived as the ugliness and philistinism of the industrial age. Its philosophical foundations were laid in the eighteenth century by Immanuel Kant, who postulated the autonomy of aesthetic standards from morality, utility, or pleasure. In England the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood since 1848 had sown the seeds of aestheticism and the work of Rossetti, Burne-Jones and

Swinburne exemplified it in expressing a yearning for ideal beauty through conscious medievalism. The attitudes of the movement in the 1890s were represented by the writings of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde and the illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley in the periodical *The Yellow Book* that ran from 1894 to 1897.

Walter Pater (1839-1894) is a key figure in the transition from mid-Victorianism to the "decadence of the 1890s". Although he was a mild-mannered Oxford don, he had almost a subversive effect on the circle of young poets and artists he drew around him. ***Studies in the History of Renaissance,*** a collection of essays published in 1873, was the first of the several volumes that established Walter Pater as the most important critical writer of the last Victorian period. At Oxford, he had heard the lectures of Matthew Arnold, who was then professor of poetry. After graduating, Pater remained at Oxford as a tutor of classics; the experience was described in his autobiographical sketch, ***The Child in the House.*** In view of his retiring disposition Pater was surprised by the impact made by his books on young readers of the 1870s and 1880s. To Pater's disciples, his work seemed strikingly different. Instead of recommending a continuation of a quest for Truth, Pater assured his readers that the quest was pointless. Truth, he said, is relative. Instead of echoing Carlyle's call to duty and social responsibilities, Pater reminded his readers that life passed quickly and that our only responsibility is to relish sensations, and especially the sensations provoked by works of art.

Pater is the author of impressionistic criticism as well as fiction. In his essays he tried to communicate what he called the "special unique impression of pleasure" made on him by the works of some artist or writer. His range of subjects included the dialogues of Plato, the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, the plays of Shakespeare. Of particular value are his studies of the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Lamb in his volume of ***Appreciations*** (1889), and the poetry of William Morris in his essay ***Aesthetic Poetry*** (1868). These and other essays were praised by Oscar Wilde, who implemented Pater's ideas in his work and his life.

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) interpreted Pater's ideas as the search for sensual as well as artistic pleasure. Wilde was born in Dublin to the family of distinguished surgeon, Sir William. His mother, Lady Jane Francesca Wilde, was a poet and journalist. After majoring in classical studies at Trinity College, Dublin, he won a scholarship to Oxford and there established a brilliant academic record. At Oxford he came under the influence of the aesthetic theories of John Ruskin and Walter Pater.

After graduating in 1878, Wilde settled in London and quickly established himself as a spokesman for the school of "art for art's sake". He became a prominent personality of his day: he wore his hair long, decorated his room with peacock feathers, lilies, sunflowers, blue china. In 1882 he visited America for a lengthy (and successful) lecture tour where he startled audiences by airing gospel of the aesthetic movement. He was a dazzling conversationalist. Yeats, the leader of the Celtic Renaissance movement, recollected: "I never before heard a man talking with perfect sentences, as if he had written them all overnight with labour and yet all spontaneous". Wilde also delighted his listeners by uttering opinions that were both outrageous and incongruous, as for example his affirmation that Queen Victoria was one of the women he most admired and whom he would have married "with

pleasure" (the other two were the famous actress Sarah Bernhardt and a mistress of Victoria's son Edward, Lily Langtry).

In addition, Wilde had the gifts of an actor, who delights in gaining attentions. Like the dandies of the earlier decades of the 19th century he favoured colourful costumes in marked contrast to the sober black suits of the late-Victorian middle class. A green carnation in his buttonhole and velvet knee breeches became for him badges of his youthful iconoclasm. In a letter written when he was forty-two years old, he remarked: "The opinions of the old on the matters of Art are, of course, of no value whatever".

His first published work was the book of children's stories, ***The Happy Prince,*** a masterpiece enjoyed both by adults and children. In his writings, he excelled in a variety of genres: as a critic of literature and of society (***The Decay of Lying***, 1889, and ***The Soul of Man Under Socialism,*** 1891) and also as a poet, novelist, and dramatist. Much of his prose develops Pater's aestheticism, particularly its sense of superiority of art to life and its lack of obligation to any standards of mimesis.

His novel ***The Picture of Dorian Gray*** created a sensation when it was published in 1891. In the Preface to the novel Wilde states: "The artist is a creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim. Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming. This is a fault. Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are cultivated. For these there is hope. They are the elect to whom beautiful things mean only Beauty. There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all. No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style. Vice and Virtue are to an artist materials for art. It is a spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors. Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital. All art is quite useless".

Although the preface to the novel emphasizes the ideas of aesthetic movement, in the novel itself the author seems to the expounding a moral lesson on the evils of selfish hedonism. The novel is a story of a handsome young man and his selfish pursuit of sensual pleasures. The novel touches upon different problems: morality, art, beauty. An inexperienced, kind and innocent young man at the beginning of the novel, Dorian is influenced by two men with sharply contrasted characters: the generous and humane artist Basil Hallward, who thinks that art without beauty is shallow and worships Dorian's beauty, and the cynical Lord Henry Wotton who attracts Dorian by his eloquence and paradoxes and finally corrupts him.

Although Wilde proclaimed the theory of extreme individualism he repeatedly contradicted himself. In his tales he glorified the beauty of devoted love, unselfishness, kindness and generosity (***The Happy Prince***, ***The Nightingale and the Rose***), rejected egoism and greed (***The Selfish Giant***, ***The Devoted Friend***).

Wilde's most outstanding success was as a writer of comedies of manners which were staged in London and New York from 1892 through 1895, including ***Lady Windermere's Fan***, ***A Woman of no Importance***, ***An Ideal Husband***, and ***The Importance of Being Earnest***. These comedies were a satire against various aspects of contemporary life: marriage relations, morality and class privileges. Thus ***An Ideal Husband*** shows the way to power in English society. The main hero is Sir Robert

Chiltern, a member of the government, an undersecretary for foreign affairs and a respectable citizen, who made his fortune by selling a government secret. He is blackmailed by Mrs. Cheveley who happens to know about it and whose aim is to make Sir Robert publicly support the Argentine Canal scheme she and her friends are interested in. Sir Robert can't explain to his wife the reason why he speaks in favour of the scheme that he dislikes. Later he tries to fight with Mrs. Cheveley using her own weapon. In this way Wilde shows the little difference between a member of the government and a dishonest adventuress. Oscar Wilde did not, however, try to go very deep into social problems of the age in his comedies; his aim was to entertain the public by means of **aphorisms and paradoxes**, directed mainly against the philistine morals and tastes of the bourgeoisie, and the sparkling wit of his dialogue, e.g. "Does he lie? My nephew Aldgeron? It can't be true! He graduated the Oxford University!" In Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850) the hero affirms: "I have always been thoroughly in earnest". 45 years later Oscar Wilde's comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest* uses the words "earnest" in a pun, turning earlier Victorian values upside down.

In the spring of 1895 his success suddenly crumbled when Wilde was arrested and sentenced to jail, with hard labour, for two years on accusation of homosexuality. The revulsion of feeling against him in England and America was violent, and the aesthetic movement itself suffered a severe blow.

His two years in jail led Wilde to write two emotionally high-pitched works, his poem ***The Ballad of Reading Gaol*** (1898) and his prose confession ***De Profundis*** (1905), in which he said: "The gods had given me almost everything. I had a genius, a distinguished name, high social position, brilliancy, intellectual daring… I treated art as supreme reality and life as a mere mode of fiction… But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease…Tired of living on the heights, I deliberately went to the depths in the search for new sensation. What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion… I ended in horrible disgrace. There is only one thing for me now, absolute humility." After leaving jail, Wilde, a ruined man, immigrated to France, where he lived out the last three years of his life under an assumed name. He had been declared a bankrupt, and in France he had to rely on friends for financial support. He was buried in Paris.

11. For many years **Rudyard Kipling** (1865-1936) was one of the most popular poets who have ever lived. He was born in India and, at the age of six, was sent home to England for his education. For his first six years in England, he lived in a rigidly Calvinistic foster home. When he was twelve he was sent to a private school. His views in later life were deeply affected by the English schoolboy code of honour and duty, especially when it involved loyalty to a group or team. At seventeen he rejoined his parents in India, where his father was a teacher of sculpture at the Bombay School of Art. For seven years he lived in India as a newspaper reporter and a part-time writer before returning to England, where his poems and stories (published while he was abroad) had brought him early fame. In 1892, after his marriage to an American woman, he lived for five years in Brattleboro, Vermont. Upon returning to England, Kipling settled on a country estate. He was the first English author to own an automobile as he had a keen

interest in all kinds of machinery – one of many tastes in which he differed markedly from his contemporaries in the nineties, the aesthetes. He was also the first English author to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature (1907).

In the final decades of the 19th century, India was the most important colony of Britain's empire. English people were consequently curious about the world of India, a world that Kipling's stories and poems envisioned for them. Leonard Woolf, Virginia Woolf's husband, wrote the following about his experience in India in the early years of the 20th century: "I could never make up my mind whether Kipling had moulded his characters accurately in the image of Anglo-Indian society or whether we were moulding our characters accurately in the image of a Kipling story." During his seven years in India in the 1880s, Kipling gained a rich experience of colonial life, which he presented in his stories and poems. His first volume of stories, ***Plain Tales from the Hills*** *(*1888), explores some of the psychological and moral problems of the Anglo-Indians and their relationship with the people they had colonized. In his two ***Jungle Books*** (1894, 1895) he created a world of jungle animals. And although Kipling never professed fully to understand the way of life of the Indians themselves, or their religions, he was fascinated by them and tried to portray them with understanding. This effort is especially evident in his narrative ***Kim*** (1901), in which the contemplative and religious way of life of Indians is treated with no less sympathy than the active and worldly way of life of the Victorian English governing classes.

In his poems, Kipling also draws on the Indian scene, most commonly as it is viewed through the eyes of private soldiers of the regular army. Kipling is usually thought of as the poet of British imperialism, as indeed he often was, but in these poems about ordinary British soldiers in India, there is little glorification of the triumph of empire.

The fresh perspective of the common individual on events, expressed in the accent of the London cockney, was one of the qualities that gained Kipling an immediate audience for his ***Barrack-Room Ballads*** (1890, 1892). What attracted his audience was not just the freshness of his subjects but his mastery of swinging verse rhythms. In part he learned his craft as a poet from traditional sources. In his own family he had connections with the Pre-Raphaeltites, and he was influenced by such immediate literary predecessors as Swinburne and Browning. He was also influenced by the Protestant hymn. Both of his parents were children of Methodist clergymen, and hymn singing, as well as preaching, affected him profoundly. Another influence were the songs of the music hall. As a teenager in London, Kipling had enjoyed music-hall entertainments, which reached their peak of popularity in the 1890s. Kipling knew how to make poems that could be set to music, such as *The Road to Mandalay* or *Gentlemen Rankers,* or *The Ladies.*

Most of Kipling's best-known work was written before the death of Queen Victoria. In the 20th century, he continued to write prose and verse for thirty-six years, gaining some fresh notoriety as a result of his fierce outbursts against Germany during World War I. Some of his best post-Victorian poems are the songs in ***Puck of Pook's Hill*** **(**1906), celebrating in beautifully crafted verse the English past during the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods.

Lecture 2. English prose in the first half of the twentieth century

1. Historical overview of the epoch.
2. General characteristic of the English artistic avant-garde. Notions of modernism and stream-of-consciousness technique.
3. Joyce's analytical method and technique. *Dubliners*. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Ulysses.*
4. Virginia Woolf. *Mrs. Dalloway.*
5. Conrad's investigation of moral ambiguities in human experience. *Lord Jim.*
6. Edward Morgan Foster. *A Room with a View*.
7. Criticism of hypocrisy in modern industrialized civilization in Richard Aldington's work. *Death of a Hero*.
8. D.H.R. Lawrence.

1. The period, which for convenience we call "the twentieth century," begins really with the late nineteenth, when the sense of the passing of a major phase of English history was already in the air. Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887 and, even more, her Diamond Jubilee in 1897 were felt even by contemporaries to mark the end of an era. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, there were many manifestations of a **weakening of traditional stabilities**. The aesthetic movement, with its insistence on "art for art's sake," assaulted deliberately and provocatively the **assumptions about the nature and function of art** held by ordinary middle-class readers. It helped to widen the **breach between artists and writers** on the one hand **and the "Philistine" public** on the other—a breach an earlier symptom of which was Matthew Arnold's war on the Philistines in *Culture and Anarchy* and that was later to result in the "**alienation of the artist**," which has since become a commonplace of criticism.

The growth of popular education as a result of the Education Act of 1870, which finally made elementary education compulsory and universal, led to the rapid emergence of a large, unsophisticated literary public at whom new kinds of journalism, in particular the cheap "yellow press," were directed. A public that was literate but not in any real sense educated increased steadily throughout the nineteenth century, and one result of this was the splitting up of the audience for literature into "highbrows," "lowbrows," and "middlebrows." Although in earlier periods there had been different kinds of audience for different kinds of writing, the split now developed with unprecedented speed and to an unprecedented degree because of the mass production of "popular" literature for the semiliterate. The fragmentation of the reading public now merged with the artist's war on the Philistine (and indeed was one of the causes of that war in the first place) to widen the **gap between popular art and art esteemed only by the sophisticated and the expert**.

Another manifestation —or at least accompaniment—of the end of the Victorian age was the rise of various kinds of **pessimism and stoicism**. The novels and poetry of Thomas Hardy show one kind of pessimism, while a real or affected stoicism is to

be found in many writers of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. Examples of this stoicism—the determination to stand for human dignity by enduring bravely, whatever fate may bring—range from Robert Louis Stevenson's essays to Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books* and many of his short stories.

Although the high tide of **anti-Victorianism** was marked by the publication in 1918 of *Eminent Victorians* by Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), the criticism of the normal attitudes and preconceptions of the Victorian middle classes first became really violent in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. No one could have been more savage in attacks on the Victorian conceptions of the family, education, and religion than Samuel Butler, whose novel *The Way of All Flesh* (completed in 1884, posthumously published in 1903) is still the bitterest indictment in English literature of the Victorian way of life. The chorus of questioning of Victorian assumptions grew ever louder as the century drew to an end; sounding prominently in it was the voice of the young Bernard Shaw, one of Butler's greatest admirers.

The **position of women**, too, was rapidly changing during this period. The Married Woman's Property Act of 1882, which allowed married women to own property in their own right; the admission of women to the universities at different times during the latter part of the century; the fight for women's suffrage, which was not won until 1918 (and not fully won until 1928) —these events marked a change in the attitude toward women and in the part they played in the national life as well as in the relation between the sexes, which is reflected in a variety of ways in the literature of the period.

Politically, the crucial feature in the period was the build-up to the First World War. Germany was now unified and becoming increasingly strong, expanding its industries and in particular its navy. Britain's domination of world affairs in Victorian times was now called into question, its natural resources appeared limited compared to those of other countries, such as France and the USA, and it fell behind in education in the areas of science and technology. The rigid class system also ensured that the working classes were never made to feel they really participated in Britain's greatness. The South African war in 1899-1902, in which the rest of Europe sided with the Boers against Britain, led the government to seek agreements to ensure the balance of power within Europe, including treaties with France and Russia.

Tension in Europe increased steadily and led to the First World War. The bitter trench warfare, which characterized the First World War, leaving a total of 750,000 dead and two million seriously injured among the British alone, not only destroyed the flower of European youth but left deep scars on European life for generations. At the close of the war in 1918 Europe was shattered and exhausted, winners and losers.

The thirties reached fever pitch in the Spanish Civil War in 1936, the so-called **Poet's war** in which many of Britain's leading writers actually took an active part in fighting for the Republican side against General Franco. The failure of the cause led to a new mood of disillusionment with ideals that had once been held passionately.

2. By and large, literature before World War I viewed society as a stable unity. In the twentieth century the notion of civilization underwent a drastic redefinition. While the Europeans of the nineteenth century had assumed that technological

advancements would foster peace, prosperity and unchecked progress, artists and intellectuals of the new century not only started questioning technology's contribution to the humanity on moral and ethical grounds, but they also began to allocate "progress" to the realm of myth. Writers like Joyce focused on the dissolution of the world order.

The major artistic movement of reaction to social disintegration acquired the name of "**Modernism**". The years 1912 to 1930 were the **Heroic Age of the modern novel**, the age of Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster.

One can trace **three major influences** on the changes in attitude and technique in the fiction of this period. The first is the novelists' realization that the general hack-ground of belief that united them with their public in a common sense of what was significant in experience had disappeared. The public values of the Victorian novel, in which major crises of plot could be shown through changes in the social or financial or marital status of the chief characters, gave way to **more personally conceived notions of value**, dependent on the novelists' own intuitions and sensibilities rather than on public agreement. A new technical burden was thus imposed on the novelist's prose, for it had now to build up a world of values instead of drawing on an existing world of values.

The second influence on the changes in attitude and technique in the modern novel was a **new view of time**; time was not a series of chronological moments to be presented by the novelist in sequence with an occasional deliberate retrospect ("this reminded him of," "she recalled that") but a continuous flow in the consciousness of the individual, with retrospect merging into anticipation. This influence is closely bound up with a third; the **new notions of the nature of consciousness**, which derived in a general way from the pioneer explorations of the subconscious by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961), but were also part of the spirit of the age and discernible even in those novelists who had not read either of these psychologists. Consciousness is multiple; the past is always present in it at some level and is continually colouring one's present reaction. The view that we are our memories, that our present is the sum of our past, that if we dig into the human consciousness we can tell the whole truth about people without waiting for a chronological sequence of time to take them through a series of testing circumstances, inevitably led to a technical revolution in the novel. For now, by exploring in depth into consciousness and memory rather than proceeding lengthwise along the dimension of time, a novelist could write a novel concerned ostensibly with only one day of the protagonist's life (Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*). This view of multiple levels of consciousness existing simultaneously, coupled with the view of time as a constant flow rather than a series of separate moments, meant that novelists preferred to plunge into the consciousness of their characters in order to tell their stories rather than to provide external frameworks of chronological narrative.

The "**stream-of-consciousness**" technique, in which the author tries to render directly the very fabric of a character's consciousness without reporting it in formal, quoted remarks, was developed in the 1920s as an important new technique of the

English novel. It was developed more or less independently by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, though the forerunners of the technique were Laurence Sterne, Samuel Richardson, Henry James, George Meredith and many other English novelists. The term was introduced by the American philosopher W. James, who thought that stream of consciousness was a river where all thoughts, feelings, ideas, and sudden associations were mixed without any logical explanation. In this form, the writer attempts to create the illusion of actual thought processes, depicting the free flow of a character's thoughts through an equally free association of words, without any explicit connection. The reader must try to follow the characters as they drift through a succession of ideas, memories and sensations. Joyce called the stream-of-consciousness technique a "stream of life".

It made for more difficult reading, at least for those accustomed only to the methods of the older English novel. No "porch" was constructed at the front of the novel to put the reader in possession of necessary preliminary information: such information emerged, as the novel progressed, from the consciousness of each character as it responded to the present with echoes of its past. No conventional signposts were put up to tell readers where they were, for that was believed to interfere with the immediacy of the impression. But once readers learn how to find their way in this territory, they are rewarded by new delicacies of perception and new subtleties of presentation.

Modernism came from a conviction that the previous structures of every aspect of human life had been shattered or exposed to their falsehood. Unity and sequence of works of art was considered as a mere wish for order and consistency, not reflections of the real world. The established literary forms and their integral parts, such as exposition, development, climax and resolution, were thought to be unnatural, not revealing the changeability and fragmentation of life. Compared with other literary movements, modernism is notable for what it leaves out: explications, links, summaries that were characteristic of traditional, established literature.

A representative modernist work would begin casually and unpredictably, no explanation would follow, nor would any solution finish it. It would present some fragments set side by side and not sufficiently, as compared to earlier periods, interconnected. The narrative would be more suggestive than assertive, bringing into play various images and their symbolic representations rather than statements. The dynamic of a modernist work is often hidden underneath. The reader himself is expected to uncover the logical relation of the bits and pieces.

Concentration on the stream of consciousness and on the association of ideas within the individual consciousness led inevitably to **stress on the essential loneliness of the individual**. For all consciousnesses are unique and isolated, and if this unique, private world is the real world in which we live, if the public values are not the real values that give meaning to our personalities, then we are all condemned to live in the prison of our own incommunicable consciousness. The public gestures imposed on us by society never correspond to our real inward needs. They are conventional, mechanical, imposing a crude standardization on the infinite subtlety of experience. If we do try to give out a sign from our real selves, that sign is bound to be misunderstood when read by some other self in the light of that self's quite other

personality. The **theme of such modern fiction** is thus the impossibility of love, the establishment of emotional communication, in a community of private consciousnesses. This is, in different ways, the theme of Joyce, of Lawrence, of Woolf, of Forster, and of Conrad. The search for communion and the inescapable isolation of Leopold Bloom in *Ulysses* is symbolic of the human condition as seen by the modern novelist.

After the various narrative techniques developed over two centuries of the novel, the stream of consciousness may come as something of a shock. Non-native speakers of English are likely to have difficulty following this free association (not least because they come from a different culture, and speak a different language in which words and concepts have different resonance and associations). That said, even native speaker do not find Joyce particularly easy.

Below is an example, from *Ulysses* to give some flavour of the technique.

(*Leopold Bloom is making breakfast and is about to give some milk to the cat*):

"Mrkgnao! the cat cried.

They call them stupid. They understand what we say better than we understand them. She understands all she wants to. Vindictive too. Wonder what I look like to her. Height of a tower? No, she can jump me.

Afraid of the chickens she is, he said mockingly. Afraid of the chookchooks. I never saw such a stupid pussens as the pussens.

Cruel. Her nature. Curious mice never squeal. Seem to like it."

Now, here is what this passage might look like if all the connections were made explicit, along the lines of a traditional narrator.

"The cat miaowed. Mr Bloom thought: People call cats stupid, but in reality they understand what human beings say better than we understand them. This cat understands everything she wants to. She's vindictive too. I wonder what I look like to her. Do I seem very high, like a tower? No, because (I know) this cat can jump up on me.

[...] But this cat is cruel. It's her nature to be cruel. It's funny that when she catches a mouse it doesn't squeal. Mice seem to like being caught."

This is a very simple example, and of course Joyce honed the technique into a powerfully expressive tool, capable of rendering subtle distinctions of character and mood.

4. **Virginia Woolf** (1882-1941) was the daughter of the celebrated Victorian critic and biographer Sir Leslie Stephen. She never went to school but was educated at home, and, after her father's death in 1904, she and her sister Vanessa became leading figures in the so-called Bloomsbury Group, an avant-garde circle based at the Stephen sisters' home in Bloomsbury, an area of London, and concerned with social issues, anti-imperialism and feminism.

Her first novels were fairly conventional, but she became increasingly interested in understanding and describing characters from within and in capturing the true nature of human consciousness, so her later works became increasingly experimental in their technique.

Although Virginia Woolf's novels suffer a little from the limited middle-class environment, which was the only one she had experienced, her perceptive

experiments in literary technique are striking, and her analysis of them lucid and cogent. She wanted to **revolutionize the sense of plot** and criticized more solid, traditional novelists such as H.G. Wells, Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett for their obsession with inessential details which often seemed to be the main basis for their novels and described them as "materialists" for being concerned more with the material aspects of life than with the subtleties of inward experience. She felt that novels should be based on the writer's own feelings, not conventional descriptions.

Technically Virginia Woolf makes no attempt to preserve the outlines of chronological events, but breaks down human experience into a series of impressions: these, however, are never drown in shapeless experimentation with form because the author keeps control of structure and pattern so that the meaning emerges through the interaction of images and impressions. She paid close attention to new developments in painting and the shifting perspectives in her later novels seem to have something of the quality of visual art. In the concluding paragraph of her essay *Modem Fiction* she wrote, "The proper stuff of fiction does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss." She also mused on the idea of inventing a new name for the form of her books to replace the word "novel".

Other important influences were the philosopher Bergson's notion of "duration" or psychological time and the role of memory and association in works such as Marcel Proust's cycle *A la recherche du temps perdu.* She developed a stream of consciousness technique rather similar to that of Joyce, but quite independently. The sketches in which she explored the possibilities of moving between action and contemplation, between specific external events in time and delicate tracings of the flow of consciousness where the mind moves between retrospect and anticipation, were collected in *Monday or Tuesday* (1921).

Her technical experiments made possible those later novels in which her characteristic method is fully developed—***Jacob's Room*** (1922); ***Mrs. Dalloway*** (1925), the first completely successful novel in her "new" style; ***To the Lighthouse*** (1927); ***The Waves*** (1931), and ***Between the Acts*** (1941), published after her death. Using the stream of consciousness technique, in her novels she explored with great subtlety problems of personal identity and personal relationships as well as the significance of time, change, and memory for human personality.

Woolf was increasingly concerned with the position of women, especially professional women, and the constrictions they suffered under. She wrote several essays on the subject, notably in ***A Room of One's Own*** (1929) and ***Three Guineas*** (1938).

5. A great paradox of English fiction is that one of its supreme masters, **Joseph Conrad** (1857-1924) was born in Ukraine, of Polish parents, was totally ignorant of the English language until he was 21 years old, and to the end of his life spoke English with a thick foreign accent. Conrad was as much a pessimist as Hardy, but he expressed his pessimism in subtler ways.

His name was Jozef Teodor Conrad Korzeniowski and he came from an aristocratic family: his father was a translator and writer and also a leader of the Polish nationalists. They moved to Warsaw in 1861, where Conrad's father was

arrested after the insurrection of 1863 and exiled. Thus Conrad was orphaned at 11 years of age and was looked after by a rich uncle. At 16 he went to France to begin a career as a ship's officer: he had inherited a romantic temperament and longing for adventure from his father. In 1874 he was involved in gun-running activities and attempted suicide after an unhappy love affair. By some miracle the bullet went straight through his body and out the other side, missing his heart. In 1878, he made a new start by going to England and joining a merchant ship. Incredibly, this was where he began to learn the English he was to use so tellingly in his fiction. He became a naturalized British subject and in 1884 he gained his master's certificate.

Conrad spent sixteen years at sea, rising to be captain of his own ship and in 1889 began his first novel, ***Almayer's Folly***. The novel was shown to John Galsworthy, who encouraged the sailor to continue writing. In 1890 he made a trip to the Belgian Congo which was to provide the source material for one of his best known works, the novella ***Heart of Darkness***, published in 1899. He returned sick and disillusioned, having undergone a spiritual crisis. He finally gave up the sea in 1894 and devoted himself to a literary career, marrying in 1896 and frequenting distinguished friends such as Henry James, H.G. Wells and Ford Madox Ford. Writing was always difficult for Conrad, who once said that he wrote in English, thought in French, and dreamed in Polish. He was a slow and meticulous worker, but nevertheless produced a long series of works, including the story ***The Nigger of the Narcissus*** (1897), and the novels ***Lord Jim*** (1900), ***Nostromo*** (1904), ***The Secret Agent*** (1906) and ***Under Western Eyes*** (1910). For much of his life he had lived in poverty, but the publication of ***Chance*** in 1912 brought him success, although critics do not consider this work as good as those from the first decade of the century. His last first-class work was ***Victory*** (1914).

Conrad's work is closely related to his own life, but it is remarkable for the intense artistic transformation that his experience undergoes in his works, each novel or story creating its own unique form and technique. In his preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* he wrote: "A work that aspires, however humbly, to the condition of art should carry its justification in every line. And art may itself be defined as a single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of visible justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect. It is an attempt to find in its forms, in its colours, in its light, in its shadows, in the aspects of matter and in the facts of life what is fundamental, what is enduring and essential – their one illuminating and convincing quality –the very truth of their existence".

Conrad was for a long time regarded as a sea writer whose exotic descriptions of eastern landscapes gave his work a special kind of splendor. But this is only one aspect of his work. He used the sea and the circumstances of life on shipboard or in remote eastern settlements as means of exploring certain profound moral ambiguities in human experience. In 1914, Conrad declared: "Polonism I have taken into my works from Mickiewicz and Slowacki", mentioning by name the two greatest Polish writers, and also the moral and political authorities, of Polish romanticism. Conrad transferred the traditional themes of Polish literature to his writings in English: ideas of responsibility, fidelity and betrayal, honour and shame, duty and escape. The passage "from alienation to commitment", recognized as a frequent theme in

Conrad's fiction, has been a staple subject in Polish romantic literature. The moral problem of an individual were typically posed in terms of communal obligations; and ethical principles, formed under a decisive influence of chivalric ethos, were grounded in the idea that an individual, however exceptional he may be, is always a member of community. In *The Nigger of the "Narcissus*" he shows how a dying black seaman corrupts the morale of the ship's crew by the very fact that his plight produces sympathy, thus symbolically presenting one of his commonest themes – **the necessity and at the same time the dangers of human contact**. In *Lord Jim* he probes the meaning of a gross failure of duty on the part of a romantic and idealistic young sailor, and by presenting the hero's history from different points of view he keeps the moral questioning continuing to the end. The use of **intermediate narrators** and **multiple points of view** is common in Conrad; it is his favourite way of suggesting the complexity of experience and the difficulty of judging human actions.

This notion of difficulty of true communion, coupled with the idea that the communion can be forced on us – sometimes with someone who seems to be our moral opposite but who later we may recognize as our true self – is found in many of Conrad's works, e.g. in *The Secret Shorer*

Other stories and novels explore the ways in which the codes we live by are tested in moments of crisis, revealing either their inadequacy or our own. *Under Western Eyes* is the story of a Russian student who becomes involuntarily associated with antigovernment violence in czarist Russia and is maneuvered by circumstances into a position where, though a government spy, he has to pretend to be a revolutionary among revolutionaries. This is the ultimate in human loneliness - when you must consistently pretend to be the opposite of what you are.

Lord Jim has been called Conrad's *Hamlet*. It is a complex tragedy of an indecisive man of great inherent nobility who nevertheless, with "the stamp of one defect", manages to bring death and destruction upon those he loves. In form, this novel of Conrad's greatest period is no less rich and complicated than *Hamlet*. Using constant changes of point of view, narrations within narrations, kaleidoscopic time shifts, and other highly sophisticated fictional techniques Conrad weaves around the incident of Conrad's desertion of the Patna a complex moral skein. A basically simple adventure yarn thus becomes a great parable of man's fate. As in the greatest tragedies, Jim's character haunted by the sin of his past and lost in search for absolution brings the ultimate catastrophe down upon him.

Story overview. Spotlessly clean and immaculately dressed, Jim at first glass is more prepossessing than any other water-clerk in the Eastern ports. But the job, which entails rowing out in a small boat to sell ship's supplies to vessels reaching port, does not agree with him, for after doing satisfactory work for a while he will suddenly and mysteriously take off for a distant port. Charles Marlow, an experienced old sailor, is intrigued by the tall blond English lad with a haunted look. Although Jim, the son of a country parson, seemed to all "the right kind", a gentleman, he was involved in the disgraceful Patna affair, which Marlow learns about while attending the Court of Inquiry investigating the case.

Twice in Jim's apprenticeship to the sea he had shown moments of indecisiveness that could easily have been interpreted as cowardice. Then he ships aboard the Patna, an old vessel commanded by a drunken, cowardly old captain, and carrying eight hundred Malayan pilgrims. The crew, with the exception of Jim, is rough, disorderly, and mercenary. Jim is the only gentleman aboard. One night, while the pilgrims are sleeping in squalor on the deck of an overcrowded ship, the Patna runs into an unidentified submerged object. One of the officers spreads the word that the ship is about to sink. With only seven lifeboats aboard, there is no hope of saving any of the eight hundred Malayans in the mad scramble that would follow a general alarm. The crew jump into the lifeboats, without even sounding an alarm lest the pilgrims awaken and panic. Jim is shocked at the crew's cowardice bur when the captain and crew call to him from the lifeboats he impulsively jumps, not because he is afraid of dying but because he visualizes how helpless he would be when the horrified pilgrims awaken. The lifeboats reach shore and tell the appalled British colonials what happened. The colonials had expected nothing better from the captain and crew but are embarrassed that Jim, one of them, should also have behaved so dishonourably. They even offer him money to flee before the Court of Inquiry meets, but Jim proudly insists on taking the consequences of his cowardly action. It is this stubborn sense of his worth as a man responsible for his acts that attracts Marlow to the sailor. Ironically enough, the Patna does not sink after all, but just drifts until she is spotted by a French gunboat and taken into port. Nevertheless, the court deprives all the officers of the Patna of their sailing certificates and closes its hearings.

Gradually Marlow manages to make friends with Jim. He sees in the young sailor a mirror of what might well have happened to him in the crises he has somehow managed to survive. He gets Jim a job with the owner of a rice mill. For a time Jim seems well-suited to his work. But one day a former officer of the Patna shows up, at this reminder of his disgrace, Jim bolts without saying a word. He leaves one job after another, constantly heading east in the hope that somewhere far enough from civilization his disgrace will not be known. Marlow, beginning to despair that Jim will ever fond peace and salvation for his troubled soul, goes to visit an old German friend, Stein, head of Stein and Company, who is also an ardent butterfly collector and an amateur philosopher. Stein diagnoses Jim's trouble immediately: Jim is a romantic, unrealistic about human limitations, with too noble a concept of himself, and thus he cannot forgive himself for his momentary, all-too-human lapse into cowardice. Stein's solution for Jim's problem is to send him to the remote island Patusan, where Stein and Company have a trading post. Stein gives Jim a ring to present as identification to his old friend Doramin, an island chieftain.

On the island Jim at first runs into trouble: he is jailed by a tyrannical rajah who is fearful of the trade competition Jim may bring. Jim escapes from prison and Doramin helps him defeat the rajah in a pitched battle. Jim falls in love with Jewel, the beautiful daughter of Cornelius, his corrupt predecessor in Stein's employ. When Marlow pays Jim a visit two years later, all seems to be going well. Jewel loves Jim and cannot imagine that her strong, respected lover could never find acceptance in the outside world. To the natives, Jim has become a hero for defeating the hated rajah and bringing prosperity to the island. They call him "Tuan" or "Lord".

Trouble comes to the island in the person of "Gentleman" Brown, a pirate who harbours his boat in Patusan, hoping to find provisions, money, and sanctuary. Jim is on a trip up the river when Brown and his crew attack the stockade, temporarily commanded by Dain Waris, Doramin's son. The natives manage to repel the attack and to drive Brown and his crew to take shelter on a hilltop. When Jim returns from his expedition, he goes himself, at a considerable risk, to interview Brown. Brown begs Jim for a chance to escape –after all, did not Jim ever need a second chance in life? The words hit home. Jim returns down the hill and persuades the natives to lift the siege. They do so reluctantly. Brown repays Jim's benevolence by slaughtering several natives, including Dain Waris. Heartsick at what he considers his second betrayal, Jim presents himself before Doramin. Native justice demands that Jim be punished for the slaying of Dain Waris, which was the result of his own misjudgment of character. Stoically he allows the heartbroken old chieftain to shoot him through the chest. His tragic death, Marlow believes, was the only possible salvation for Jim, the only way to recapture his lost honour.

6. **Edward Morgan Forster (**1879-1970) was born in London, and attended King's College, Cambridge (1897-1901), where he met members of the later-formed Bloomsbury group. In the atmosphere of skepticism, he shed his not-very-deep Christian faith. After graduating, Forster travelled in Italy and Greece with his mother and on his return began to write essays and short stories for the liberal *Independent Review*. In 1905 Foster spent several months in German as tutor to the children of the Countess von Armin.

With King's he had a lifelong connection and was elected to an Honorary Fellowship in 1946. He declared that his life as a whole had not been dramatic, and he was unfailingly modest about his achievements. Interviewed by the BBC on his eightieth birthday, he said: "I have not written as much as I'd like to... I write for two reasons: partly to make money and partly to win the respect of people whom I respect... I had better add that I am quite sure I am not a great novelist." Eminent critics and the general public have judged otherwise and in his obituary *The Times* called him "one of the most esteemed English novelists of his time."

Forster had five novels published in his lifetime and one more, *Maurice*, appeared shortly after his death although it was written nearly sixty years earlier. Forster often criticized in his books Victorian middle class attitudes and British colonialism through strong woman characters. However, Forster's characters were not one-dimensional heroes and villains, and except for his devotion to such values as tolerance and sense of comedy, he was uncommitted.

His first novel, ***Where Angels Fear to Tread*** (1905), is the story of Lilia, a young English widow who falls in love with an Italian in spite of the efforts of her bourgeois relatives to get her back from Monteriano. The mission of Philip Herriton to retrieve her from Italy has something in common with that of Lambert Stretcher in Henry James's *The Ambassadors*, a work Forster discussed ironically and somewhat negatively in his book ***Aspects of the Novel*** (1927). *Where the Angels Fear to Tread* ends tragically: the main heroine dies in childbirth, and the Herritons obtain custody of the infant so that he can be raised as an Englishman.

The second novel, ***The Longest Journey*** (1907), is an inverted bildungsroman following the lame Rickie Elliott from Cambridge to a career as a struggling writer and then a school master, married to the unappetizing Agnes Pembroke.

Forster's third novel, ***A Room with a View*** (1908), is his lightest and most optimistic. It is Foster's most widely read work, remaining popular for a century since its original publication. The book is the story of young Lucy Honeychurch's trip to Italy with her cousin, and the choice she must make between the free-thinking George Emerson and the repressed aesthete Cecil Vyse. George's father Mr. Emerson quotes thinkers who were influential on Forster including Samuel Butler. *Where the Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View* can be seen collectively as Forster's Italian novels. Both include references to the famous Baedeker guidebooks and concern narrow-minded middle-class English tourists. Italy is used as a convenient background to criticize English morals and values. English society, especially in *Where the Angels Fear to Tread*, is portrayed as matriarchal, while the Italian society is shown as patriarchal.

Foster often features characters attempting to understand each other across social barriers. Two of his novels, ***Howards End*** (1910) and ***A Passage to India*** (1924)**,** explore the irreconcilability of class differences.

Foster's novel ***Maurice*** (1914), published posthumously in 1971, tells the story of Maurice Hall from his school days through university and beyond, and explores the possibility of reconciling class differences as part of a homosexual relationship. Sexuality is another key theme in Foster's work and his writing can be characterized as moving from heterosexual to homosexual love. Another characteristic of his work is his usage of symbols and attachment to mysticism.

Other works by Foster include short stories, which were collected in ***The Celestial Omnibus*** (1914); the film script, ***A Diary for Timothy***; a libretto of ***Billy Budd*** (based on Melville's novel, for opera by Britten); literary criticism; travel writings; essays. His firm opposition to prejudice, racism, and totalitarianism has seldom been better expressed than in his essays ***Two Cheers for Democracy*** and ***What I Believe*** which are the credo of a man who in the age of increasing uniformity insists upon the rights and sanctity of the individual and the importance of the personal life.

For the remaining forty-six years of his life, Forster devoted himself to other activities as writing novels was not the most important element in his life. He contributed reviews and essays to numerous journals, most notably the *Listener*. In the 1930s and 1940s Forster became a successful broadcaster on BBC In 1934 he became the first president of the National Council for Civil Liberties. In 1949 Forster refused a knighthood. After his mother's death in 1945 he accepted an honorary fellowship at King's College and lived for the most part in the college doing little. In 1969 he accepted an Order of Merit.

7. **Richard Aldington** (1892-1962) was a poet, novelist, critic, and biographer who wrote of what he considered to be **hypocrisy in modern industrialized civilization**. He is best known for his World War I poetry, the 1929 novel *Death of a Hero*, and the controversy arising from his 1955 *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical*

Inquiry. His 1946 biography, *Wellington*, was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for that year.

Aldington was born in Portsmouth, the son of a solicitor, and educated at Dover College, and for a year at the University of London. He was unable to complete his degree because of the financial circumstances of his family. He met the poet Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), the American Imagist poet, in 1911 and they married two years later.

His poetry was associated with the Imagist group, and his work forms almost one third of the Imagists' inaugural anthology Des Imagistes (1914). Ezra Pound had in fact coined the term imagists for H.D. and Aldington, in 1912.

He joined the army in 1916, was commissioned in the Royal Sussexs in 1917 and was wounded on the Western Front. Aldington never completely recovered from his war experiences, and was likely suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

He went into self-imposed 'exile' from England in 1928 and lived in Paris for years.

Death of a Hero, published in 1929, was his literary response to the war, commended by Lawrence Durrell as "the best war novel of the epoch". He went on to publish several works of fiction.

In 1930 he published a bawdy translation of *The Decameron*. In 1942, having moved to the United States with his new wife Netta Patmore, he began to write biographies. The first was one of Wellington (*The Duke: Being an Account of the Life & Achievements of Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington*, 1943). It was followed by works on D. H. Lawrence (*Portrait of a Genius, But...*, 1950), Robert Louis Stevenson (*Portrait of a Rebel*, 1957), and T. E. Lawrence (*Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Inquiry*, 1955).

Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Inquiry was Aldington's biography of T.E. Lawrence was an uncompromising attack on the latter which caused a scandal on its publication, and an immediate backlash. He attacked Lawrence as a liar and a charlatan, claims which have coloured Lawrence's reputation ever since. Aldington's own reputation has never fully recovered from what came to be seen as a venomous attack upon Lawrence's reputation. Many believed that Aldington's suffering in the bloodbath of Europe during World War I caused him to resent Lawrence's reputation, gained in the Middle Eastern arena.

Aldington died in France on 27 July 1962, shortly after being honoured in Moscow on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. In the U.S.S.R. Aldington became a best-seller. His politics had in fact moved far towards the right — opinions he shared with Lawrence Durrell, a close friend since the 1950s — but he had felt shut out by the British establishment after his T. E. Lawrence book. He lived in Provence, at Montpellier and Aix-en-Provence.

On 11 November 1985, Aldington was among 16 Great War poets commemorated on a slate stone unveiled in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. The inscription on the stone was written by a fellow Great War poet, Wilfred Owen. It reads: "My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity."

Aldington's contribution is difficult to assess. His best and best known novel, *Death of a Hero* (1929), to which *All Men Are Enemies* (1933) was a sequel, reflected

the disillusionment of a generation that had fought through World War I. In *The Colonel's Daughter* (1931) he satirized sham gentility and literary preciousness so outspokenly that two lending libraries refused to handle the novel. However, in his long poems *A Dream in the Luxembourg* (1930) and *A Fool i' the Forest* (1925) he inveighed against the mechanization of modern man more lyrically, with bittersweet romanticism. His translations from ancient Greek and Latin poets revealed his love for earlier civilizations. His book of reminiscences, *Life for Life's Sake,* was published in 1941.

8. David Herbert Richards Lawrence (1885-1930) was an English author, poet, playwright, essayist and literary critic. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, human sexuality and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile he called his "savage pilgrimage." At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as, "The greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the influential Cambridge critic F.R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence's fiction within the canonical "great tradition" of the English novel. Lawrence is now generally valued as a visionary thinker and significant representative of modernism in English literature, although some feminists object to the attitudes toward women and sexuality found in his works.

The fourth child of a barely literate miner, and a former schoolmistress, Lawrence spent his formative years in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. His working class background and the tensions between his parents provided the raw material for a number of his early works. Lawrence would return to this locality, which he was to call "the country of my heart," as a setting for much of his fiction.

He left school in 1901, working for three months as a junior clerk at Haywood's surgical appliances factory before a severe bout of pneumonia ended this career. In 1902-1906 Lawrence served as a pupil teacher at the British School, Eastwood. He received a teaching certificate from University College of Nottingham in 1908. During these early years he was working on his first poems, some short stories, and a draft of a novel that was eventually to become *The White Peacock.* At the end of 1907 he won a short story competition in the Nottingham Guardian.

In the autumn of 1908 Lawrence left his childhood home for London. Some of the early poetry came to the attention of Ford Madox Ford, editor of the influential *The English Review*. With the publication of the story ***Odour of Chrysanthemums*** his career as a professional author began in earnest, although he taught for a further year. Shortly after his novel ***The White Peacock*** appeared in 1910, Lawrence's mother died. His grief following her death became a major turning point in his life, just as the

death of Mrs. Morel forms a major turning point in his autobiographical novel *Sons and Lovers*, a work that draws upon much of the writer's provincial upbringing.

A teaching colleague, Helen Corke, gave Lawrence access to her intimate diaries about an unhappy love affair, which formed the basis of ***The Trespasser***, his second novel. In 1912, after recovering his health from pneumonia, Lawrence abandoned teaching in order to become a full time author. The same year Lawrence met Frieda Weekley, with whom he was to share the rest of his life. She was six years older than he, married to Lawrence's former modern languages professor from Nottingham University, and with three young children. She eloped with Lawrence to her parents' home in Metz, a garrison town then in Germany near the disputed border with France. Their stay here included Lawrence's first brush with militarism, when he was arrested and accused of being a British spy, before being released following an intervention from Frieda Weekley's father. After this encounter Lawrence left for a small hamlet to the south of Munich, where he was joined by Frieda for their "honeymoon," later memorialized in the series of love poems entitled ***Look! We Have Come Through*** (1917).

From Germany they walked southwards across the Alps to Italy, a journey that was recorded in the first of his travel books, a collection of linked essays entitled ***Twilight in Italy*** and the unfinished novel, ***Mr Noon***. During his stay in Italy, Lawrence completed the final version of ***Sons and Lovers*** that, when published in 1913, was acknowledged to represent a vivid portrait of the **realities of working class provincial life**. It is largely autobiographical. Paul Morel, a poet and painter, like the author, was reared in a working-class home. His talent assisted him towards culture and artistic achievement. Here he was helped by his adoring mother and his friend Miriam who fully shared his passion for nature and beauty.

In Italy, he started writing the first draft of a work of fiction that was to be transformed into two of his better-known novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. Eventually, Frieda obtained her divorce. The couple returned to England at the outbreak of World War I and were married on 13 July 1914.

Frieda's German parentage and Lawrence's open contempt for militarism meant that they were viewed with suspicion in wartime England and lived in near destitution. ***The Rainbow*** (1915) was suppressed after an investigation into its alleged obscenity in 1915. Later, they were even accused of spying and signaling to German submarines off of the coast of Cornwall where they lived at Zennor. During this period he finished ***Women in Love***. In it Lawrence explores the **destructive features of contemporary civilization** through the evolving relationships of four major characters as they reflect upon the value of the arts, politics, economics, sexual experience, friendship and marriage. This book is a bleak, bitter vision of humanity and proved impossible to publish in wartime conditions. Not published until 1920, it is now widely recognised as an English novel of great dramatic force and intellectual subtlety.

In late 1917, after constant harassment by the military authorities, Lawrence was forced to leave Cornwall. This persecution was later described in an autobiographical chapter of his Australian novel ***Kangaroo*** (1923). Until 1919 he was

compelled by poverty to shift from address to address and barely survived a severe attack of influenza.

After the traumatic experience of the war years, Lawrence began what he termed his “savage pilgrimage”, a time of voluntary exile. He escaped from England at the earliest opportunity, to return only twice for brief visits, and with his wife spent the remainder of his life travelling. This wanderlust took him to Australia, Italy, Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka), North America, Mexico and southern France.

Many of these places appeared in his writings. New novels included ***The Lost Girl*** (for which he won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction), ***Aaron's Rod***. He experimented with shorter novels or novellas, such as ***The Captain's Doll, The Fox*** and ***The Ladybird***. In addition, some of his short stories were issued in the collection ***England, My England and Other Stories***. During these years he produced a number of poems about the natural world in ***Birds, Beasts and Flowers***. Lawrence is widely recognized as one of the finest travel writers in the English language, e.g. ***Sea and Sardinia***. Other non-fiction books include two studies of Freudian psychoanalysis and ***Movements in European History***, a school textbook that was published under a pseudonym, a reflection of his blighted reputation in England.

While in the U.S., Lawrence rewrote and published ***Studies in Classic American Literature***, a set of critical essays begun in 1917. These interpretations, with their insights into symbolism, New England Transcendentalism and the puritan sensibility, were a significant factor in the revival of the reputation of Herman Melville during the early 1920s. In addition, Lawrence completed a number of new fictional works, including ***The Boy in the Bush***, ***The Plumed Serpent***, ***St Mawr***, ***The Woman who Rode Away***, ***The Princess*** and assorted short stories.

In March 1925 he suffered a near fatal attack of malaria and tuberculosis while on a third visit to Mexico. Although he eventually recovered, the diagnosis of his condition obliged him to return once again to Europe. He was dangerously ill and poor health limited his ability to travel for the remainder of his life.

The Lawrences made their home in a villa in Northern Italy while he wrote ***The Virgin and the Gipsy*** and the various versions of ***Lady Chatterley’s Lover*** (1928). The latter book, his last major novel, was initially published in private editions in Florence and Paris and reinforced his notoriety. Lawrence responded robustly to those who claimed to be offended, penning a large number of satirical poems, published under the title of *“**Pansies**"* and *"**Nettles**"*, as well as a tract on ***Pornography and Obscenity***.

Lawrence continued to produce fiction, including short stories and ***The Escaped Cock*** (also published as *The Man Who Died*), an unorthodox reworking of the story of Jesus Christ’s Resurrection. His last significant work was a reflection on the Book of Revelation, ***Apocalypse***.

Besides novels, Lawrence wrote many short stories. Among his most praised collections, ***The Prussian Officer and Other Stories***, published in 1916, provides insight into Lawrence's attitudes during World War I. His collection ***The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*** (1928), develops his themes of leadership that he also explored in novels such as ***Kangaroo, The Plumed Serpent*** and ***Fanny and Annie***.

Lawrence died at the Villa Robermond in Vence, France due to complications from tuberculosis. Frieda Weekley returned to live on the ranch in Taos and later her third husband brought Lawrence's ashes to rest there in a small chapel set amid the mountains of New Mexico.

The obituaries following Lawrence's death were, with the notable exception of E. M. Forster, unsympathetic or hostile. A number of feminist critics have questioned Lawrence's sexual politics, and this questioning has damaged his reputation in some quarters since then. However, though he held views espousing feminism the evidence of his written works does indicate an overwhelming commitment to representing women as strong, independent and complex. He produced major works in which young, self-directing female characters were central.

Lawrence is best known for his novels ***Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow, Women in Love*** and ***Lady Chatterley's Lover***. Within these Lawrence explores the possibilities for life and living within an industrial setting. Though often classed as a realist, Lawrence's use of his characters can be better understood with reference to his philosophy. His use of sexual activity, though shocking at the time, has its roots in his highly personal way of thinking and being.

Lawrence was one of the very first among English writers to be absolutely outspoken on questions of love and sex; he looked upon sex as the chief factor shaping human existence. Disappointed, disgusted with social life and with social man, Lawrence sought escape in the world of nature and instinctive, unconscious feelings. "My great religion," he said, "is a belief in the blood, the flesh as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle." Lawrence was very interested in human touch behaviour and his interest in physical intimacy has its roots in a desire to restore our emphasis on the body, and re-balance it with what he perceived to be western civilization's over-emphasis on the mind. Lawrence firmly believed that the evils of an unjust and corrupt society could be mitigated if men and women found warmth and happiness in love. The sufferings brought upon lovers by a cruel social law or, more often, by the clash of their conflicting wills, by the hatred and revolt that sometimes go hand in hand with love, are **the main subjects** of Lawrence's novels. His best books are his earliest, written before his style became increasingly naturalistic.

Lawrence continued throughout his life to develop his highly personal philosophy, many aspects of which would prefigure the counterculture of the 1960s. In fact, he was referenced in one of the most iconic films about 1960s counterculture *Easy Rider*. As his philosophy develops, Lawrence moves away from more direct Christian analogies and instead touches upon Mysticism, Buddhism, and Pagan theologies. In some respects, Lawrence was a forerunner of the growing interest in the occult that occurred in the twentieth century, though he would have identified himself as a Christian.

Lecture 3. American literature after the Civil War

1. General overview of the epoch.
2. "Local color", realism and Naturalism.

3. Harriet Beecher Stowe. *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

4. O.Henry's short stories.

5. Mark Twain's work. The typical motif of Mark Twain's writing. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn:* themes, symbolism, criticism of American reality.

6. Henry James as a writer of the "international novel". Characterization of the Europeans and the Americans. *The Ambassadors* .

7. Realism and romanticism in Jack London's work.

8. Naturalism in Theodore Dreiser's work. *An American Tragedy*: composition, characters, criticism of the American dream.

1. American society after the Civil War was characterized be massive industrialization in the North and an astonishing growth in population. In a process comparable to the Industrial Revolution in Britain, American industry became more highly mechanized. Machines were used in ever greater numbers and businesses were able to charge lower prices for the range of new products available: the typewriter (1867), the telephone (1876), the phonograph (1877) and the gasoline automobile (1885) made their first appearance in this period. The last one had an enormous impact on American society, and by 1916 no less than 3.5 million people owed a car –as opposed to only 8,000 in 1900. Business was booming and the role of business owners in the political decision-making process was to become ever more important as time progressed.

Economic growth was in part facilitated by a growing domestic market. By 1916 America's population had more than doubled its 1870 level of 40 million to almost 100 million. Immigration was a prime factor in the population growth: more than 25 million people entered America between 1870 and 1920. Immigrants arriving in the "Promised Land" provided both cheap labour power and a market of consumers. During what Mark Twain called "**The Gilded Age**", many individuals amassed huge fortunes and attempted to imitate the culture and manners of their upper-class European counterparts. The growing ranks of America's middle class also shared in the enormous quantity of wealth generated by the boom. The working class, however, lived in great poverty in crowded slums and tenement houses with little or no sanitation. Unemployment due to labour surplus only aggravated their wretched conditions during the depressions of 1873, 1884, 1893 and 1907.

It was not until the 1890s that politicians truly set about solving the problems afflicting society at that time. During what is frequently referred to as the "**Progressive Era**" (1890-1917), reformers succeeded in bringing about many changes. During the 1890s writers (nicknamed "muckrakers"), educators, churchmen and social workers gained much publicity for their causes, and the forces of the establishment were soon compelled to make compromises in the wake of strikes and public concern at corruption and exploitation. At local and state levels reforms were passed to assist the poor with regard to both housing and education, and factory legislation was introduced to help workers. Under Sherman Anti-Trust Act trusts and monopolies began to be regulated by federal legislation. Both President Roosevelt (1901-1909) and his successor William Taft (1909-1913) sued businesses and companies which were thought to be operating against the public interest.

2. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, American writers produced a wide variety of works, particularly in the field of prose. As the frontier moved west to its ultimate resting place on the Pacific Ocean, so Americans became more inquisitive about people living in other parts of the country. After the Civil War, their curiosity was in part satisfied by a number of authors known collectively as "literary comedians" and "local colorists". Writing mainly for newspapers and magazines, the former concentrated on colourful descriptions of local traditions, customs, manners, dress and – most importantly – dialects and speech. Their humour was mostly bound up bad spelling and amusingly contorted or incorrect grammar, with slang incongruously combined with Latinate words and leaned allusions (**Ch.F. Browne**, **D.R. Lock** and others).

More serious stories and novels covering almost every corner of the country were written by the "**local colorists**". Their task was to show realistically the lives of various sections of society and thus promote understanding in a united nation. In their sympathetic portrayal of mostly simple folk in provincial communities and their attention to dialect and local customs, these works in part paved the way for the trends of realism and naturalism which were to dominate the American novel over the coming decades. Among the "local colorists" were **Bret Harte**, famous for his tales about the mythical California of the past; **Joel Chandler Harris**, brilliant humourist and creator of Uncle Remus, the wise old black man who tells stories about Bre Rabbit, Bre Fox and others to the son of a plantation owner, **Harriet Beecher Stowe** with her *Oldtown Folks* and **Sam and Lawson** with his *Oldtown Fireside Stories*, both dedicated to New England; **E. Eggleston** with his novels of the early days of settlement in Indiana. In time, practically every corner of the country was portrayed in local color fiction: Louisiana Creoles by **T.N.Page**, tight-lipped folk of New England by **Sarah Orne Jewett**, people of New York by **William Sidney Porter** (**O' Henry**).The stories were only partially realistic as the authors tended nostalgically to revisit the past instead of showing their own time. But some at least avoided older sentimentality or romantic formulas. **Mark Twain** was allied with both literary comedians and local colorists. But he had more skill than his teachers in selecting evocative details, and he had a genius for characterization.

Realism and Naturalism also developed during this period, in part influenced by the novels of the French Naturalist school led by Emile Zola who had a great impression on American writers. **William Dean Howells**, influential critic and editor of *Atlantic Monthly*, was instrumental in laying down the guidelines for a new realism in literature. He defined the aims of realism as "nothing more and nothing less than the truthful treatment of material", and asserted that the true realist "cannot look upon human life and declare that this thing or that thing unworthy of notice, any more than the scientist can declare a fact of the material world beneath the dignity of his inquiry". In *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), Howells best illustrated his aims, and his call up on writers to deal with ordinary, average lives of American people was to be answered by a host of other novelists- known as **Naturalists** – over the following decades.

Inspired by Zola's *The Entrails of Paris* with its minute description of an enormous city, American writers began to study factories and slums. An American

critic said that since the eyes of the novelists had opened to the significance of economics, the world of the makers (the workers) had begun to interest them more than the world of the spenders (the master class). Against the seedy background of social degradation, crime, exploitation and slum conditions, the Naturalists attempted to demonstrate that human behaviour was determined by natural scientific and environmental laws. In exploring the amorality of society, they often show their characters as victims of their social surroundings. Their works are based on first-hand research, carefully documented and essentially faithful to the facts. The Naturalists believed that if an episode was transcribed in its actuality, as it appeared to the observer, it would convey all its emotional weight without lofty sentimentality, moralizing or explanation on the part of the author. They made their stories and novels vehicles for philosophical and social preachments and were franker than their predecessors in their subjects and details.

Theodore Dreiser treated subjects that had seemed too daring to earlier Realists and illustrated his beliefs by depictions of characters and unfolding of plots. He portrayed characters whose deeds are nothing more than "chemical compulsions". His characters are unable to direct their actions and are swallowed up by opponents whose greater strength and ruthlessness bear out a kind of Darwinian "survival of the fittest". **Stephen Crane** dealt with similarly overwhelming circumstances in his short novels *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* and *The Red Badge of Courage*, a story about the reactions of a Civil War soldier. He was an impressionist who made his detail important in stressing his conception of man overwhelmed by circumstances and environment. **Frank Norris** in his novel *The Octopus* described the strangulation of Californian wheat growers at the hands of the railroads. *Main-Travelled Roads*, the bitterly realistic collection of short stories by **Hamlin Garland**, dealt with the hardships of farmers in the Midwest. During the early 1900s some writers used social naturalism and realism to expose the evils of society and instigate reform. Expos of fraud, corporate irresponsibility, corrupt business practices and child labour. President Roosevelt named these writers and journalists "muckrakers", but the scandal caused by the publication of **Upton Sinclair**'s *The Jungle* (1906) prompted Roosevelt to pass the Meat Inspection Act and the Federal Food and Drugs Act in the interests of public hygiene.

Writers of many types of works contributed to literature of social revolt. They attacked the growing power of business and the corruption of government. Political corruption and inefficiency figured in *Henry Adams*' *Democracy* (1880). **Edward Bellamy**'s *Looking Backward* (1888) was both an indictment of capitalist system and an imaginative picturing of a utopia achieved by a collectivist society in the year 2000.

3. **Harriet Beecher Stowe** (1811-1896), a local colorist, first came to be popular as an abolitionist writer with her novel ***Uncle Tom's Cabin***. The book is one of the most famous and popular pieces of Civil War literature, that drew many people into the fight over the institution of slavery. When Abraham Lincoln met the author he joked, "So you're the little woman that started this great war". The novel was first published in the abolitionist newspaper *The National Era* in 1851-52, and later in book form. The story was prompted by Stowe's contact with fugitive slaves, her

indignation with the Fugitive Slave Law as well as her personal tragedy –the death of her infant Samuel from cholera.

Uncle Tom's Cabin is to some extent based on true events and, in particular, on the life of Josiah Henson. "I could not control the story, the Lord himself wrote it", Stowe said, "I was but an instrument in His hands and to Him should be given all the praise". The book sold more copies than any other piece of literature, with the exception of the Bible, and for some time Stowe was the most celebrated writer in the New England literary clubs. She toured the United States and Europe to speak against slavery. In England she became friends with George Eliot, Elisabeth Browning, and Lady Byron. To Russia *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was smuggled in Yiddish to evade the tsarist censorship. Attacks on the veracity of her portrayal of the South led Stowe to publish ***The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*** (1853), in which she presented her source material.

After the Civil War the sales of the novel declined. The sentimentality and religiosity of the story was considered a drawback. In the early twentieth century "Uncle Tom" was used pejoratively to denote white paternalism and black passivity, undue subservience to white people on the part of the black. In 1970s, however, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, with its strong female characters, started to attract the attention of feminist critics. On the other hand, Stowe's vision also found new defenders; Tom's passivity was compared to Gandhi's strategy of peaceful resistance.

Later Stowe became a local colorist, though these works did not gain the same popularity as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. She published novels, studies of social life, essays, and a small volume of religious poetry. However, her ***The Pearl of Orr Island*** (1862), ***Old-Town Folks*** (1869), and ***Poganuc People*** (1878) are among the best examples of local color writing in New England.

4. O.Henry (1862-1910) was a local colorist, a well-known short story writer, a virtuoso of surprise endings, whose central theme was the life of ordinary people of New York. It was he who put the commercial short story on the literary map. He was a talented storyteller who brought a new vigor, excitement, humour and suspense to the short story. His interest in people and places enabled him of compassionate insights.

O.Henry is the penname of William Sidney Porter who was born in Greensboro, North Carolina. At the age of 15 he went to work in his uncle's drugstore. Later he moved to a Texas ranch, then to Austen, where he married, became a bank teller and bought his own weekly newspaper. A string of misfortunes came upon the Porters. His wife's health was unstable, their first child died, the newspaper failed, and in 1894 he was accused of misappropriating the bank's funds. Though believed innocent by many, Porter fled to Honduras, and returned only to be with his dying wife. Porter was committed to the federal jail in Ohio, where he began to write fiction seriously.

On his release Porter made for New York –his "Baghdad on the Subway". His popularity was growing. From December 1903 to January 1906, he produced a story a week for the New York *World*. His first book, ***Cabbages and Kings*** (1904), depicted fantastic characters against exotic Honduran backgrounds. Both ***The Four Million*** (1906) and ***The Trimmed Lamp*** (1907) explored the lives of the multitude of New York in their daily routines and searching for romance and adventure. These

were followed in rapid succession by ***The Voice of the City*** (1909), ***The Gentle Grafter*** (1908), ***Roads of Destiny*** (1909), ***Options*** (1908), ***Strictly Business*** (1910), and ***Whirligigs*** (1910).

Despite his popularity, O. Henry's final years were marred by illness and a desperate financial struggle. He tried to conceal his past, avoided publicity, had no close friends. He died a gentle, alienated man.

O. Henry's stories are famous for their surprise endings, the so-called "O. Henry's endings." He is sometimes named the American answer to Guy de Maupassant. Both authors wrote twist endings, but O. Henry's stories were much more playful and optimistic. His stories are also well known for witty narration. Most of them are set in his own time, the early years of the 20th century. Many take place in New York City, and deal for the most part with ordinary people: clerks, policemen, and waitresses.

Fundamentally a product of his time, O. Henry's work provides one of the best English examples of catching the entire flavor of an age. Whether roaming the cattle-lands of Texas, exploring the art of the "gentle grafter" or investigating the tensions of class and wealth in turn-of-the-century New York, O. Henry had an inimitable hand for isolating some element of society and describing it with an incredible economy and grace of language. Some of his best and least-known work resides in the collection ***Cabbages and Kings***, a series of stories which each explore some individual aspect of life in a paralytically sleepy Central American town while each advancing some aspect of the larger plot and relating back one to another in a complex structure which slowly explicates its own background even as it painstakingly erects a town which is one of the most detailed literary creations of the period.

The Four Million is another collection of stories. It opens with a reference to Ward McAllister's assertion that there were only Four Hundred people in New York City who were really worth noticing. But a wiser man has arisen—the census taker—and his larger estimate of human interest has been preferred in marking out the field of these little stories of the "Four Million." To O. Henry, everyone in New York counted. He had an obvious affection for the city, which he called "Bagdad-on-the-Subway," and many of his stories are set there—but others are set in small towns and in other cities.

Among his most famous stories are:

The Gift of the Magi is about a young couple who are short of money but desperately want to buy each other Christmas gifts. Unbeknownst to Jim, Della sells her most valuable possession, her beautiful hair, in order to buy a platinum chain for Jim's watch; while unbeknownst to Della, Jim sells his own most valuable possession, his watch, to buy jeweled combs for Della's hair. The essential premise of this story has been copied, re-worked, parodied, and otherwise re-told countless times in the century since it was written.

The Ransom of Red Chief, in which two men kidnap a boy of ten. The boy turns out to be so bratty and obnoxious that the desperate men ultimately pay the boy's father $250 to take him back.

The Cop and the Anthem tells the reader about a New York City hobo named Soapy, who sets out to get arrested so he can avoid sleeping in the cold winter as a guest of the city jail. Despite efforts at petty theft, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and "mashing" with a young prostitute, Soapy fails to draw the attention of the police. Disconsolate, he pauses in front of a church, where an organ anthem inspires him to clean up his life — and is ironically charged for loitering and sentenced to three months in prison.

A Retrieved Reformation tells the tale of safecracker Jimmy Valentine, recently freed from prison. He goes to a town bank to check it over before he robs it. As he walks to the door, he catches the eye of the banker's beautiful daughter. They immediately fall in love and Valentine decides to give up his criminal career. He moves into the town, taking up the identity of Ralph Spencer, a shoemaker. Just as he is about to leave to deliver his specialized tools to an old associate, a lawman who recognizes him arrives at the bank. Jimmy and his fiancée and her family are at the bank, inspecting a new safe, when a child accidentally gets locked inside the airtight vault. Knowing it will seal his fate, Valentine opens the safe to rescue the child. However, the lawman lets him go.

After Twenty Years, set on a dark street in New York, focuses on a man named "Silky" Bob who is fulfilling an appointment made 20 years ago to meet his friend Jimmy at a restaurant. A cop questions him about what he is doing there. Bob explains, and the policeman leaves. Later, a second policeman comes up and arrests Bob. He gives Bob a note, in which the first policeman explains that he was Jimmy, come to meet Bob, but he recognized Bob as a wanted man. Unwilling to arrest his old friend, he went off to get another officer to make the arrest.

Compliments of the Season describes several characters' misadventures during Christmas.

Friends in San Rosario, about embezzlement, a bank audit and loyalty to an old friend, bears poignantly upon Porter's real-life prison experience.

5. Mark Twain (1835-1910) is the pen-name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, the writer who has been called the true father of national American literature. This title may be justified by the fact that Mark Twain made a more extensive combination of American folk humour and serious literature than any of the previous writers had done. He inherited the Midwestern and Western humourist tradition but imaginatively combined the "local color" with realism which had been absent from most of the works of his contemporaries.

Clemens was born in Alabama, Missouri, but soon his family moved to Hannibal on the Mississippi River, a town which would later provide a model for the fictitious town of St. Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. There the future writer developed a passion for the river and the desire to become the pilot on a river boat. When he was 11 his father died and his own formal schooling ended. Sam Clemens was apprenticed to a printer, worked on his brother's newspaper for a while, and in 1854 set out on his own, working as a printer in various eastern and Midwestern towns. ("So I became a newspaperman. I hated to do it, but I couldn't find honest employment", he was to say later.) In 1856 he fulfilled his boyhood dream and became a riverboat pilot. This job prompted him his pen name which he

adopted in 1863: “mark twain” is to sound the depths and deem them safe for passage. Life on the river would provide much fodder for Twain’s future works that are at times mystical, often sardonic and witty, always invaluable an insight into the human condition. The river which he loved he also described in his memoir ***Life on the Mississippi*** (1883).

During the Civil War Twain served for a time as a volunteer soldier and in 1862 he went to the west. He began a prolific period of reporting for numerous publications, traveled to various cities of America and different countries in Europe, Hawaii, and the Holy Land which he based ***Innocents Abroad*** on. His newspaper accounts of the travels promoted his popularity, and on his return he became a successful lecturer. During this period he wrote mainly humorous sketches, the most famous being ***Advice for Little Girls*** and ***The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calavaras County***. In 1870 he married and settled in the east, first in Buffalo and then permanently in Hartford, Connecticut. He gave up journalism and made fiction writing his profession. In spite of the change in his social status, his writing continued to be a sharp attack on society. In his last years, he became increasingly bitter. Some of his works of this period are so pessimistic that he withheld them from publication. Twain suffered many losses in his life including the deaths of his three children and accumulated large debts that plagued him for years. His last statement was: “Death, the only immortal who treats us all alike, whose pity and whose peace and whose refuge are for all – the soiled and the pure, the rich and the poor, the loved and the unloved”.

The typical motif of Mark Twain’s writing is the narration of a story by a young or native person or a story in which the main character is an Easterner unaccustomed to frontier life. In his stories the overrefined Easterner is usually outwitted by Westerners. When Mark Twain wrote from a youth’s perspective, the youth was usually wise beyond his years but retained an idealism which the author contrasted with the hypocrisy and cruelty of the adult world. He was born in one of slave states he grew to despise the injustice of slavery and any form of violence. Ironically, he is still at times labeled racist.

Mark Twain is the source of numerous and oft-quoted witticisms and quips including “Whenever I feel the urge to exercise I lie down until it goes away”, “Familiarity breeds contempt – and children”, “The past does not repeat itself but it rhymes”, “The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated”. A prolific lecturer and writer, he published more than thirty books, hundreds of essays, speeches, articles, reviews, and short stories.

Twain’s best loved novels, ***The Adventures of Tom Sawye***r (1876) and ***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*** (1884), are both set along the Mississippi River. Both novels contain a wide range of local dialects and realistic portrayals of local characters. Deepened by new attention to Huck’s developing consciousness and conscience, broadened by its undercover exploitation of social and political ambiguities of American society of the day, *Huckleberry Finn* is obviously a richer and more sophisticated book than *Tom Sawyer*. The main premise behind *Huckleberry Finn* is the young boy’s belief in the right thing to do even though the majority of society believes that it was wrong.

The story begins in fictional St. Petersburg, Missouri, on the Mississippi River. The principal characters of the novel are Huck Finn (a “huckleberry” was the nineteenth-century slang for a person of no importance”), the son of an abusive alcoholic father and Tom Sawyer’s friend; Jim, Miss Watson’s slave; Pap Finn, Huck’s reprobate drunkard father; Widow Douglas, Huck’s guardian. Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, have each come into a considerable sum of money as a result of their earlier adventures (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*). Huck has been placed under the guardianship of the Widow Douglas, who, together with her sister, Miss Watson, are attempting to "sivilize" him. Huck appreciates their efforts, but finds civilized life confining. In the beginning of the story, Tom Sawyer appears briefly, helping Huck escape at night from the house, past Miss Watson's slave, Jim. They meet up with Tom Sawyer's self-proclaimed gang, who plot to carry out adventurous crimes.

Huck’s life is changed by the sudden appearance of his shiftless father, “Pap,” an abusive parent and drunkard. Although Huck is successful in preventing his Pap from acquiring his fortune, Pap forcibly gains custody of Huck and the two move to the backwoods where Huck is kept locked inside his father's cabin. Equally dissatisfied with life with his father, Huck escapes from the cabin, elaborately fakes his own death, and sets off down the Mississippi River. While living quite comfortably in the wilderness along the Mississippi, Huck happily encounters Miss Watson's slave Jim on an island called Jackson’s Island, and Huck learns that he has also run away, after hearing that Miss Watson intended to sell him downriver, where conditions for slaves were even harsher. Jim is trying to make his way to Cairo, Illinois, which is in a free state. At first, Huck is opposed to Jim’s trying to become a free man, but they travel together, they talk in depth, and Huck begins to know more about Jim's past and his difficult life. As these talks continue, Huck begins to change his opinion about people, slavery, and life in general. This continues throughout the rest of the novel.

Throughout the story, Huck is in moral conflict with the received values of the society in which he lives, and while he is unable to consciously refute those values even in his thoughts, he makes a moral choice based on his own valuation of Jim’s friendship and human worth, a decision in direct opposition to the things he has been taught. Mark Twain in his lecture notes proposes that “a sound heart is a surer guide than an ill-trained conscience,” and goes on to describe the novel as “...a book of mine where a sound heart and a deformed conscience come into collision and conscience suffers defeat.” The novel has also been deemed as a bildungsroman by many literary critics.

Huckleberry Finn was met with outright controversy in Twain’s time: in certain Southern states, the novel was banned due to the extensive criticism of the hypocrisy of slavery; others have argued that the novel is racist due to what has been termed the racist character of the language – in particular, the heavy use of the word “nigger”. In our times, the connotations of this word sometimes override the novel’s deeper antislavery themes, and prevent readers from understanding Twain’s true perspective.

One of the features that distinguishes the book as proudly American is its unabashed use of the first-person Missouri vernacular narrative voice of an

uneducated boy living on the Mississippi River during the 1840s. *Huckleberry Finn* is a frequently funny book with a serious message. Twain prefaced the book with a warning that "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot". Twain's characteristic humour peppers *Huck*'s pages. Nevertheless, the novel explores significant issues of American life, including the legitimacy of hierarchal social relationships. In *Huckleberry Finn* Mark Twain's humour possesses a cutting edge of criticism with regard to the hypocrisy and inhumanity of "civilization".

The major themes of *Huckleberry Finn* are conflict between civilization and "natural life", mockery of religion and superstition and bitter criticism of slavery. Twain wrote a novel that embodies the search for freedom. He wrote during the post-Civil War period when there was an intense white reaction against blacks. Twain took aim squarely against racial prejudice, increasing segregation, lynchings, and the generally accepted belief that blacks were sub-human. He made it clear that Jim was good, deeply loving, human, and anxious for freedom. The image of the river acquires a symbolic meaning. Huck's and Jim's raft journey has become an oft-used metaphor of idealistic freedom from oppression, broken family life, racial discrimination, and social injustice. At the end of the book Huck decides "to light out for the Territories ahead of the rest". Twain's intended irony is that these Territories, soon after the events of the book, were to become the scene of great bloodshed over the issue of whether or not to outlaw slavery.

In Ernest Hemingway's opinion, "… all American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*… There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since".

6. **Henry James** (1843-1916) bridges a gap between the nineteenth and twentieth-century literature and between America and Europe. His principal interest, especially in his novels, is the confrontation of American and European culture and also the clash between the old and the new, between the dying century and the one just beginning. His innovative and finely crafted prose possessed a sophistication which went beyond that of his contemporaries, taking as its main subjects the inner, psychological workings of the individual mind and the moral problems facing America in the new age.

He was born in New York City, the second child if wealthy, somewhat aristocratic parents. His father was a philosopher and a friend of Emerson's. His brother William became a prominent philosopher and psychologist. The father disapproved of most schools and, consequently, sent his sons to a variety of tutors and European schools in search of the best education for them. As children, Henry James Jr. and his siblings travelled about Europe with their father. Thus, Henry James grew up free of all usual ties to a specific community and to particular religious beliefs: from childhood he viewed the world as an intensely interested outsider, i.e., as an artist.

When still a child, Henry James was given a great deal of independence, so much in fact, that he felt isolated from others. A quiet child among exuberant brothers and cousins, he was more often an observer than a participant of their

activities. When, because of a back injury, he could not fight in the Civil War, he felt even more excluded from the social life of his time. As an adult he developed many close friendships, but retained his attitude of an observer and devoted much of his life to solitary literary work.

For one year only, James entertained ideas of "entering the world", and studied law at Harvard. But he actually spent most of his time reading Hawthorne and Balzac. He was obviously going to become a writer. His first story was published in the prestigious American magazine *Atlantic Monthly* in 1865, and James was befriended by its editor William Dean Howells, who was also an accomplished novelist and proponent of realism in literature. Howells would then publish all the short stories James had to offer. During the first half of the 1870s, Henry James travelled widely in Europe, but he still returned to the United States to try his hand at being a literary journalist. His brother had warned him about losing touch with America. But in the end, James realized that he could live more cheaply and more comfortably in Europe, and that his art required the established culture of Europe. The other important event during this period was the death of his beloved cousin Minny Temple who died from tuberculosis. To him she was an example as a young, vibrant woman cut down before she could realize her dreams or truly experience life –her figure would appear in some of his greatest works.

James' literary education continued with his stay in Paris in 1875–1876. Here he made friends with Turgenev, Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt, Emile Zola, Daudet and Guy de Maupassant. Despite this wonderfully stimulating environment James left Paris because he felt that he would always be an outsider there. Although, he would still travel about Europe, in 1876 he moved to England where he stayed for most of the rest of his life. In 1815, to show his support for England in World War I, he became a British citizen.

In 1878 James had his first major literary success with the short novel ***Daisy Miller.*** This success opened up the doors for him to the most elite of late Victorian cultural society: he socialized with the likes of Tennyson and Browning. Among the writers most influential on James's fiction were Nathaniel Hawthorne, with his emphasis on the ambiguities of human choice and the universality of guilt, Honoré de Balzac, with his careful attention to detail and realistic presentation of character, and Ivan Turgenev, with his dislike for over-elaborate plots. Like Realists and Naturalists James thought that fiction should represent reality. But he conceived of reality as twice translated – through the author's particular experience of it and through his unique depiction. For much of his life James was an expatriate, an outsider, living in Europe. This feeling of being an American in Europe came through as a recurring theme in his books. James' being a permanent outsider in so many ways may have helped him in his detailed psychological analysis of situations –one of the strongest features in his writing. His stories may be seen as psychological experiments. *The Portrait of a Lady* may be an experiment to see what happens if an idealistic young woman suddenly becomes very rich.

He first achieved recognition as a writer of the "international novel" – a story which brings together persons of various nationalities who represent certain characteristics of their country. The Europeans in James' novels are more cultured,

more concerned with art, and more aware of the subtleties of social situations than are his Americans. The Americans, however, usually have a morality and innocence which the Europeans lack. James seems to value both the sophistication of Europe and the idealism of America. His later books put less emphasis on the international theme and are more concerned with the psychology of the characters. He favoured internal, psychological drama, and his work is often about conflicts between imaginative protagonists and their difficult environments. He explores their complex inner lives with psychological realism formerly unseen in the American novel.

In all, James wrote 22 novels and 112 tales of varying lengths. Among his major works are ***The American*** (1877), ***The Portrait of a Lady*** (1881), ***The Bostonians*** (1886) ***The Spoils of Poynton*** (1897)***, The Wings of the Dove*** (1902), ***The Ambassadors*** (1903) and ***The Golden Bowl*** (1904). A master of the novel and the short story, he also left behind an influential body of literary journalism dealing with the art of fiction. In his classic essay ***The Art of Fiction*** (1884) he argues against rigid proscriptions on the novelist's choice of subject and method of treatment. He maintained that the widest possible freedom would help ensure narrative fiction's continued vitality.

In ***The Portrait of a Lady*** James concluded the first phase of his career with a novel that remains to this day his most popular long fiction. It is the story of a spirited young American woman, Isabel Archer, who inherits a large amount of money and subsequently becomes the victim of scheming by two American expatriates. The narrative is set mainly in Europe, especially in England and Italy. The novel is not only a reflection of James' interest in the differences between the New World and the Old, but a profound meditation on the themes of personal freedom, responsibility, betrayal, and sexuality.

In the 1880s James began to explore new areas of interest besides the Europe-America contrast. ***The Bostonians*** is the bitterest tragicomedy that centers on an odd triangle of characters: Basil Ransom, an unbending political conservative from Mississippi; Olive Chancellor, Ransom's cousin and a zealous Boston feminist; and Verena Tarrant, a pretty protégé of Olive's in the feminist movement. The story line concerns the contest between Ransom and Olive foe Verena's allegiance and affection, though the novel also includes a wide panorama of political activists, newspaper people, and quirky eccentrics.

The Wings of the Dove tells the story of Milly Theale, an American heiress stricken with a serious disease, and her impact on the people around her. Some of them befriend her with honourable motives, while others are more self-interested. Milly was based on Minny Temple.

James considered ***The Ambassadors*** his best work. It is a dark comedy that follows the trip of Lewis Lambert Strether to Europe in pursuit of his widowed fiancée's supposedly wayward son, Chad Newsome. Stretcher is to bring the young man back to the family business, but he encounters unexpected complications. In England Strether meets Maria Gostrey, an American woman who has lived in Paris for many years; her cynical wit and worldly-wise opinions start to rattle Strether's preconceived view of the situation. In Paris Strether is impressed by the much greater sophistication Chad seems to have gained during his years in Europe. Chad takes him

to a garden party where Strether meets Marie de Vionnet, a beautiful and gracious woman separated from her reportedly obnoxious husband, and her daughter Jeanne. All these impressions bring Strether to think that he might have missed the best life has to offer. He starts to delight in the loveliness of Paris and actually stops Chad from returning to America. Mrs. Newsome, Strether's fiancée and Chad's mother, soon sends out new "ambassadors" to bring back Chad. Chad's sister Sarah Pocock, the most important of the new emissaries, harshly dismisses Strether's impression that Chad has improved and demands that her brother should return home. Strether, on his part, realizes the full extent of Chad and Marie's romantic involvement and advises Chad not to leave Marie. He himself, however, finds he is no longer comfortable in Europe and returns to America. The third-person narrative is told exclusively from Strether's point of view.

The Golden Bowl is a complex, intense study of marriage and adultery. The book explores the tangle of interrelationships between a father and daughter and their respective spouses and focuses deeply and almost exclusively on the consciousness of the central characters.

7. **Jack London** (1876-1916) fought his way out of the factories and waterfront dives of West Oakland to become the highest paid, most popular novelist and short story writer of the beginning of the twentieth century. His sincere and ardent writing questions life and death, dignity and integrity against the struggle for survival. Jack London ascribed his literary success largely to hard work. He tried never to miss his early morning writing stint –a thousand words a day. However, outside his workroom he was a colouful and controversial personality who was often in the news. Strikingly handsome, full of laughter, adventurous, restless and courageous, he was one of the most attractive and romantic figures of his time.

From earliest youth John Griffith London supported himself with lowly and dangerous jobs, experiencing the struggle for survival that most other writers knew only from observation or books. By the age of 18 he had worked in a cannery and jute-mill, as an oyster pirate, seaman, and coal shoveler. After crossing much of the continent and being often arrested for vagrancy he determined to educate himself. With an intellectual energy that matched his physical strength, London quickly completed high school and spent a semester reading enormously as a special student at the University of California.

A great influence on London was the philosophy of Marx, Hegel and the rather darker views of Nietzsche, Spencer and Darwin, which gave rise to the belief in humanitarianism and class solidarity combined with a respect for individual heroes and the survival of the strongest.

London's professional career began after he spent the winter of 1897-98 in the Klondike in an unsuccessful search for gold but with a most profitable collection of literary materials. His stories of his Alaskan adventures won him acceptance for their fresh subject matter and virile force. By 1902, he had published three volumes of short stories –***The Son of the Wolf*** (1900), ***The God of Fathers*** (1901), and ***The Children of the Frost*** (1902) which brought him fame. The next novel, ***The Call of the Wild*** (1903), describes the adventures of Buck, a dog brought from California to the Yukon, who learns to be heartless and cruel in order to survive. ***White Fang***

(1906) reverses the theme, portraying a wolf who, because of a human master's love and kindness, turns from a savage beast into a loyal, domestic animal.

The law of survival and the will to power is dramatized in another novel, ***The Sea-Wolf*** (1904).The autobiographical novel, ***Martin Eden*** (1909), depicts the inner workings of the American dream experienced during the protagonist's meteoric rise from obscure poverty to wealth and fame. Eden, a poor but intelligent and hardworking sailor, is determined to become a writer. Eventually, his writing makes him rich and well-known, but he realizes that he no longer belongs to the working class, while he rejects the materialistic values of the wealthy. He sails to the South Pacific and drowns himself in the sea.

As to Jack London himself, in 1905 he built, at enormous cost, a boat and set sail for a troubled two-year voyage, from which he returned both physically and financially exhausted. In 1913, Wolf House, which took him four years to build and cost him$100,000, burnt down before he moved in. Finally, he committed suicide with a fatal dose of morphine.

Within his lifetime London completed 50 books, mostly fiction. London became the highest-paid writer in the United States. However, his expenditures were higher than his earnings, and he always had to write for money.

London's reputation in the United States lessened in the 1920s when a brilliant new generation of postwar writers made the prewar writers seem lacking in sophistication. However, his popularity has remained high throughout the world. London is one of the most extensively translated of American authors. When a commemorative edition of his works was published in the USSR in 1956 it was sold out in five hours.

The key to London's popularity is his vivid, brutal and exiting style.

To Build a Fire is probably the best known of all his stories. Set in a bitterly cold Klondike, it recounts the haphazard trek of a new arrival who has willfully ignored an old-timer's warning about the risks of traveling alone. Falling through the ice into a creek in seventy-below weather, the unnamed man is keenly aware that survival depends on his untested skills at quickly building a fire to dry his clothes and warm his extremities. After publishing a tame version of this story—with a sunny outcome—in The Youth's Companion in 1902, London offered a second, more severe take on the man's predicament in The Century Magazine in 1908. Reading both provides a dramatic illustration of London's growth and maturation as a writer. As Labor (1994) observes: "To compare the two versions is itself an instructive lesson in what distinguished a great work of literary art from a good children's story."

Other stories from his Klondike period include: ***The Law of Life***, about an aging American Indian man abandoned by his tribe and left to die; ***Love of Life***, about a desperate trek by a prospector across the Canadian tundra; ***To the Man on Trail***, which tells the story of a prospector fleeing the Mounted Police in an agonizing sled race, and raises the question of the contrast between written law and morality; and ***An Odyssey of the North***, which again raises questions of conditional morality, and paints a sympathetic portrait of a man of mixed white and Aleut ancestry.

London was a boxing fan and an avid amateur boxer himself. ***A Piece of Steak*** is an evocative tale about a match between an older boxer and a younger one. It not

only contrasts the differing experiences of youth and age but also raises the social question of the treatment of aging workers. ***The Mexican*** combines boxing with a social theme, as a young Mexican endures an unfair fight and ethnic prejudice in order to earn money with which to aid the Mexican revolution.

A surprising number of London's stories would today be classified as science fiction. ***The Unparalleled Invasion*** describes germ warfare against China; ***Goliah*** revolves around an irresistible energy weapon; ***The Shadow and the Flash*** is a highly original tale about two competitive brothers who take two different routes to achieving invisibility; ***A Relic of the Pliocene*** is a tall tale about an encounter of a modern-day man with a mammoth. ***The Red One***, a late story from a period when London was intrigued by the theories of Jung, tells of an island tribe held in thrall by an extraterrestrial object. His dystopian novel, ***The Iron Heel***, meets the contemporary definition of soft science fiction.

The Road (1907) is a series of tales and reminiscences of London's hobo days. It relates the tricks that hoboes used to evade train crews, and reminisces about his travels with Kelly's Army. He credits his story-telling skill to the hobo's necessity of concocting tales to coax meals from sympathetic strangers.

London's autobiographical book of "alcoholic memoirs", ***John Barleycorn***, was published in 1913. Recommended by Alcoholics Anonymous, it depicts the outward and inward life of an alcoholic. The passages depicting his interior mental state, which he called the "White Logic", are among his strongest and most evocative writing. The question must, however, be raised: is it truly against alcohol, or a love hymn to alcohol? He makes alcohol sound exciting, dangerous, comradely, glamorous, manly. In the end, when he sums it up, this is the total he comes up with:

"And so I pondered my problem. I should not care to revisit all these fair places of the world except in the fashion I visited them before. Glass in hand! There is a magic in the phrase. It means more than all the words in the dictionary can be made to mean. It is a habit of mind to which I have been trained all my life. It is now part of the stuff that composes me. I like the bubbling play of wit, the chesty laughs, the resonant voices of men, when, glass in hand, they shut the grey world outside and prod their brains with the fun and folly of an accelerated pulse.

No, I decided; I shall take my drink on occasion."

London's literary executor, Irving Shepard, quoted a "Jack London Credo" in an introduction to a 1956 collection of London stories:

I would rather be ashes than dust!

I would rather that my spark should burn out in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot.

I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.

The function of man is to live, not to exist.

I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them.

I shall use my time.

8. **Theodore Dreiser** (1871-1945) is a major writer, publicist, and a public figure in the USA of the period. The leader of American Naturalist trend in literature, for many he is the writer who initiates American literature into the twentieth century.

Theodore Dreiser was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, the twelfth child into the family of poor immigrants from Europe. He began living independently early in life, doing odd jobs. Only for a short time he studied at Indiana University. From1892 to 1897 he worked as a reporter for different journals and newspapers, in which his first essays and stories were published. In 1897 he abandoned his work as a journalist to become a professional writer.

His first novel was ***Sister Carrie*** (1900). It is the story of Caroline Meeber, or Sister Carrie, as they call her at home, who cannot tolerate work at a shoe factory and becomes a mistress first of a travelling salesman, Drouet, and later of a restaurant manager, Hurstwood, who abandons his family and finds her a place of an actress in a musical theatre. In the course of time Carrie's comic talent is discovered, and she becomes successful. Despairing of finding a job, Hurstwood commits suicide. Dreiser showed in the novel the ruinous effect of the pursuit of material well-being on an individual: Carrie loses her natural human qualities that had made her so appealing and becomes unscrupulous, selfish and callous. The book was considered immoral and was banned in the United States. It was published in America only after it became a success in Great Britain.

Gennie Gerhardt (1911), Dreiser's second novel, continues the theme of a woman with a working-class background and proves the failure of the American myth of equal opportunities for all. The novels ***The Financier*** (1912), ***The Titan*** (1914) and ***The Stoic*** (published posthumously in 1947) forming the "**Trilogy of Desire**", give the life story of an American capitalist and show the ways in which the fortunes of big capital are made. They are built round its protagonist, the financier Cowperwood, one of those "titans who, without heart or soul … enchain and enslave" the nation but is also a tragic figure who squanders his exceptional talents. Unlike the previous novels, the trilogy investigates the "spiritual anatomy" not only of the victims of the capitalist system, but also of those who determined the tragic fate of common Americans. Dreiser stresses the biological aspect of human beings, the analogy in the behaviour of animals and men, presents recordings of business transactions in all their intricacies in the closest Naturalist tradition. His story of the formation of a tycoon was based on the life of the Chicago streetcar tycoon Charles Tyson Yerkes and also on biographies of twenty other American millionaires. ***The Genius*** (1915) tells the life story of a talented artist who begins his career with painting realistic pictures but lacks the nerve to stand for his principles and gives up his realistic creed. Dreiser was accused of "un-American way of thinking," and the novel was prohibited. Because of his depiction of then unaccepted aspects of life, such as sexual promiscuity in *The Genius*, Dreiser was often forced to battle against censorship.

Dreiser's masterpiece is ***An American Tragedy*** (1925). The novel shows the inevitable process of crippling, corrupting and destroying an individual in contemporary society. The author stated that his purpose was not "to moralize … but to give, if possible, a background and a psychology of reality which would somehow explain, if not condone, how such murders happen – and they have happened with surprising frequency in America as long as I can remember". The immediate prototype of the main hero of the novel, Clyde Griffiths, was Chester Gillette whose

murder of his girlfriend, Grace Brown, in 1906 received tremendous publicity, although Dreiser's investigation is based on at least fifteen other similar cases. Dreiser claimed that since 1892, when he started to work as a newspaperman he "began to observe a certain type of crime in the United States that proved very common. It seemed to spring from the fact that almost every young person was possessed of an ingrown ambition to be somebody financially and socially." "Fortune hunting became a disease" with the frequent result of a peculiarly American kind of crime: "many forms of murder for money...the young ambitious lover of some poorer girl...(for) a more attractive girl with money or position...it was not always possible to drop the first girl. What usually stood in the way was pregnancy."

An American Tragedy is aimed polemically against the romantic stories about poor youths who made fortunes and married girls from well-to-do families. Creating the poor-boy-get-rich myth, stories of this type glorified the desire to amass wealth and gave the false impression of American possibilities. The novel is directed against the idea of American prosperity and the country's having entered its "golden age". The title, ***An*** *American Tragedy*, implies the generalized nature of tragedies similar to that of Clyde Griffiths. Speaking about his novel Dreiser wrote in 1927: "I had long brooded upon the story, for it seemed to me not only to include every phase of our national life – politics, society, religion, business, sex – but it was a story so common to every boy reared in the smaller towns in America. It seemed so truly a story of what life does to the individual – and how impotent the individual is against such forces." The victims of the cult of wealth in the novel are both Clyde Griffiths and Roberta Alden.

Griffiths is different from the protagonists of Dreiser's previous novels. He is a most ordinary and typical American, and his tragedy is typically American and therefore all the more terrible. His fate is predetermined by the illusions cultivated in his childhood which cause him later to succumb to a frenzied craving for a life of luxury and ease regardless of the price he has to pay for it. The author accentuates Clyde's instability and susceptibility to the influence of his surroundings that were "sufficient to convince any inexperienced and none-too-discerning mind that the chief business of life for anyone with a little money or social position was to attend a theatre, a ball-game in season, or to dance, motor; entertain friends to dinner, or to travel to New York, Europe, Chicago, California".

The composition is logical and well-proportioned. The novel is made up of three distinct social and economic parts. The first part deals with the poverty and social humiliation of his early life. The plot centres around Clyde's character and the formation of his personality. The second part shows the temptations that the glittering world of wealth and luxury offers to an infantile young person and the resulting catastrophe: in order to gain access to that world through his marriage with Sondra Finchley, Clyde plots to kill Roberta, and is accused of Roberta's death. Dreiser draws attention to a similarity between Clyde and Roberta: like Sondra to Clyde, Clyde to Roberta personifies the world of the rich and, infected with the same virus of ambition and unrest, she persistently tries to get Clyde to marry her. The third part of the novel presents Clyde's court trial and his death on the electric chair. Although Clyde's guilt cannot be legally proved his fate is decided long before the beginning of

court proceedings: he is a toy in the pre-election campaign battle waged by two political parties.

As Clyde's guilt in murdering Roberta presents a legal problem, *An American tragedy* is still studied in law colleges of the USA.

Dreiser was a committed socialist, and wrote several non-fiction books on political issues. These included *Dreiser Looks at Russia* (1928), the result of his 1927 trip to the Soviet Union, and two books presenting a critical perspective on capitalist America, *Tragic America* (1931) and *America Is Worth Saving* (1941). His vision of capitalism and a future world order with a strong American military dictate combined with the harsh criticism of the latter made him unpopular within the official circles. Although less politically radical friends, such as H.L. Mencken, spoke of Dreiser's relationship with communism as an "unimportant detail in his life," Dreiser's biographer Jerome Loving notes that his political activities since the early 1930s had "clearly been in concert with ostensible communist aims with regard to the working class."

Dreiser had an enormous influence on the generation that followed his. Sherwood Anderson said: "Heavy, heavy, the feet of Theodore. How easy to pick some of his books to pieces, to laugh at him for so much of his heavy prose ... The fellows of the ink-pots, the prose writers in America who follow Dreiser, will have much to do that he has never done. Their road is long but, because of him, those who follow will never have to face the road through the wilderness of Puritan denial, the road that Dreiser faced alone."

Another American critic, H.L. Mencken, wrote about him: "He was a great artist … no other American of his generation left so wide and handsome a mark upon the national letters. American writing before and after his time differed almost as much as biology before and after Darwin. He was a man of large originality, of profound feeling, and of unshakable courage. Almost all of us who write are better off because he lived, worked, and hoped."

Lecture 4. American prose in the first half of the twentieth century

1. Historical outline of the epoch: the "Roaring Twenties", the Great Depression, the New Deal. Distinctive features of "modern American literature" and "modern American style".

2. Gertrude Stein.

3. Ernest Hemingway's work and method; his "theory of an iceberg". *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*.

4. Francis Scott Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby*.

5. William Faulkner's work and method; his understanding of time. *The Bear*.

6. John Steinbeck. *The Grapes of Wrath.*

1. When World War I broke out President Woodrow Wilson attempted to maintain American neutrality, although the provision of loans and supplies to the Allied forces left little doubt as to whose side the United States was on. Following the sinking of the passenger ship "Lusitania" (with 128 Americans aboard) and

subsequent attacks on American merchant shops by the German navy, the USA declared war on Germany in 1917.

Although American forces only arrived en masse towards the end of the war, two million Americans had volunteered to fight and more than three million were drafted. The arrival of American troops in France made an important contribution to the Allied defeat of Germany. At home a spirit of patriotism prevailed and many citizens made a conscious effort to help finance the war by purchasing billions of dollars worth of Liberty Bonds. Patriotic songs were composed in honour of "doughboys" fighting in Europe.

Post-war America witnessed continued growth in population, and a continued movement from rural areas to cities. This trend brought about changes in the everyday lives of Americans: city life was inevitably more impersonal, and family ties inevitably became weaker.

The "**Roaring Twenties**", as they fondly became known, brought with them radical changes in lifestyle. The nineteenth amendment to the Constitution (1920) had given women the right to vote, and, armed with their newly acquired independence, they quickly took advantage of the new opportunities opening up around them in the field of work. Some women (known as "Flappers") rejected the more sober cloths of their predecessors in favour of shorter skirts and daring hairstyles.

The eighteenth "**Prohibition**" amendment (1920) had attempted to outlaw sales of liquor, but "speak-easies" (or secret nightclubs) sold **bootleg** alcohol to public. People rushed to speak-easies to listen to the new jazz sounds and dance the latest steps to the rhythms of the charleston or some other new dance. The bootlegging of liquor had its darker side: gangs seeking control of the illegal alcohol market proliferated in the larger cities and the levels of crime and violence grew considerably.

A series of Republican administrations attempted to curb the newly unleashed forces of hedonism to restore the traditional social values. Thus, President Harding's message to the electorate in 1920 was ***A Return to Normalcy***. The efforts of federal government found sympathetic support in other sections of society, though its manifestation was not always positive. Religious revivalism became increasingly popular in both rural and urban areas, and the Ku Klux Klan returned to its former strengths.

After World War I the United States witnessed a period of economic boom, but while manufacturers and large companies continued to expand, farmers and labourers actually experienced a decline in their wages. Their resulting poverty inevitably led to a reduction in domestic demand. Very soon America was producing more than it could consume. Confident of high returns on their investments in the stock market, increasing numbers of Americans bought stocks during the 1920s, but towards the end of the decade wild bouts of speculation pushed the value of their investments to artificially high levels. In October 1929 prices started to decline and the resulting panic led to the great stock market crash in which American investors lost over 50 billion dollars. **The Great Depression** which followed lasted for a full ten years.

The failure of the banking system during the crash meant that hundreds of thousands of people lost their savings overnight. Businesses had to cut back on

production, thousands of factories were closed and millions of people lost their jobs. In rural areas 750,000 farmers lost their land. In 1932 the Democrat F.D. Roosevelt replaced Hoover as President of the United States. His programme for recovery was called **the New Deal**, and it involved greater government intervention in the affairs of the economy than had ever been seen before. By the end of the decade Roosevelt's measures were beginning to have positive effects, and such was his popularity that he was re-elected four times – a record in the history of the United States.

The literature of the period became to be called "**modern**", and the style which was elaborated at the time, "modern American style". The inter-war period in American literature was characterized by experimentation and creative inventiveness. Writers attempted to come to terms with new philosophical and psychological interpretations of reality. The discovery of the subconscious and new concepts regarding time meant that the scope of literary reference was broadened and orthodox beliefs of the past were laid open to question.

Aesthetic considerations were formalized anew as American literary criticism matured. Ezra Pound, leading literary critic of the time, was joined by T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens in his analysis of the writer's craft, and further important contributions were made by Ernest Hemingway and Gertrude Stein. Writers measured themselves according to new literary canons as literary criticism developed into a serious and systematic genre. Conventional standards and established authors were questioned and attacked by a new body of writers whose works were frequently published by the so-called "little magazines" – independent-minded periodicals more concerned with publishing new authors and establishing new critical standards than the material rewards of commercial success. The most influential of these magazines were two edited by the essayist and critic Henry L. Mencken. From the pages of The Smart Set and American Mercury, Mecken and his protégés launched their crusade against established literary conventions and authors.

2. With the possible exception of James Joyce, **Gertrude Stein** (1874-1946) has been heaped with more accusation of charlatanry than any other modern author. She had an incalculably important influence on younger authors and her influence on Hemingway alone would mark her as an important literary figure.

Stein abandoned America for France 1903. The date is important as it marks the founding of the Paris expatriate cenacle of American authors. In 1907 she was joined by her friend Alice B.Toklas who was to serve as her lifetime companion. The two women settled at 27 rue de Fleurus, an address that was to become the headquarters of avant-garde literature. Stein coined the term "a lost generation" which was applied to the intellectual youth of the 1920s, and particularly of the Paris expatriate group including Hemingway, Elliot Paul, Henry Miller and others, who had participated in the First World War and were left uprooted and disillusioned

Quite independently and originally she conceived central devices of style and syntax that were taken up by a whole school of young American naturalists in the 1920s and which have continued to filter their way into American literature. She shattered the forms of conversational grammar and syntax and demonstrated the possibilities of free association.

Stein was the trailbreaker and she did not always do the things as well as her imitators, who could concentrate on refining the technique she had created out of nothing. She was the first American author to try to transcribe banal daily speech, almost exactly as it occurs in life, into literature. As a student of psychology she learnt that the human brain does not always operate on a sequential and logical level, that an ordinary conversation is full of repetitions and divergences. She was interested in the process of associative thought. She began to create something like automatic writing, a prose in which the imagination created world-pictures without the intervention of the intellectual or logical part of the brain. The mind, she felt, gives the words a special significance which is independent of their dictionary meaning; words promote emotions and recollections through their sounds and associations as well as through their denotational content. For Gertrude Stein, the word and phrase were immediate symbols of intense, momentary, and highly personal experience rather than as instruments disciplined by normative grammar. Her chief works are ***Three Lives*** (1909), ***Tender Buttons*** (1914), ***An Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*** (1933), ***Four Saints in Three Acts*** (1934) (an opera libretto) and ***Wars I Have Seen*** (1945)

The most radical of her word experiments are contained in *Tender Buttons* and *Four Saints in Three Acts*: the literal or denotational content of the language is virtually nil. In most of her works the phrases devoid of metaphor or simile are strung together with the conjunction "and" (a technique imitated by Hemingway); whole paragraphs are built around a single statement, phrased and rephrased until it becomes imbedded in the reader's consciousness. This technique is clearly apparent in the styles of Hemingway and Dos Passos, and Stein was not entirely wrong when she proclaimed that she had taught Hemingway to write.

3. **Ernest Hemingway** (1899-1961) is one of the most famous American novelists, short-story writer and essayist, whose deceptively simple prose has influenced a wide range of writers. The publicity about his colourful and adventurous life has often obscured the fact that he was primarily a creative artist. Although he was free from the pretensions of the aesthetic cultists, he approached the craft of writing with a careful and conscientious devotion. He once remarked that his job as a writer was to "put down what I see and what I feel in the best and simplest way I can tell it." In spite of his occasional stylistic experiments and his rare excursions into politics, this remained his ideal. In the early twenties Hemingway contributed poetry to avant-garde reviews. He soon turned to the short story and the novel, but he retained an almost poetic interest in economy of language and in precision and brilliance of imagery.

Hemingway was born in Oak Park, a prosperous Chicago suburb in the state of Illinois, to the family of a prominent physician. He spent a great deal of his youth in the wild country of northern Michigan. These experiences were later recorded in his collection of short stories *In Our Time*. After leaving school Hemingway took a job on the *Kansas City Star*. Although he held this position only a few months, the journalistic training he acquired at this formative age marked his style for the rest of his career.

During the First World War, in 1917-18, he was a volunteer ambulance driver on the Austrian front, and was seriously wounded in Italy: his knee was patched with a platinum cap he was to retain the rest of his life. This war became for Hemingway and other members of the Lost Generation the key moment of their lives. In the novel *A Farewell to Arms* the main character, Frederick Henry, explains why: ”I was always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrificed…We had heard them sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity… Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage or hallow were obscene…” The theme of the coming death is one of the central themes in Hemingway’s work.

In 1921 Hemingway returned to Europe and lived in Paris, where he joined the American expatriates who were forming a literary and artistic circle centering in Saint-Germaine quarter; he described his experiences in Paris in ***A Movable Feast***, published posthumously in 1964 (“If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then whenever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a movable feast”), and in his famous novel ***The Sun Also Rises***. From 1924 on he travelled widely, seldom remaining in the same place for more than a few months. In 1933-34 he went to Africa on a hunting expedition and emerged with the materials for ***Green Hills of Africa*** and several of his best stories. In 1936-37 he made two trips to Spain to cover the Civil War as a journalist and used his experiences there in the novel ***For Whom the Bell Tolls*** and the drama ***The Fifth Column***. He engaged in political activity on behalf of the Spanish Loyalists as the Civil War brought to the surface the antifascist sentiments he had been developing since his travels in Italy in the early 1920s. During the Second World War he served as a war correspondent in Europe. Although technically a civilian, he actually took part in the campaign in France as an irregular raider. ***Across the River and Into the Trees*** made use of these war experiences.

After the war Hemingway made his home at Finca Vigia outside Havana, Cuba, where he divided his time between deep-sea fishing and writing. A novella, ***The Old Man and the Sea***, laid in Cuba and utilizing his fishing experience, appeared in 1952. In 1954 Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. On 2 July 1961 he committed suicide. Hemingway had been many times injured, grave wounds from the war injuries in Italy at eighteen to brain concussions including a skull fracture, three serious automobile accidents, two airplane accidents with severe internal injury, and miscellaneous wartime wounds. In the story *Indian Camp* there is such an episode: “Why did he kill himself, Daddy?” “I don’t know, Nick. He couldn’t stand things, I guess”.

From the beginning Hemingway bore one of the marks of a great writer: his style was original and unmistakable. An extremely subjective author, he is not interested in writing from sheer imagination or of making use of documentary materials in the traditional naturalistic manner. He writes only about aspects of life he has encountered personally, and these are many: war, big-game hunting, sport fishing, bullfighting, skiing and life in the expatriate society of Paris. There is little he has done he has not written about. In Africa in 1933-34 he was stricken with dysentery. As a result he wrote one of his best stories, ***The Snows of Kilimanjaro***. Each of the locales of his life –Michigan, Wyoming, Paris, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Africa and Cuba –had a novel or a cycle of stories written about it, and most of Hemingway's friends found themselves converted to characters in his fiction. Like Joyce and Proust, Hemingway uses the material of his life to construct a transformed and artistically heightened fiction.

Because of his subjective approach to fiction, his male characters are usually more believable than his women: they are projections of his own personality. His work is autobiographical not only in the incidents related, but in the attitudes and reactions of his characters to their situations. His female characters are seen through masculine eyes: he is not a master of feminine psychology.

The sensations that interest Hemingway and consequently the experiences he relates are generally on the physical level like drinking wine chilled in a Spanish mountain stream, passing one's fingers through the hair of a girl whose head has recently been sheared, or of being blown up by a trench mortar shell in Italy. He is anxious to communicate the reader "how it was", to recreate the exact physical sensations. The reader knows how it was to shoot lions in Kenya, to take part in the retreat from Caporetto, or to live in Paris in the early 1920s.

Wallace Stevens once termed Hemingway "the most significant of living poets, so far as the subject of extraordinary reality is concerned." By "poet" Stevens referred to the author's stylistic achievements in his prose fiction. Hemingway derived his style from two different sources: his work as a newspaper reporter and his encounter with Gertrude Stein and other avant-garde writers in Paris. As a journalist he learnt to avoid superfluous adjectives and adverbs and to pack the maximum content into the minimum space. He was also influenced by Stein's prose, with its phrases connected by "and" which brings together apparently separated phenomena, its understatement and the artful repetition (borrowed from modernist poetry) of an image or an idea until it has become imbedded in the reader's mind like the repeated image of rain in *A Farewell to Arms.* It is Hemingway's proverbial **"iceberg" style** that made wider the boundaries of implication. In his *Death in the Afternoon,* Hemingway wrote: "…if a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about, he may omit things that he knows, and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things, as strongly as though the writer has stated them. The dignity of movement of an iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. It is its background. And the more is under the water the stronger is the iceberg".

The most typical of Hemingway's novels –*The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms*, and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* –are written in two different styles: a highly condensed description and narration in the flowing chain of images suggestive of free verse; and the tense dialogue, almost bare of comment and full of conversational blind alleys which Hemingway's detractors find so easy to parody.

Hemingway liked to portray soldiers, hunters, bullfighters –tough, at times primitive people whose courage and honesty are set against the brutal ways of modern society, and who in this confrontation lose hope and faith. There are many scenes of violence, pain and tragedy, yet the total effect is seldom offensive. Hemingway relates the events in a totally matter-of-fact and objective manner, without ornament and rhetoric. He never comments and never degenerates into pathos. His scenes are effective through the facts related and not through appeals to sentimentality. Hemingway's famous literary style is devoid of ornament and rhetoric. At its best, Hemingway's writing communicates profound emotions using the simplest language, as in the following fragment describing an incident he witnessed during World War I: "We were in a garden at Mons. Young Buckley came in with his patrol from across the river. The first German I saw climbed up over the garden wall. We waited till he got one leg over and then potted him. He had so much equipment on and looked awfully surprised and fell down into the garden. Then three more came over the wall. We shot them. They all came down just like that."

A believer in "the cult of experience", Hemingway often involved his characters in dangerous situations in order to reveal their nature. In his view, life is painful and hard. The only way to survive is to face what comes with honour, dignity, and endurance. These principles make up what is known as the "**Hemingway code**", and most of his protagonists are known as "code heroes".

Hemingway's chief works are ***The Sun Also Rises*** (1926), ***A Farewell to Arms*** (1929), ***For Whom the Bell Tolls*** (1940), ***The Old Man and the Sea*** (1952).

The Sun Also Rises, narrated by an American journalist, tells of a set of expatriates who make a trip over the Pyrenees to see a bullfight in Pamplona, tramping and fishing in the Spanish mountains, a bullfight festival. The early chapters are set in Paris and convey the mood of expatriate life so successfully that it seems unfortunate he did not treat such settings at greater length. The novel shows that idealism and sensitivity have been killed in the war and now the "lost generation" comes to the surface. Brett, Mike and Kohn are the real representatives of the lost generation referred to in the novel's epigraph. The novel is more than a portrait of the postwar generation: it is a study of the forces which made this generation

A Farewell to Arms is largely autobiographical in its external details. It is set during the First World War. Its hero is Frederick Henry, an American lieutenant in the Italian ambulance corps. He is wounded by a mortar shell and is thrown together with Catherine Barkley, an English nurse, in the hospital. Under her care he begins to regain his health and to find a new meaning in life. The

turning point of the novel is the retreat from Caporetto, in which the army is completely disorganized and in which Lieutenant Henry narrowly escapes being shot as a deserter. At length he regains Catherine; they flee to the high mountains of Switzerland, where they find happiness for a time. But Catherine dies in childbirth and Henry is left disillusioned and cynical. The structure of the novel is that of a classical tragedy; the cathartic ending is carefully prepared by foreshadowing and mood. Catherine dies as though the tragic fate has determined that she and Frederick shall not succeed in their love; the novel has been compared with Romeo and Juliet with its "star-crossed" lovers. The symbolic contrast between the plain (representing war, misery, corruption) and the mountains of Switzerland (happiness, purity and love) extends throughout the novel.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is set during the Civil War in Spain and tells the story of Robert Jordan, an American teacher who comes to Spain to fight for the Loyalists out of idealism. The early chapters describe his trip into the mountains north of Segovia and his contact with a guerrilla band he is to lead on an important mission: the destruction of a bridge out of the canyon into Segovia. The guerrilla band includes Pablo, its brooding and cowardly leader; Pilar, his courageous and colourful wife; and Maria, the daughter of a government official, mistreated by the fascists before her rescue by the guerrillas. Jordan and Maria fall in love and hope to marry and go to America eventually. For her part Pilar has no illusions: she has read Jordan's fate in his hand and knows he is soon to die. When Jordan makes his way through enemy lines to the Loyalist army he is struck by the confusion and corruption of the army in the plain. He knows that the battle will be lost, but returns to his mission. Finally, as a fascist column comes down the canyon to finish off the battle around Segovia, the band blows up the bridge. Because of Pablo's treachery Jordan is fatally wounded. The others offer to carry him off, but he insists on remaining with a machine gun where he can try to stop the pursuing column before he is killed. On the factual level the novel is in a deeper sense a study of war and the reactions it provokes in men and women. Jordan the idealist is willing to give his life for his cause; Pablo becomes a defeatist and seeks to avoid personal danger; Pilar stands between these two extremes: a fervent patriot, she nevertheless understands the importance of individual happiness.

The Old Man and the Sea is ostensibly a simple story. The old man, Santiago, is a Cuban fisherman down on his luck. For 84 days he hasn't caught a single fish. He is helped by a boy, Manolin, who shares his faith, but his parents forbid him to go to sea with the old man. Alone Santiago hooks a giant marlin in the Gulf Stream. The voyage lasts for three days and three nights The marlin pulls him far out to sea, and though the old man eventually harpoons it, during the return to the harbour sharks eat up all but the skeleton, head and tail of the great fish, which he tows home, half-dead with exhaustion, achieving a kind of victory in defeat. Most of the dialogue in the novella is supposed to be in Spanish which Hemingway "translates" literally to produce a curiously elegant and lyrical effect, an almost Biblical dignity. Like Hemingway's hunting stories

this novella expresses the theme of the "kinship between the hunter and the hunted" in the sense of beauty and pity that the old man feels as he struggles with the fish. Santiago is established as a saintly, even Christlike figure through the scars on his hands, his name (which is the name of the disciple who baptized Spain), and the austerity of his life. In a sense *The Old Man and the Sea* is a religious story. It is perhaps this aspect that inspired the Swedish Academy to cite it specifically in awarding Hemingway the Nobel Prize.

Hemingway's short stories, in accord with their setting are divided into American (for instance, *The Killers*), European (*In Another Country*) and African (*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*).

4. **Francis Scott Fitzgerald** (1896-1940) is considered one of the most important authors of the twentieth century. His fame rests on the romantic story of his life as well as on the quality of his writings. He became the epitome of the Jazz Age which he described in his novels and short stories.

He was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, the only son of an unsuccessful, aristocratic father and an energetic, provincial mother, and he was later to confess that he had inherited a double patrimony. After he entered Princeton University in New Jersey in 1913, he tried to eradicate his Middle West origins. He had an intensely romantic imagination, what he once called "a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life", and he was determined to realize those promises. Princeton offered him both literary nourishment and that "glitzy caste system" which lures Amory Blain in *This Side of Paradise*, the book he now started to write. Fitzgerald, however, left Princeton without a diploma. When the USA entered World War I in 1917, he enlisted in the army. The war ended shortly after Fitzgerald's enlistment, and he was discharged without ever having been shipped to Europe, so it is a remarkable tribute to his imagination that the description of the front line in *Tender is the Night* is rated as one of the best on its subject.

In the training camp in Alabama Fitzgerald met Zelda Zayre, a southern belle and person with intense personality, who became his wife and a model for most of the beautiful heroines of his fiction. He became a writer to earn enough money to marry her, and their married life furnished his greatest happiness as well as his greatest misery and pain. Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald became important participants of the wild and carefree period in the life of the generation that entered adult life after World War I, and that was infected with fear of misery and adoration of success; the "generation dedicated more than the last to the fear of poverty and the worship of success; grown up to find all the gods dead, all the wars fought, all faiths in man shaken". This period of the "Roaring Twenties" Fitzgerald called the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald now was a celebrity. The new prosperity made it possible for him and Zelda to play the roles they were so beautifully equipped for, and Ring Lardner called them the prince and princess of their generation. After the birth of a daughter, Frances Scott, in 1921, the Fitzgeralds resided in Paris and on the French Riviera, and became the conspicuous members of the "lost generation" of American expatriates like Hemingway, Stein, Pound and others.

Although Fitzgerald's passion lay in writing novels, they never sold well enough to support the opulent lifestyle that he and Zelda adopted as New York

celebrities. To supplement his income, he turned to write short stories and sold movie rights of his stories and novels to Hollywood studios. He was constantly in financial trouble and often required loans from his agent and his editor. Hemingway prefaced his chapters concerning Fitzgerald in *A Movable Feast* with this: "His talent was as natural as the pattern that was made by the dust on a butterfly's wings. At one time he understood it no more than the butterfly did and he did not know when it was brushed or marred. Later he became conscious of his damaged wings and their construction and he learned to think and could not fly any more because the love of flight was gone and he could only remember when it had been effortless". Both Zelda and F. Scott Fitzgerald were to fall victims of their disorderly life: she suffered a mental breakdown, and he, alcoholism. In 1947, Zelda died in a hospital fire in a Swiss sanatorium. His own life, as Fitzgerald regarded it, symbolized a clash between material prosperity and moral devastation. The double-faced success is scrutinised in such novels as *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night* and other works.

Fitzgerald's first novel, ***This Side of Paradise,*** was published in 1920. The novel was a revelation of the new morality of the young. It shows the world of rich young people, excited though somewhat cynical, their parties and love affairs, and bears the impact of Fitzgerald's dual attitude to wealth: he admired the opportunities it gave but was conscious of the ruinous effect of great wealth on its possessors. In December 1920 was published a collection of short stories, ***Flappers and Philosophers***; in 1922, another collection of short stories, ***Tales of the Jazz Age***, which includes one of his best stories, ***The Diamond as Big as the Ritz***. The story was the first of the series dedicated to the **theme of wealth**. The main hero of the story, John T. Unger, a student of St. Midas School, is overwhelmed by Braddock Washington's wealth. The story is the satirical disclosure of the sources of this wealth and its influence on its owners. In 1925 was published the novel ***The Beautiful and the Damned***. These works are on the Jazz Age and reflect the transition of the American society: from the America of the strict norms of bourgeois morality to the post-war America rejecting these norms and demanding complete freedom of actions for itself.

In the 1925 was published ***The Great Gatsby***, which is considered Fitzgerald's masterpiece. By then Fitzgerald himself was rich, though his earnings could never keep pace with his and Zelda's extravagance. He also knew that between peaks of joy were periods of sorrow. *The Great Gatsby* reflects Fitzgerald's deeper knowledge, his recognition that wanting to be happy does not ensure happiness and that pursuit of entertainment may involve a lot of pain. In 1936 in an autobiographical sketch for *Esquire* magazine Fitzgerald would write: "…the natural state of sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness. I think also that in an adult the desire to be finer in grain than you are, "a constant striving" …only adds to this unhappiness in the end –the end that comes to your youth or hope. My own happiness in the pace often approached such ecstasy that I could not share it even with the person dearest to me but I had to walk it away in quiet streets and lanes with only fragments of it to distil in little lines in books –and I think that my happiness, or talent for self-delusion or what you will, was an exception. It was not the natural thing but the unnatural…"

The Great Gatsby tells in its finest form a story that Fitzgerald would tell many times. An imperfect but interesting man falls unreservedly in love with, and pursues to the end, an imperfect dream, usually embodied in a beautiful and generally wealthy woman. Though dreams are by nature illusory and subject to the corrupting pressure of time, the dreamer himself has the desire to see the eternal in the transitory, to find a promise in a symbol. The power of the symbol –the green light on the further shore of the bay; the diamond as big as the Ritz – makes up the meaning of an individual life.

In *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald creates a powerful version of the modern American hero. It is the story of a self-made man, Jimmy Gatz, the farmer's son who out of love and ambition turns himself into Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, a man who has disowned his own origins and has entirely devoted himself to "the service of vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty". Jimmy Gatz falls in love with the wealthy Daisy Fay, and devotes his life to constructing a self that can win her back to him, despite the fact that she is now married and in the ends simply does not want him. He fails and is destroyed; Daisy possesses the seductive carelessness of the rich, and this finally is what brings about the disaster. This is a simple story, but constructed through remarkable and complex methods. Gatsby's story is told by a narrator, Nick Carraway. He creates the story through glimpses and impressions, decoding the events as they come in the apparently random order of their coming. For much of the novel he is the tolerant go-between, providing a necessary narrative link between Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, his distant relative. But of course it is he who selects not only the incidents but also the viewpoints from which the reader is to see them. Gatsby is a false hero, a man who cannot be trusted on anything except his ultimate and governing passion. He may appear glorious but he is not virtuous. He is as corrupt as his corrupted times, a self-made Twentieth opportunist belonging firmly to the age of organised crime and political scandals, bootlegging, betting rackets and illegal trading in bonds. It is Nick who makes him into a hero by contrasting him to the indifferent and careless rich like Daisy or Tom. Nick is a compassionate narrator who is, however, disgusted by much of what he sees. This narrative technique was to find many imitators.

His novel ***Tender is the Night*** (1934), completed after Zelda's death, was inspired by their life in the Riviera among American expatriates. It deals with insanity of the main heroine. It is the story of a psychologist who married his patient, a beautiful and rich girl. In spite of himself he was corrupted by wealth and luxury, and gave up his scientific ambitions. Though technically faulty, it is Fitzgerald's most moving novel. It was not a commercial success, and Fitzgerald went to Hollywood where he worked as the scriptwriter.

His last unfinished novel, ***The Last Tycoon***, was edited and published posthumously by Edmund Wilson, prominent literary critic and Fitzgerald's friend, in 1941. The prototype of the main hero of the novel, Monroe Stahr, was the producer Irving Thalberg. The novel was Fitzgerald's final attempt to create his dream of the promises of American life and of the kind of man who could realize them. In the intensity with which it was imagined and in the brilliance of its expression, it was equal of anything Fitzgerald ever wrote.

5. In a series of interconnected novels and short stories set on the fictional Yoknapatawpha county in the state of Mississippi, **William Faulkner** (1897-1962) produced a major work of imagination, whose setting in the American South expands to universal observations about suffering, dignity, and the enduring fate of man. Though Faulkner wrote of the conservative rural South, his writing was further ahead in novelty. He experimented with repetition, irregular punctuation, long puzzling sentences, flashbacks, different points of view.

Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, to an aristocratic Southern family. His great-grandfather was a colonel in the Civil War, railroad builder, financier and a writer; and to Faulkner his great-grandfather was to remain a symbol of the gallant aristocracy the war had destroyed. His grandfather carried on some of the family business, and his father worked first for the railway and then as the business manager of the University of Mississippi. During the writer's lifetime his family, like the fictional Sartoris clan, was aristocratic and financially secure but no longer wealthy. Faulkner himself, exaggerating somewhat, described its status as that of "genteel poverty". His education was incomplete. He left high school without graduation and went to work in his grandfather's bank. He joined the Royal Canadian Air Force during the First World War, was trained as a pilot in Toronto but never saw action as the war ended before he was commissioned. His disappointment at missing the experience of combat is reflected in some of his early stories and recurs years later in *The Fable*. After the war he was admitted to the University of Mississippi but soon left and earned his living with various odd jobs.

In 1924 his first book, a volume of poems entitled *The Marble Faun*, was published. He moved to New Orleans where he met Sherwood Anderson who helped him get his first novel, *Soldier's Pay,* published. Anderson also convinced Faulkner that he should write about his native Mississippi. After a brief trip to Europe, Faulkner returned home and began his famous cycle about Lafayette County, transformed in his books into Yoknapatawpha County. The first novel of this series, *Sartoris* (1929), tells the fantastic story of Colonel Sartoris, who is based on his own grandfather. His *The Sound and the Fury* was a critical success, although not a financial one. It was *Sanctuary* that created a sensation, became a popular success, and brought its author financial independence. From that time his reputation has constantly grown. Faulkner's chief novels are ***The Sound and the Fury*** (1929), ***Light in August*** (1930), ***Sanctuary*** (1931), ***As I Lay Dying*** (1932), ***Absalom! Absalom!*** (1936), ***The Hamlet*** (1940), ***The Bear*** (1942), ***Intruder in the Dust*** (1948***), Requiem for the Nun*** (1950), ***The Fable*** (1954), ***The To***wn (1957), ***The Mansion*** (1959), ***The Reivers*** (1962).

The Sound and the Fury is Faulkner's first radical departure from the traditional form of the novel, the most complicated technically and the most successful artistically. The title is from Macbeth: "…a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". The story is divided into four sections, each related trough the mind of a different character. The "central time" of the

action is 1929, but parts of all four sections take part in 1910. The main characters are Jason and Caroline Compson, heads of the aristocratic but declining Compson clan of Jefferson; their daughter Caddy; her daughter named Quentin for her brother; Benjamin, an idiot son; Quentin, the idealistic thinker of the family; Jason, a third son, materialistic and selfish; Dilsey, an old black servant; Luster, the 14-year-old companion and bodyguard of Benjy.

Candy is seduced by Dalton Ames and later married to an opportunistic Northerner, who abandons her. Quentin, who only half realizes he is in love with his sister, is filled with shame for her betrayal and drowns himself in Cambridge. Benjy is at first happy playing in his pasture but the land is sold to pay Quentin's tuition at Harvard (symbol of the selling out of the Southern land-holding class to the North). His brother Jason obtains legal guardianship over Benjy and has him sterilized (symbol of extinction of Southern aristocracy); later Benjy is put in a state institution. Since the mother is self-centred and helpless Dilsey presides over the disintegration of the family with loving patience and resignation.

Another masterpiece, ***The Bear***, is a complex story about the growing up into manhood of a boy, Issac McCaslin (who is also referred to as He or Ike). The chief interlocutor for the boy is his cousin, Carothers McCaslin Edmonds, who is usually called McCaslin, which adds to the confusion. Ike is sometimes ten, thirteen, sixteen, eighteen, twenty-one, seven, eight, nine. The story relates his initiating rites in hunting of Old Ben, the bear, killed when Ike was sixteen, his education in woodcraft at the hands of Sam Fathers, half-Indian, half-black. Ike keeps probing into the past, including the study of his father's and grandfather's papers, to repudiate his inheritance at the age of twenty-one: "Don't you see? This whole land, the whole South, is cursed, and all of us who derive from it, whom it ever suckled, white and black both, lie under the curse".

The protagonists of Faulkner's novels are the decayed aristocrats of the "Compson" type. Whether their names are Sartoris, Compson, McCaslin, or Stevens, they are old Southern families past the peak of their prosperity and riddled with moral decay. Yet they are finer than their antagonists, the "Snopes" clan – the efficient, materialistic carpetbaggers, merchants and entrepreneurs – who are gradually superseding them. A third class of characters are the blacks, often more heroic and admirable than either Sartoris or Snopes. The writer's mission is to preside over the spiritual death of the old South and to study the forces that are preparing its awakening.

Faulkner is greatly concerned with erotic passions, with cruelty, and with the connection between the two. His violence is twisted, melancholy, and guilty. His characters are seldom moved by normal urges: Quentin Compson (*The Sound and the Fury*) is in love with his sister, Popeye (*Sanctuary*) is impotent, and Joe Christmas (*Light in Aug*ust) becomes the paramour of a spinster a generation older than he is. Faulkner does not relate all this for mere shock effect. He is interested in aberration as a symbol of Southern decline.

Many of Faulkner's characters, though diverse, tend to fall into a set of clearly defined groups. There are moody younger sons, reckless and rebellious but proud of

their family backgrounds (Quentin Compson, Banyard Sartoris); there are naïve country girls, easily exploited by town slickers (Dewey Dell, Lena Grove); there are rebellious and nymphomaniac young girls of aristocratic families (Temple Drake). But although Faulkner sometimes recreates the same characters, he seldom repeats his stories. With a tremendous inventiveness he finds a new situation, plot, or structure for each novel.

There is little overt political content in Faulkner's work. But it is apparent that his sympathies are with the aristocratic and highly principled Sartorises, as decadent as they may be. At the beginning of his literary career he was wrongly accused of condescension towards blacks. Since then he frequently condemned racism, violence, and the activities of "White Supremacy" groups in the South. His approach to the racial problems is largely aesthetic, psychological, and physiological, although underneath, it is also moral. He describes both Sartorises and blacks as they appear to him without idealizing them foe didactic purposes. His strongest condemnation of slavery is perhaps that found on the long version of *The Bear*, where he develops the idea that the fertile land of the South has been eternally cursed by the unnatural domination of man over land and man over man and by the sexual and psychological evils that have come out of it.

Faulkner is a highly individual author, and therefore difficult to classify. His earlier works represent naturalistic regionalism, slightly influenced by the style of Sherwood Anderson and demonstrating as well a personal lyrical quality that was to become more prominent in his later novels. Beginning with *The Sound and the Fury* his work is sometimes described as "symbolic naturalism", and his style a radical form of stream of consciousness utilizing difficult and highly original experiments in chronology and point of view. Because of his interest in the stream-of-consciousness technique Faulkner may be considered a psychological novelist. In both *The Sound and the Fury* and *Light in August* the action centers round the events of a single day, but previous and subsequent incidents are filled in through recollections of the characters, through flashbacks, through often semiconscious reactions of the characters involved. The interest of the author is not so much in the incidents themselves as in complicated mental reactions they evoke on the characters. Here Faulkner resembles Proust and Joyce more than he resembles American naturalists.

From another point of view Faulkner is a regionalist, although his region is an imaginary one based on reality: "Yoknapatawpha County" with its county seat in Jefferson. Since Jefferson is described as seventy-five miles south of Memphis on the Illinois Central Road, it can be easily identified as Oxford, Mississippi, where Faulkner passed most of his life. At the same time Yoknapatawpha County is a fictional region only loosely related to real Mississippi County of Lafayette.

Though some incidents, like the murder of old Colonel Sartoris, are drawn from family traditions, Faulkner's characters are mostly the product of his imagination. For this reason Faulkner is able to create characters of great diversity. The gangster Popeye, the spinster Miss Burden, the rebellious Temple

Drake, and the Harvard student Quentin Compson are equally forceful, real, and meaningful.

In spite of the fact that Faulkner's works are ostensibly concerned with the South, as deeply rooted in place as Joyce is in Dublin, the problems of the South, people's relationship to land, the moral wrong of possession, people's relationship to people, the vulgarization of materialistic age with the loss of old courtesies and values, are the problems of the nation as a whole and the problems of the twentieth-century world. Yoknapatawpha County of Faulkner's novels is the world's universal image.

Faulkner always uses a double frame of reference in his fiction. Casual references to scriptures are meaningful to the people of his stories, as well as the dominant denominations of the South – Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians. The second frame is formed by the classical inheritance of the South – the modified Greek columns, the Grecian urn, the sense of Greek tragedy in his works.

Where Faulkner's style is most difficult and the narrative line most complex, he demands the active participation of reader in the creative process. As Quentin tries to get at the truth of the past in *Absalom! Absalom!* by a compulsive telling and retelling of the story, bringing in new historical sources including interviews and letters, finally bringing in the Canadian Shreve McCannon into the reconstruction as well, so is the reader drawn in. The language of presentation is purposely chaotic. The story is related in retrospect by diverse speakers and sometimes it is difficult to understand who the speaker is. The events in the novels may range within a hundred years. For a character like Quentin Compson who is seeking the truth and is continuing to love the South in spite of its shame it is of no importance when the event occurred. Well known is Faulkner's theory of time: "There is no "was", there is only "is". If "was" existed the bitterness and suffering would have gone".

The demands on the reader are great – you may have to puzzle out an impossible sentence or go back to pick up a lost thread, but the rewards are great. Among other prose writers who make similar demands are Joyce in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Proust, Kafka, Gertrude Stein. As has been said of some of their work: it does not have to be difficult to be good, but it helps.

Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1949 and delivered a speech of acceptance before the Swedish Academy which has become a classic in our time: "Our tragedy today is a general and universal fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing. .. He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid, and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart – love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice".

6. **John Steinbeck** (1902-1968) is a model example of the modern American nostalgia for the primitive, the counter-reaction to the triumphant urbanization

of American culture which took place in the first half of the twentieth century. He admires everything that is not a material success: the have-nots, the misfits, the racial minorities unjustly deprived of their civil and economic rights, the simple, the poor, and the oppressed. His rural heroes, illiterate and sometimes weak-minded, are nevertheless essentially noble and poetized in the traditional Romantic manner.

Steinbeck was born at Salinas, California. He studied at Stanford University, although he did not finish his degree. His principal interest in college was biology, a preoccupation he retained throughout his life. As a young man he worked on newspapers and held a variety of odd jobs. His first success as a writer was *Tortilla Flat*. *The Grapes of Wrath* created a storm of controversy which made him famous overnight. Except for a period of war reporting and for numerous fishing and scientific expeditions, he remained for some years in Monterey or in nearby Los Gatos, where he continued to turn out stories drawn from the life of the region. When he left his home area and moved to New York City, his literary work suffered a decline.

Steinbeck is a Naturalist but in his novels everything is transformed: his creative process simplifies characters and idealizes qualities. His region is the Salinas Valley in central California, populated with Mexican farm workers, Italian fishermen, and assorted artists, bohemian and eccentric. Like most regionalists he considers the life of the country infinitely superior to that of the city. Like many Naturalists he presents scenes of great cruelty and passion on his novels. His *The Grapes of Wrath* excited a torment of Puritanical indignation almost equal to that which greeted Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*. Actually Steinbeck's characters are seldom deliberately cruel. If they commit a crime it is usually through accident or out of sheer stupidity, and they generally regret such acts. They use profanity because they know no other way of speaking; foul language is as conventional in some social groups as polite formulae are in polite society.

There is a certain poetic quality in his prose. The repetition of "George, are we gonna have rabbits?" is woven into *Of Mice and Men* like the recurring motif of a sonata. Occasionally Steinbeck consciously creates the classic tragedy; the catastrophe proceeds out of the tragic flaws of the characters. The fiction is based largely on dialogue. The situation and previous history are explained through conversation. For this reason Steinbeck's novels and stories are easily dramatized; several of them have been successfully converted onto plays and films. His chief works are ***Tortilla Flat*** (1935), ***Dubious Battle*** (1936), ***Of Mice and Men*** (1937), ***The Red Pony*** (1938), ***The Grapes of Wrath*** (1939), ***The Winter of Our Discontent*** (1961).

Dubious Battle is Steinbeck's bitterest novel and one of his most powerful. The protagonist, Jim Nolan, an employee in a San Francisco store, is beaten by the police while innocently watching a radical demonstration and as a result is fired from his job. Bitter, he joins the Communist Party. His mentor in Party work is Mac, militant Marxism Personified. He welcomes trouble and bloodshed because they will provoke the class hatred he can manipulate for Party purposes. The central action of the novel is the strike of apple-pickers in the fictional

Torgas Valley. Before the Party cell interferes they are ready to accept their cut in wages. Mac and his comrades succeed in persuading them to strike. Violence and destruction arise; several men including Jim are shot in a battle with the strikebreakers; the strike fails. But Mac's purposes have bee served: a strong class feeling is sturred up. The final scene when Mac, speaking to the crowd, tries to use Jim's murder for propaganda purposes, is especially well done. The attitude of the author, however, is ambiguous. At first glance the novel is Party propaganda but Communist criticism did not approve of the novel seeing too many weaknesses and passions in Party workers.

The Grapes of Wrath is the story of itinerant farmers –the "Oakies" (Oklahoma sharecroppers) of the Depression period – who are driven from their land after the Dust Bowl storms of 1937 to seek a new prosperity. The Joad family are lured to California by leaflets promising easy and well-paying jobs. The family, headed by Tom Joad, includes the lusty and indecent Grandpa, the suffering and religious Grandma, the hard-working and tenacious Ma, the children Noah and Connie, and Connie's wife Rose. At the end of their hectic trip, during which Grandma dies and is buried without formality, their arrival in San Joaquin Valley is a bitter disappointment. Jobs are ill-paying and hard to get, and the Oakies that crowd into the valley by the thousands are worse off than they were in the dust bowl. Violence, passion and labour strife break out; Tom Joad is involved in a murder and after a while becomes a fanatic labour union agitator. The most famous scene of the novel is the final one in which Rose, her newborn baby dead, nourishing a dying man with her own milk.

Although the subject matter and dialogue of this novel are occasionally shocking, the total effect on most readers is moving and sympathetic. *The Grapes of Wrath*, which won Steinbeck the Pulitzer Prize in 1940, is generally considered his most important work. In some respects it is his most Naturalistic novel; its style is objective, it is highly detailed, and it shrinks from no banal or loathsome detail. It has, however, an underlying symbolic current which distinguishes it from American Naturalism of the type of Dreiser. The implied political attitude is similar to that in *Dubious Battle*; the conclusion is that only through organization can the itinerant fruit tramps and other workers better their condition. If the attitude is generally left-wing, however, the book is not communistic; actually it stands closer to the social liberalism of the New Deal. The political aspects are not the main point here; the interest is centered on the characterizations of the Oakies, the epic quality of the incidents, and the underlying symbolic motifs.

When John Steinbeck was given the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962, the award was not universally acclaimed by critics as the Swedish Committee of the Academy professed to admire his *The Winter of Our Discontent*, an allegory set on Long Island, unaccustomed territory for Steinbeck, and an inferior novel as compared to his earlier achievements.

Lecture 5. English and American poetry and drama in the early twentieth century

1. General characteristic of the poetry of the age.
2. Ezra Pound.
3. Thomas Stearns Eliot.
4. Edward Estlin Cummings.
5. Yeats as the leader of the Celtic Renaissance.
6. Dylan Thomas.
7. Robert Frost.
8. Carl Sandburg.
9. Shaw's publicistic drama: method and themes. Cycles of the plays. *Heartbreak House*.
10. Eugene O'Neill. *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

1. The years leading up to World War I saw the start of a poetic revolution. A new critical and a new creative movement in poetry went hand in hand, with Eliot the high priest of both. This was an extraordinary rich time for English and American verse which represented a radical departure from the poetry of the nineteenth century.

The movement developed simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, and its early members included Amy Lowell, Richard Aldington, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), John Gould Fletcher, and F. S. Flint. Among the leading poets of the period were Ezra Pound, H. D. (Hilda Doolittle) and Amy Lowell. They became the leaders of an **anti-Romantic movement** called "**Imagism**". An anthology of imagist poems was edited by Pound in 1914.

The Imagists maintained such fundamentals: the soul of poetry is the image; to communicate exact images poets should use brief, clear, specific language; the images should immediately convey the poem's meaning; the poetic language should resemble everyday conversation; all topics are suitable for poetry. The movement discarded predictable rhyme and rhythm, pleasant and beautiful subjects, sentimental and idealistic tone.

As Flint explained in an article in March 1913, imagists insisted on "direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective," on the avoidance of all words "that did not contribute to the presentation," and on a freer metrical movement than a strict adherence to "the sequence of a metronome" could allow. All this encouraged **precision in imagery and freedom of rhythmic movement**, but more was required for the production of poetry of any real scope and interest. Imagism went in for the **short descriptive lyric**, but it had no technique for the production of longer and more complex poems.

Other new ideas about poetry helped to provide this technique. It was Eliot who extended the scope of Imagism by bringing the English Metaphysicals and the French symbolists (as well as the English Jacobean dramatists) to the rescue, thus adding new criteria of **complexity and allusiveness** to the criteria of concreteness and precision stressed by the Imagists. The great edition of the poems of John Donne in 1912 both reflected and helped to encourage a new enthusiasm for seventeenth-century Metaphysical poetry. The revival of interest in Metaphysical wit brought with

it a desire on the part of some pioneering poets to introduce into their poetry a much **higher degree of intellectual complexity** than had been found among the Victorians or the Georgians. The full subtlety of French symbolist poetry also now came to be appreciated; it had been admired in the 1890s, but for its dreamy suggestiveness rather than for its imagistic precision and complexity.

At the same time a need was felt to bring poetic **language and rhythms closer to those of conversation** or at least to spice the formalities of poetic utterance with echoes of the colloquial and even the slangy. **Irony**, which made possible several levels of discourse simultaneously, and **wit**, with the use of puns (banished from serious poetry for more than two hundred years), helped to achieve that union of thought and passion that T. S. Eliot, in his review of Grierson's anthology of Metaphysical poetry (1921), saw as characteristic of the Metaphysicals and wished to bring back into modern poetry. It was Eliot, too, who introduced into modern English and American poetry the kind of irony achieved by shifting suddenly from the formal to the colloquial or by oblique allusions to objects or ideas that contrasted sharply with those carried by the surface meaning of the poem.

However, it was Ezra Pound who dominated the golden age of American poetry. His earlier work was reminiscent of the aestheticism of the 1890s, and it was only with Imagism that he developed a truly personal poetic voice. Over sixty years, he wrote seventy books of his own, contributed to about seventy others and wrote more than 1,500 articles, ranging from poetic theory to economics and music. In his poetry he borrowed widely from other languages and integrated extracts and quotations from other authors and literatures, thus widening the field of contemporary poetic experience considerably. His knowledge of nine foreign languages allowed him access to a wide variety of foreign verse forms with which he experimented freely. Pound's most ambitious work, the famous *Cantos* (1917-1972), consists of more than 140 long and often complex cantos which are supposed to deal with the whole state of modern civilization, taking in past epochs and a variety of different cultures.

Significant contributions to the verse in the 1920s and 1930s were made by, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens and E.E. Cummings. The poetry of **Marianne Moore** is characterized by close and accurate observations of objective detail and precise use of language gained her a reputation as a highly disciplined craftsman. In *Poems* (1921) and *Observations* (1924) she manifests an ability to experiment with stanza forms and versification whose end effects are subtle and complex.

Virtually unknown until the end of his life, **Wallace Stevens** had his first book of poetry *Harmonium* published in 1923. Less of an innovator in technique than many of his contemporaries, Stevens was nonetheless a complex poet. His dominating concern was the relationship between the imagination and reality in the modern world. Poetry, he believed, was the means whereby the self might interact with reality. His technically masterful poetry is characteristically witty and sensuous, and many of his best poems exploit the unexpected in terms of both imagery and diction. With the publication of his *Collected Poems* in 1954 he won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Well known for his unorthodox punctuation and phrasing, **E.E. Cummings** first came to public attention in the 1920s. His poetry possesses a strong visual

element. The patterns made on the page through typographical arrangements often have a bearing on the actual meaning of the poem itself. In its unpredictable, and often witty, organization of punctuation and verse shapes, Cumming's poetry is to be seen with the eyes as much as read. He frequently draws on the colloquial language of the urban Yankee in his verse, and many of his poems possess an almost childlike freshness and sense of wonder. Much of his work takes nature, human relationships and the world of children as its subject.

Robert Frost was no great innovator (he was content with "old ways to be new"), but this did not prevent him from becoming America's most popular twentieth-century poet and four times winner of the Pulitzer Prize. The rural beauty of New England countryside is immortalized in the traditional stanzas and blank verse forms of early nineteenth-century English Romantic poetry. His love of nature is evident in a series of poems which seem simple at first sight, but reveal a complexity and subtlety of meaning on closer inspection: poetry, he said, is a question of "saying one thing and meaning another". His rural imagery is often loaded with symbolic or metaphysical meaning. His poetry often deals with the tragic aspects of life and the complexities of human existence. His language is homely and simple – like that of the rural New Englanders he so accurately describes.

In the Midwest, **Edgar Lee Masters** and **Carl Sandburg** made an important contribution into American verse. Masters is remembered chiefly for his *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), a series of free verse epitaphs that in the form of monologues record the dreams and disappointments of the author's youth in a small Midwestern town. Being dead, the town's inhabitants are at last free to "tell all", and their often bitter revelations, contained in brief, ironic and objective epitaphs, constitute not only an expos of the small town mentality, but of a whole way of life in America.

In *Chicago Poems* (1914), in the form of Whitmanesque free verse, Sandburg celebrated life on the Prairies and in Midwestern cities. His treatment of the urban landscape – its industries and its working people – was something new in American poetry, and was a further confirmation of William Carlos William's observation that "anything a poet can effectively lift from its dull bed by force of the imagination becomes his material". His frequently long and unconventionally structured poems are characterized by strong, loose rhythms and a sinewy language which attempt to reproduce the vivid slang and idiom of the Midwest.

Modern drama begins in a sense with the witty drawing-room comedies of Oscar Wilde; yet Wilde founded no dramatic school. His wit was personal and generative of paradoxes for their own sake, unlike the wit of Restoration comedy, which reflected an attitude to the relation between the sexes that was part of a view of society held by a whole (if a small) social class. **George Bernard Shaw** brought still another kind of wit into drama –the provocative paradox that was meant to tease and disturb, to challenge the complacency of the audience. Other attempts by twentieth-century dramatists to debate social questions on the stage—by John Galsworthy, for example—deserve respect for their humanity and intelligence and sometimes for their theatrical craftsmanship, but they lack Shaw's verbal and intellectual brilliance and his superb capacity to entertain.

Up to the twentieth century, very little of worth in terms of drama had been produced in the United States: early Puritan attitudes to the theatre as a place of moral corruption did not encourage the growth of American drama. Americans visiting early twentieth-century Europe were impressed by the depth and variety of theatrical works, and some attempted to set up a "little theatre" movement on their return home. Theatre groups began appearing all over the country, especially on university campuses and within the local communities. During this crucial period for modern drama, foreign playwrights like Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekov and Shaw had a considerable influence on American writers.

The first great American dramatist was the Nobel Prize winner **Eugene O'Neill**. His range of dramatic techniques varied from Naturalist works *Beyond the Horizon*, *Desire under the Elms* and *The Iceman Cometh* to plays like *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* which employed the Impressionist techniques of early twentieth-century German playwrights. O'Neill's willingness to experiment in both technique and subject is evident in *Strange Interlude*, a lengthy, psychologically motivated play containing spoken asides and soliloquies revealing the inner thoughts of his characters. *Morning Becomes Electra* is another psychologically penetrating play, and represents the author's thorough use of Greek forms, themes and characters. In their subtle analysis of human psychology and the tragedy of human relationships, O'Neill's plays constituted a real departure from the melodrama of previous American theatre and were to have a considerable influence on the next generation of American playwrights.

Other important dramatists of the period included Elmer Rice, Clifford Odets and Thornton Wilder. **Elmer Rice** is chiefly remembered for his expressionist work *The Adding Machine* (1923) and the Naturalist *Street Scene* (1929). *Waiting foe Lefty* and *Awake and Sing* (both 1935) by **Clifford Odets** were important examples of the more socially conscious "proletarian" plays which became popular during the 1930s. Dealing with the history of a New Hampshire town, **Thornton Wilder** became famous with *Our Town* (1938), which has become an American classic, and in its omission of scenery and stage settings was to anticipate some of the features of contemporary theatre.

2. To appreciate the poetry of **Ezra Pound** (1885-1972), critics are inclined to set it aside from his life –the life which pushed him to exile, which bore a stain of insanity and imprisonment, and which charged him of treason. For all that he insisted that his work, life, and ideas were closely interlocked.

Ezra Loomis Pound, the highly controversial and influential poet, was born in Idaho but his parents moved to a well-to-do Philadelphia suburb when he was still a baby. When Pound was a teenager he already knew that he wanted to be a poet and he determined that he would know "what part of poetry was indestructible, what part could be lost by translation, what effects were obtainable in one language only and were utterly incapable of being translated". With this goal in mind, he studied French, Italian, Old English, Latin at the University of Pennsylvania. His plan to teach languages and to write did not succeed, and Pound decided to move to London in 1908, where he lived till 1920. He supported himself by teaching and writing for magazines, including Chicago's *Poetry Magazine*. His generous and tireless efforts to

assist other authors like Robert Frost, James Joyce, William Carlos Williams and T. S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway were fully reciprocated later in the time of his public disgrace.

Pound was a successful promoter of both his poetry and his ideas about it, and knew how to attract publicity. Ironically, he came to criticize the very traditional poetry that had made him want to be a poet in the first place. This contradiction haunted him forever.

The tragedy of World War I led Pound to consider deeply the reasons for the demise of European civilization. His conclusions were mostly economic in nature, but unfortunately tinged with anti-Semitism and fascism. During the war Pound made many broadcasts in Italy against the US and in favour of Mussolini. When the Americans conquered Italy Pound was captured and kept in an open-air cage in Pisa. He was then taken to the United States to be tried for treason, but was found to be "insane and mentally unfit to be tried". Pound spent years from 1946 to 1958 in St Elizabeth's Hospital for the criminally insane, in Washington DC. Even in this confinement Pound continued to write poetry and his rather eccentric political correspondence. In 1948 he won the prestigious Bollingen Prize for poetry. When he was released, Pound returned to Italy where he lived in silence until his death at eighty-seven.

It was Pound who dominated the golden age of American poetry. His earlier work was reminiscent of the aestheticism of the 1890s, and it was only with Imagism that he developed a truly personal poetic voice. Pound's ***In a Station of the Metro*** which originally consisted of 30 lines is considered to be the best example of a classic imagist work:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

One **strength of his poetry** is abstraction through sensory objects; another one was his love of language, tenderness for nuances of meaning and sound, which trait made him rework each line of a poem for rhythmical and allusive perfection. Over sixty years, Pound wrote seventy books of his own, contributed to about seventy others and wrote more than 1,500 articles, ranging from poetic theory to economics and music. In his poetry he borrowed widely from other languages and integrated extracts and quotations from other authors and literatures, thus widening the field of contemporary poetic experience considerably. His knowledge of nine foreign languages allowed him access to a wide variety of foreign verse forms with which he experimented freely.

Pound's most ambitious work, the famous ***Cantos*** (1917-1972), was modelled on *Leaves of Grass* and was devised as a mold of biography and history, as a representation of the total mind and memory. It consists of more than 140 long and often complex cantos which are supposed to deal with the whole state of modern civilization, taking in past epochs and a variety of different cultures. The cantos are separate poems of different length, combining reminiscence, meditation, description and transcripts from the books Pound was reading. Each canto begins in one place and later is taken up in one or more other places and finished, if at all, in still another. This deliberate disconnectedness, this art of a

thing continually breaking off short, is the method by which the cantos tie themselves together.

3. American-English poet, playwright, and critic, a leader of the modernist movement in literature, **Thomas Stearns Eliot** (1888-1965) was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948. His works, such as ***The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock***, ***The Waste Land***, ***The Hollow Men***, and ***Four Quartets***, are considered defining achievements of twentieth-century Modernist poetry.

Eliot was born in St Louis, Missouri, into a distinguished family of New England origin. His forbearers included William Greenleaf Eliot, founder of Washington University. Isaac Stearns on his mother's side was one of the original settlers of Massachusetts Bay Colony. His father was a prosperous industrialist and his mother was a poet. In 1906 Eliot went to Harvard and after receiving his B.A. in 1909 he spent a year in France, attending lectures in Sorbonne and studying poetry. He then returned to Harvard where he worked on a dissertation on the English idealist philosopher F.H. Bradley and also studied Sanskrit and Buddhism.

In 1915 Eliot made England his permanent home. With Ezra Pound he started to reform poetic diction. Pound was largely responsible for getting Eliot's early poems into print. In 1917, was published Eliot's first volume of verse, ***Prufrock and Other Observation***. His second book, ***Ara Vos Prec***, appeared in 1919. In 1922 he founded the Criterion, a quarterly review that he edited until the beginning of World War II. In 1925, he joined the publishing house of Faber and Gwyer, becoming eventually one of the firm's directors. In 1927, he became a British citizen and member of the Church of England. His way towards his own particular brand of High Anglicanism may be charted in his poetry, starting from ***The Hollow Men*** (1925).

Between 1925 to his death, Eliot published some 600 articles and reviews. His principal purpose in his literary-critical essays was "the elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste". In the essay ***Religion and Literature*** (1935) he stated that "literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint".

Eliot's most important work is ***The Waste Land*** (1922), **a poetic exploration of soul's or civilization's struggle for regeneration**. Following Pound's suggestion, Eliot reduced the poem to about half its original length. Eliot dedicated the poem to Pound, referring to him as "il miglior fabbro", Italian for "the better poet".

The Waste Land, which caught the mood of confusion and feelings of nostalgia for a "paradise lost" after World War I, was not unanimously hailed as a masterpiece, the phrase "the poetry of drought" has become a cliché of left-wing criticism. *The Waste Land* is a poem about spiritual dryness, about the kind of existence in which no regenerating belief gives significance and value to people's daily activities, sex brings no fruitfulness, and death heralds no resurrection. The symbolic Waste Land can be revived only if a "questing knight" goes to the Chapel Perilous, situated in the heart of it, and there asks certain ritual questions about the Grail (or Cup) and the Lance—originally fertility

symbols, female and male, respectively. The proper asking of these questions revives the king and restores fertility to the land.

The **five sections of *The Waste Land*** are: "The Burial of the Dead", "A Game of Chess", "The Fire Sermon", "Death by Water", and "What the Thunder Said". The first four sections of the poem correspond to the Greek classical elements of Earth (the burial), Air (which is generally thought to be aligned with the intellect and the mind), Fire (passion), and Water. The title of the fifth section could be a reference to the fifth element of Aether, which is included in many mystical traditions.

The poem is a series of fragmentary dramatic monologues, a dense chorus of voices and culture historical quotations that fade one into another. The poem moves between different voices and makes use of phrases in foreign languages. The text of the poem is followed by several pages of notes, purporting to explain his metaphors, references, and allusions. Some of these notes are helpful in interpreting the poem, but some are even more puzzling, and many of the most opaque passages are left without annotation.

Eliot drew material for the poem from several sources, among them the Grail story, the legend of the Fisher King, Sir James George Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and Dante's *Commedia*, but while Dante finally is reunited with Beatrice in Heaven, *The Waste Land* ends ambiguously with a few words of Sanskrit.

In a way, the work, bristling with symbols, quotations and references, fulfilled Eliot's "**impersonal theory of poetry**" explicitly advanced in his essay ***Tradition and the Individual Talent*** (1920): "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together".

The style of the poem in part grows out of Eliot's interest in exploring the possibilities of **dramatic monologue**. The **basic method** used in *The Waste Land* may be described as the application of the **principle of complexity**. Eliot's poetry demonstrates the aesthetic form in modern poetry which demands a complete reorientation in the reader's attitude to language. Eliot's real novelty was his deliberate **elimination of all merely connective and transitional passages**, his building up of the total pattern of meaning through the immediate **juxtaposition of images** without overt explanation of what they are doing, together with his use of **oblique references to other works of literature** (some of them quite obscure to most readers of his time). Nevertheless, the complexity of Eliot's work may be exaggerated: the nature of his imagery together with the movement of his verse generally succeed in setting the tone he requires, in establishing the area of meaning to be developed, so that even a reader ignorant of most of the literary allusions can often get the feel of the poem and achieve some understanding of what it says.

There is no disagreement on the part of critics as to Eliot's importance as the poet of the modern symbolist-Metaphysical tradition and one of the great renovators of the English poetic dialect, whose influence on a whole generation of poets, critics, and intellectuals generally was enormous. In 1948 he was awarded

the rare honor of the Order of Merit by King George VI and also gained the Nobel Prize in literature.

4. **Edward Estlin Cummings** (1894-1962) was a central figure in the remarkable generation of American writers who carried out a revolution in literary expression in the twentieth century. Throughout his life, he challenged the forces that tended to suppress individuality, to make a person conform to the general cannon. He was a combination of an unabashed romantic and an avant-garde modernist seeking to explore unusual means of expression. He was a poet, playwright, prose writer, and painter whose vital transcendental vision found embodiment in a startling array of innovative artistic devices, where typography, punctuation, grammar, syntax, diction, imagery, and rhythm were often pushed to their limits.

Cummings was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to liberal, indulgent parents who from early on encouraged him to develop his creative gifts. He was educated at Harvard, where in 1916 he received his M.A. While a student he began to write traditional poetry based on the elaborate stanza patterns of the Pre-Raphaelite and Metaphysical writers. In his last year of college, he became intensely interested in the new movements in the arts through his association with Dos Passos and began to experiment with free verse and to develop as a self-taught cubist painter. In 1917, after working briefly for a mail-order publishing company, the only regular employment in his career, Cummings volunteered to serve in the Ambulance Corps in France. There he and his friend were imprisoned in a French detention camp on suspicion of espionage because in their letters they criticized the conduct of the war and expressed pacifist views. ***The Enormous Room*** (1922), Cumming's witty and absorbing account of the experience, was also the first of his literary attacks on authoritarianism. Back in the USA, he was drafted into the army, where he served until November 1918. He depicted military life satirically in such poems as ***i sing of Olaf glad and big*** (1931).

At the end of the war Cummings went to Paris to study art. On his return to New York in 1924 he found himself a celebrity, both for ***The Enormous Room*** and for ***Tulips and Chimneys*** (1923), his first collection of poetry. It was followed by ***XLI Poems*** (1925) and ***&*** (1925). Some of his early poems are crammed with literary allusions, others merely depict ordinary scenes of life –in city streets, in cafes, in rooming houses, celebrations of the beauties of the natural world, and harsh satires directed at politicians, generals, professors, the clergy, and national leaders. Clearly influenced by Gertrude Stein's syntactical and Amy Lowell's imagistic experiments, Cumming's early poems had nevertheless discovered an original way of describing the **chaotic immediacy of sensuous experience**. The **games with language** (adverbs functioning as nouns, for instance) combine with deliberately **simplistic view of the world** that give them the gleeful and precocious tone which was to become a hallmark of his work, as in the following example: "whereIings, whenlings/ daughters of ifbut offspring of hopefear/ sons of unless and children of almost/ never shall guess".

Love poems, satirical squibs, and descriptive nature poems would always be his **favoured forms**.

To emphasize his **viewpoint that life was always in process**, he sometimes wrote untitled poems without beginnings and endings, consisting of fragmentary lines. He indulged in free **play with punctuation and capitalization**. Lowercase letters were the rule; capitals were used only for special emphasis; punctuation marks were omitted for ambiguous statement; others were introduced for jarring effects. His use of the lowercase letter "i" and the manner of writing his own name as "e.e. cummings" reflected the role that he created for himself: the underling, the unnoticed dreamer, the downtrodden one, the child in the man. He published his discussions based on his poetry lectures at Harvard University under the title ***i: six nonlectures*** (1953). Yet by asserting his individuality in this way, he established a memorable persona. Being a painter as well as a poet, he had developed a unique form of **literary cubism**: he broke up his material on the page to present it in a new, visually direct way. Some of his poems have to be seen in their printed arrangement before they can be completely understood. "The day of the spoken lyric is past," he proclaimed. "The poem has at last taken its place. It does not sing itself; it builds itself, three dimensionally, gradually, subtly, in the consciousness of the experiencer".

His two marriages ended in divorces, which affected Cummings' personality so much that by the 1930s he had changed from a vivacious celebrant of life to a cynical, hard-hitting critic of American culture. These attitudes are increasingly evident in his volumes of poems ***Is 5*** (1926), ***ViVa*** (1931), and ***No Thanks*** (1935). However, his third marriage in 1934 proved a success. His later works affirm life in all its essential forms, but especially in whatever is natural, unpretentious, and unique. His philosophy entailed a rejection of social forces that hinder the expression of individualism, in particular those that encourages group behaviour, conformity, or imitation.

Within his lifetime Cummings published 11 books of poems, as well as several plays –***Him*** (1927), ***Antropos: The Future of Art*** (1930; 1945), and ***Santa Claus: Morality*** (1946), a scenario for a ballet ***Tom*** (1935), based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, lectures and essays, stories for children entitled ***Fairy Tales***. He continued to write sonnets all his life, often traditional in theme, but sometimes he chose "unpoetic" subjects –a nightclub dancer, the gurgle of water going down a sink, brothels and their customers, a politician giving a hypocritical patriotic speech.

Cumming's critical reputation has never matched his popularity. The left-wing critics of the 1930s were only the first to dismiss his work as sentimental and politically naïve. His supporters, however, find value not only in his verbal and visual inventiveness but also in its mystical and anarchistic beliefs. Cumming's celebration of the individual and of love and spring was not simply sentimental. It was based on hard-won personal experience as well as his transcendental vision that provided the rationale for his artistic experimentalism. Regarding the invisible world of the spirit as dwelling within the visible world

of matter, this vision sees matter as bodying forth spirit. To realize this, however, requires peeling the scales of habit from one's eyes, for society's routines tend to deaden one's insight into the organic aliveness of the world and all its creatures.

5. **William Butler Yeats** (1865-1939) was the leader of the **Celtic Renaissance**, or the **Irish Literary Revival**, a movement against the cultural influences of English rule in Ireland during the Victorian period, which sought to promote the spirit of Ireland's native heritage by reviving ancient Irish folklore, legends and traditions in new literary works. He is remembered as an important cultural leader, a major playwright and one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. In 1923, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Yeats was born in Dublin, the son of a well-known Irish painter, John Butler Yeats. He spent his childhood in County Sligo, where his parents were raised, and in London where his father furthered his career as an artist. For financial reasons, the family returned to Dublin in 1880, and the boy resumed his studies at the Erasmus Smith High School where he remained till 1883. It was during this period that he started to write poetry, and in 1885, his first poems as well as an essay called ***The Poetry of Sir Samuel Ferguson***, were published in the *Dublin University Review*. ***The Wanderings of Oisin and Other Poems*** (1889) was the first work that he would not disown in maturity. It was based on the poems of the Fenian Cycle of Irish mythology. The poem introduced what was to become one of the most important themes of Yeats: the appeal to the life of contemplation vs. the appeal to the life of action. After *The Wanderings of Oisin*, he never attempted another long poem. His other early poems are lyrics on the themes of love or mystical and esoteric subjects, mystical and slow-paced.

In 1890 Yeats co-founded the Rhymer's Club with Ernest Rhys. This was a group of like-minded poets who met regularly and published anthologies in 1892 and 1894. Other early collections include ***Poems*** (1895), ***The Secret Rose*** (1897) and ***The Wind Among the Reeds*** (1899). Though Yeats never learned Gaelic himself, his early poetry drew extensively from Irish mythology and folklore. Other potent influences on his poetry were the Irish poet, feminist, actress and revolutionary Maud Gonne, his muse and the source of his unrequited love, to whom he proposed four times; the Pre-Raphaelite poets; and Percy Bysshe Shelley. In a late essay on Shelley he wrote: "I have re-read *Prometheus Unbound* … and it seems to me to have an even more certain place than I had thought among the sacred books of the world".

Born into Anglo-Irish landowning class, Yeats became involved with the Celtic Renaissance, together with J.M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, and Padraic Colum. Yeats did such researches as ***Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*** (1888), ***Irish Fairy Tales*** (1892), and ***A Book of Irish Verse*** (1895). In 1899 Yeats, Lady Gregory, Martin and George Moore founded the **Irish Literary Theatre**, which would become the **Abbey Theatre** (also known as the National Theatre of Ireland) in 1904. Yeat's play ***Cathleen Ni Houlihan***, with Gonne in the title role, was featured on the opening night. It was followed by ***On Baile's Strand***, ***The Countess Cathleen***, ***The Land of Heart's Desire*** and ***The King's Threshold***.

After 1910, Yeat's work was strongly influenced by Pound, becoming more modern in its concision and imagery, but Yeats never abandoned his strict adherence to traditional verse forms. He had a life-ling interest in mysticism, spiritualism, occultism and astrology, which was off-putting to some readers, but he remained uninhibited in advancing his idiosyncratic philosophy. In 1885, he and his friends formed the Dublin Hermetic Order. Later he became heavily involved with theosophical beliefs. In 1917 he married Georgie Hyde Lees, twenty-seven years his junior, who shared his interests. Yeats and his wife dabbed with a form of automatic writing, Mrs. Yeats contacting a spirit guide she called "Leo Africanus". With her assistance he wrote ***A Vision*** (1925), an attempt at explanation for his elaborate philosophy and use of symbolism in his poetry. Yeats' mystical inclinations, informed by the writings of Swedenborg and Hindu religion, theosophical beliefs and the occult, formed much of the basis of his late poetry, which some critics attacked as lacking intellectual and philosophical insights, though he himself wrote in 1892, "If I had not made magic my constant study I could not have written a single word of my Blake book, nor would The Countess Cathleen ever have come to exist. The mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write".

Yeats is generally considered to be one of the twentieth-century's key English-language poets. Yet, unlike most modernists who experimented with free verse, Yeats was a master of the traditional verse forms. The impact of modernism on his work can be seen in the increasing abandonment of the more conventionally poetic diction of his early works in favour of the more austere language and more direct approach to his themes that characterises the poetry and plays of his middle period, comprising the volumes ***In the Seven Woods***, ***Responsibilities*** and ***The Green Helmet***. His later poetry and plays are written in a more personal vein. His subjects include his son and daughter and the experience of growing old, as, for example, in the poem ***The Circus Animals' Desertion***: "Now that my ladder's gone,/ I must lie down where all the ladders start/ In the foul rag and bone shop of the heart".

Yeats was deeply involved in politics in Ireland, but despite Irish independence from England, his verse reflected a sense of pessimism about the political situation in his country and the rest of Europe. In his early works, Yeats' aristocratic pose led to an idealisation of the Irish peasant and a willingness to ignore poverty and suffering. However, the emergence of a revolutionary movement from the ranks of the urban Catholic middle class made him reassess his attitudes. Yeats' new direct engagement with politics can be seen in the poem ***September 1913***, with its well-known refrain "Romantic Ireland's dead and gone,/It's with O'Leary in the grave". The poem is an attack on the Dublin employers who were involved in the lockout of workers who supported James Larkin's attempts to organise the Irish labour movement. In ***Easter 1916***, with its equally famous refrain "All changed, changed utterly:/A terrible beauty is born", Yeats faces his own failure to recognise the merits of the leaders of the Easter Rising because of their humble backgrounds and lives. Yeats was elected a senator of the Irish Free Republic in 1922 and reappointed in 1925. During his time as a senator Yeats warned his colleagues, "If you show that this country, southern Ireland, is going to be governed by Roman Catholic ideas alone, you will never get

the North … You will put a wedge in the midst of this nation". As they were virtually all Catholics, they were offended by these comments.

6. **Dylan Thomas** (1914-1953) was born in the coastal city of Swalsea, Wales. His father, who was a writer and possessed a degree in English, brought his son up to speak English rather than Welsh. Thomas's childhood was spent largely in Swansea, with regular summer trips to visit his mother's family on their farm. These rural sojourns, and their contrast with the town life provided substance for much of his work, notably short stories and radio essays and the poem *Fern Hill*. He attended the boys-only Swansea Grammar School where his father taught English literature, and his first poem was published in the school magazine. Thomas Dylan left school at age 16 to become a reporter. At the age of 21 he moved to London.

He was unable to actively fight in World War II because of frail health, however he still served the war effort by writing scripts for government propaganda.

In 1934 he published his first book of poetry, ***Eighteen Poems***, which was a great success; his rich and sensual imagery and complex poetic technique contrasted favourably with the more austere, socially aware verse of his British contemporaries. As well as drawing on the rich poetic tradition of Wales itself, Thomas was also influenced strongly by the Bible, the Metaphysicals, William Blake, Gerald Manley Hopkins as well as Freud and Jung, creating opulent and vibrant poems full of Christian symbolism and biological and bodily imagery. Other important works by Thomas include two later collections of poetry ***Deaths and Entrances*** (1946) and ***In Country Sleep*** (1951), which was his last volume of original poetry. His prose works include the autobiographical ***A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog*** (1940) and ***Adventures in the Skin Trade*** (published posthumously in 1954).

He met his future wife, Caitlin MacNamara, and "the love affair started in a Bloomsbury pub in the spring of 1936. A young Irish dancer called Caitlin MacNamara sat on a stool at her bar: blond, blue-eyed and drinking gin. To the drunken Welsh poet who staggered towards her through the smoky fog of The Wheatsheaf, she appeared an angelic beauty. And when finally the poet reached her, eccentrically laying his head in her lap, he mumbled a proposal of marriage". This unorthodox first encounter between Dylan Thomas and his wife is a central part of the Bohemian mythology that surrounds the memory of one of Britain's best loved creative talents. In 1937, Dylan Thomas married Caitlin and would have three children with her, though the marriage was tempestuous.

For many years, Thomas family lived a wandering life between London and South Wales. During the war he wrote scripts for documentary films; it was during this period that he became famous for his beautiful readings of poetry in what the poet called his "cut-glass accent". Afterwards he worked as a literary commentator for BBC radio. Also in this period he wrote and performed on the radio his play for voices, *Under Milk Wood,* which was also an enormous success; this richly comic play recounts the lives of the people of a small Welsh town by the sea, Llareggub.

In 1946, the wife of the famous Oxford historian A.J.P. Taylor bought Thomas a cottage, the Boat House, in the seaside village of Laugharne, and so he returned to

Wales with his wife and children. Unfortunately, Thomas, never a very good businessman, was constantly plagued with money problems, and partially in an attempt to improve this situation, he began a series of very successful reading tours in the United States, and his striking and powerful voice would captivate American audiences. However, the stress of these engagements increased his drinking, however, and he drunk himself to death in Greenwich Village, Manhattan. His lasts words were: "After 39 years, this is all I've done".

His body was brought back to Wales for burial in the village churchyard at Laugharne. Tourists in his home town of Swansea can visit his statue in the maritime quarter, the Dylan Thomas Theatre, and the Dylan Thomas Centre. The latter is a literature centre, where exhibitions and lectures are held and it is the setting for the city's annual Dylan Thomas Festival. In 2004 a new literary prize, the Dylan Thomas Prize, was created in honour of the poet. It is awarded to the best published writer in English under the age of 39.

The poetry of Dylan Thomas is noted for its innate spirituality, the romantic and metaphysical nature. His poem ***And Death Shall Have No Dominion*** expresses his deep love of humanity and the immortalist sentiment that death shall never triumph over life, as in the following lines:

Dead men naked they shall be one
With the wind and the west moon;
When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones have gone,
They shall have stars at elbow and foot;
Though they go mad they shall be sane,
Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;
Though lovers be lost love shall not;
And death shall have no dominion.

His best-known line is : "Do not go gentle into that good night".

7. Robert Lee Frost (1874-1963), a popular and often-quoted poet, was highly honoured during his lifetime. He received the Pulitzer Prize for poetry four times, an achievement unequalled by any other American poet, and was awarded the Bollinger Prize posthumously.

Although he is commonly associated with New England, Frost was born in San Francisco, a descendent to a Devonshire Frost who had sailed to New Hampshire in 1631. His father was a former school teacher turned newspaper man, a hard drinker, a gambler, a harsh disciplinarian. His father died when Robert Frost was twelve, and he moved with his mother and sister to Massachusetts, near his paternal grandparents. In 1892, he attended Dartmouth College for a semester, and then went home to teach and work at various jobs including factory work and newspaper delivery. In 1892 he sold his first poem, ***My Butterfly***, to *New York Independent*. In 1895 he married Elinor Miriam White and they taught school together until 1897. Frost then entered Harvard University for two years but had to return home as his wife was expecting a second child. His grandfather purchased a farm in Derry, New Hampshire for the

young couple. Robert Frost stayed there for nine years and wrote many of the poems that would make up his first works. His attempt at poultry farming was not successful, and from 1906 to 1912 he taught at a secondary school.

In 1912, Frost sailed with his family to Glasgow, and later settled in Beaconsfield, outside London. His first book of poetry, ***A Boy's Will***, was published in 1913, and in 1914 appeared his second volume, ***North of Boston***. In England he made some crucial contacts including Ezra Pound, who was the first to write a (favourable) review of Frost's work. Frost returned to America in 1915 and launched a career of writing, teaching and lecturing. From 1916 to 1938, he was an English professor at Amherst College in New Hampshire. He had honourary degrees from Harvard, Bates College, Oxford and Cambridge universities. Long before his death Frost's poetry entered school and university curricula, and was deeply implanted in American imagination.

Frost is widely remembered for reciting a poem, ***The Gift Outright***, on January 20, 1961 at the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy. Nominally a tribute to the country's early Colonial spirit, the poem ends in an optimistic, but characteristically ambivalent, note:

Such as we were we gave ourselves outright
(The deed of gift was many deeds of war)
To the land vaguely realizing westward,
But still unstored, artless, unenhanced,
Such as she was, such as she would become.

Frost was a prolific poet, and his poems are still occasionally unearthed and published. He was the first to incorporate the established verse forms, such as the sonnet, rhyming couplets, blank verse, with uniquely American and local vocabulary and speech rhythms. He also brought together separate poems into a larger unity by the same narrator, a wise countryman, close to nature. Over the course of his career, he became known for poems involving dramas or an interplay of voices, such as ***Death of the Hired Man***. Among his best-known shorter poems are ***Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening***, ***Mending Wall***, ***Nothing Gold Can Stay***, ***Birches***, ***After Apple-Picking***, ***The Pasture***, ***Fire and Ice***, ***The Road Not Taken***, and ***Directive***.

Of all his poetic elements, Frost's style is the hardest to pin down. In a letter to his friend, Louis Untermeyer, in 1924 Frost said that "style in prose or verse is that which indicates how the writer takes himself and what he is saying… His style is the way he carries himself toward his ideas and deeds". An essential element of Frost's style is his choice of words or diction: he uses everyday words, and writes his sentences with meter and rhythm to enhance their beauty. He believed that the subjects of poetry should be "common in experience", that it should speak of familiar things everyone recognizes, but "uncommon in expression". If the poet succeeds, "the poem will keep its freshness like a petal keeps its fragrance". Frost's genius matured before the beginning of poetic modernism. He, therefore, had much more in common with the nineteenth-century poets and with the Georgians –poets who carried the

Victorian tradition into the new century –than with Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and others who dominated the first half of the twentieth century.

8. **Carl Sandburg** (1878-1967) is regarded as the representative poet of the prairie West. He created a new technique in poetry, celebrating industrial and agricultural America. His poetry is noted for **everyday language rhythms, for democratic subjects and themes, for the colourful use of sayings and anecdotes**.

Carl Sandburg grew up in a small town of Galesburg, Illinois, which nevertheless boasted of three colleges and abounded in stories of its hero, Lincoln. He came from the humblest origin and worked in a barber shop, where he listened to the customers' talk about local history and arguments about politics, and became involved in the affairs of the state. During the Spanish-American War of 1898, Sandburg saw active service in Puerto Rico, and was a war correspondent for the Galesburg *Evening Mail*. He received free tuition at Lombard College for his war service. A professor of English at Lombard published Sandburg's first little book ***In Reckless Ecstasy*** (1904). For two years after college Sandburg, roaming about the country, got to know America in the songs of her farmlands, cowboys, river men, and Negro stevedores. All this became material for his poetry. After getting married in 1908, Sandburg went into advertising, wrote features for the Milwaukee Journal and Daily News. In 1912, he returned to Chicago, and in 1916, his ***Chicago Poems*** came out, followed by ***Cornhuskers*** (1918). Meanwhile he was scrupulously collecting Lincoln material for his great biography. In 1926, his ***Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years*** in two volumes came out bringing financial relief. Sandburg worked for another 16 years to bring out ***Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*** (four volumes, 1939), which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1940. ***The American Songbag***, a collection of folk songs, came out in 1927, ***The People, Yes*** followed in 1936, perhaps his greatest poetic work. Sandburg enjoyed

9. **Modern drama** begins in a sense with the witty drawing-room comedies of Oscar Wilde; yet Wilde founded no dramatic school. His wit was personal and generative of paradoxes for their own sake, unlike the wit of Restoration comedy, which reflected an attitude to the relation between the sexes that was part of a view of society held by a whole (if a small) social class. **George Bernard Shaw** (1856-1950) brought still another kind of wit into drama –the provocative paradox that was meant to tease and disturb, to challenge the complacency of the audience. Other attempts by twentieth-century dramatists to debate social questions on the stage—by John Galsworthy, for example—deserve respect for their humanity and intelligence and sometimes for their theatrical craftsmanship, but they lack Shaw's verbal and intellectual brilliance and his superb capacity to entertain.

Shaw was a novelist and short-story teller, book reviewer, art, music, and theatre critic, socialist essayist. But he is best remembered as a dramatist, the author of 47 plays. In 1925 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his drama *Saint Joan*.

Shaw was born in Dublin and was descended, in his own words, from a family of an Irish gentleman who lacked the income of a gentleman. At the age of 14 he started to work as a clerk in a land agent's office. At 20 he went to London. He

studied Marx and Engels, but rejected the idea of a revolutionary reconstruction of the world. He became a member of the Fabian society that preached an unrevolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism. Shaw believed in active and individually willed kind of evolution, urged on by what he called the Life Force.

In 1895 he became dramatic critic for the Saturday Review: his deliberately provocative reviews stirred up contemporary English ideas about plays and acting and enlarged the intellectual horizons of his readers. He championed Henrik Ibsen and published in 1891 a study of Ibsen titled *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, which presented the Norwegian dramatist as a realistic and reforming playwright, who addressed himself to the problems of modern life and introduced genuine discussion in his dialogue.

Shaw introduced on the English stage a new type of play – the British **social drama** (also known as the **publicistic drama**, or the **drama of ideas**). He did not reject the drama which treated universal human problems, such as love and death. He admitted that plays of this type were more lasting while social plays were of interest only as long as the particular problem existed. But he said: "If people are rotting and starving in all directions and nobody else has the heart or brains to make a disturbance about it, the great writers must." The reviewing of new plays over a period of years had given Shaw an expert knowledge of the structural devices employed by the authors of the "well-made play" of the late nineteenth century, and when he came to write his own plays, he was able to use conventional dramatic structure and even conventional themes for highly unconventional purposes. From the beginning, his aim as a dramatist was to shock his audiences into taking a new view of their society and the moral problems that arose out of it. "I must warn my readers," he wrote, "that my attacks are directed against themselves, not against my stage figures". Not only did he delight in standing the popular view on its head but he went further: beginning by persuading his audience by means of dramatic action and dialogue that the conventional hero was the villain and the conventional villain was the hero, he would swing everything around again to show that the conventional hero was the hero after all, but in a very different sense from that which the audience had originally thought.

The dramatical situations of Shaw's plays are significant not so much in themselves but as the starting points for the discussion by the heroes of various social problems. At the nucleus of each play lies a **central idea**. In ***Widower's Houses*** it is the exploitation of the urban poor by capitalists; in ***Philanderer***, free love; in ***Mrs. Warren's Profession***, prostitution; in ***Candida***, the woman's position in the family; in ***Caesar and Cleopatra***, the policy of conquest and the principles of government; in ***Man and Superman***, love, marriage, socialism, and capitalist civilization; in ***John Bull's Other Island***, the relations between the English and the Irish, the national character, practicality and romanticism; in ***On the Rocks*** and ***The Apple Cart***, bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, etc. Grouped around a central problem is a multitude of other problems. The plays are provided with prefaces in which Shaw explores the themes more fully.

Shaw's artistic device is the **paradox**, i.e. the opinion contradicting that which is regarded as obvious. In *Man and Superman*, for example, they are :

"Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same".

"Never resist temptation: prove all things, hold fast that which is good".

"Do not love your neighbour as yourself. If you are on good terms with yourself it is an impertinence; if on bad, an injury. "

The very action of Shaw's plays is based on **paradoxical situations**. Respectable members of society live on immoral earnings (*Widower's Houses*). A priest becomes a rebel, while a godless man performs an act of Christian self-sacrifice (*The Devil's Disciple*). In his earlier plays Shaw would take a conventional stage type, reverse it and then prove that the reversal was the truth. In *Arms and Man* the romantic stage soldier is substituted by a mercenary who knows fear and hunger; in *Mrs. Warren's* profession he replaces the romantic courtesan with the woman conducting the profitable, but unpleasant, trade of prostitution.

As a rule Shaw's characters are highly original. Some of them are closer to him: John Tanner in *Man and Superman*, Richard Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple*, Julius Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Captain Shotover in *Heartbreak House*. However they are not idealized and do not win an easy victory in their discussion with their opponents.

Shaw's greatest innovation were his female characters. The 19th century English drama admitted two kinds of women: either a weak, tender martyr figure, or a strong-willed impassioned heroine. Shaw created the emancipated woman who is not only equal to man but often surpasses him in intelligence, will-power, and spiritual strength. Some of his heroines are faultless (Candida). Others are invested with features typical of people of a particular social standing (Cleopatra).

The 19th century novel and drama were frankly didactic. Shaw chose a different way of reaching the public. One of his characters, Father Rogan, says the words which could be said by Shaw himself: "My way of joking is to tell the truth. It's the funniest joke in the world. "In the play *Back to Methuselah* another character says: "Most of the extraordinary ideas have come up first as jests." That Shaw's humour had a profound effect cannot be denied but some critics air the opinion that the message would have been greater if the wit had been less.

Shaw's literary career can be divided into two major periods: from the 1870s to World War I and from World War I to the end of his life. He devoted more than 70 years to intensive creative quest, mastering different genres, defending the theory and embodying in practice the principles of realism in art. In his essay *Three Plays by Brieux* (1909) he stated that great art cannot be created for its own sake. He believed that great writers are apostles doing what used to be called the Will of God. He placed such emphasis on the idea of the "high priesthood" of artists that in his appraisal a mediocre dramatist could be compared with Shakespeare as long as he exposed evil. As a playwright Shaw himself attacked the ills of the society in which he lived.

The first cycle of Shaw's plays, ***Plays Unpleasant*** , appeared in 1892-93. The most remarkable plays of the cycle – *Widower's Houses* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* – are interesting not only for the revelation of life's contradictions, but

also for their gripping dramatic action. The plays have long provocative prefaces attacking a great variety of problems including theatrical censorship.

The cycle of ***Pleasant Plays*** (1894-97) is concerned, as the writer saw it, "less with the crimes of society, and more with its romantic follies and the struggle of individuals against these follies". The cycle incorporated the antiromantic comedy *Arms and the Man***,** the psychological drama *Candida*, the historical extravaganza *The Man of Destiny*, and the comedy *You Can Never Tell*.

In the third cycle, ***Three Plays for Puritans*** (1898-99), Shaw, in the struggle for a socially engaged and realistic art, campaigned both against naturalism of modern drama and against pseudo-romanticism of sentimental drama. In *The Devil's Disciple* he threw new light on the world of Puritanism with its pretence of virtue. *Caesar and Cleopatra* is directed against militarism. *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* studies the correlation of formal legality and true morality.

Within the first twenty years of the 20th century Shaw continued to demonstrate creative inventiveness with his philosophical comedy *Man and Superman* (1901-03), the satirical dramas *John Bull's Other Island* (1904), *Major Barbara* **(**1905), the fable-play *Androcles and the Lion* (1912), the "poem " *Pygmalion* (1912-13), and the tragicomedy ***Heartbreak House*** (1913-17), subtitled "a fantasia in the Russian manner on English themes" that suggests Anton Chekhov in its depiction of the imminent collapse of a civilization.

The most important features of Shaw's artistic method and the originality of his theatre are the keen sense of social commitment, the pronounced intellectual atmosphere, and the brilliance of the dialogue.

9. Not only was **Eugene O'Neill** (1888-1953) the greatest playwright, he was also the first to bring serious themes into the theatre and to experiment with theatrical tradition. Four times he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize: for ***Beyond the Horizon*** (written in 1918), ***Anna Christie*** (1920), ***Strange Interlude*** (1926-27), and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** (1940-41), and he was the only playwright ever to win the Nobel Prize (1936). He is one of the most subjective dramatists of all time, who nourished the substance of his finest writings from his own tragic life.

Eugene O'Neill used to say about himself: "…I started as a trouper. My mother nursed me in the wings and in the dressing rooms". Another important fact was that his mother, as a result of his birth, became a drug addict: the doctor, to ease the difficult childbirth and recovery, had administered the drug too often. On learning of his role in the tragedy, O'Neill was devastated. Burdened with a sense of guilt, he turned rebellious, rejecting all established authority, particularly his family's religious faith.

He was expelled in his first year in Princeton for his turbulent behaviour and spent several years meandering. In 1909, he was secretly married against the wishes of both his and his wife's parents. In a few months, he set off to Honduras to prospect for gold and spent two years sailing to Buenos Aires, England, and South Africa. By 1912, he was physically and emotionally exhausted, but a tuberculosis case, ironically though, saved his life: while in hospital, he decided that upon recovery he would become a dramatist. He read

drama seriously, especially Stringberg, Ibsen and the Greek tragic poets. In 1914, O'Neill joined George Pierce Baker's famous drama workshop at Harvard for a year and that same year published his first book, Thirst and Other One-Act Plays. In 1916, his first play, Bound East for Cardiff, was produced. This play showed O'Neill's gift for creating an impressive surrounding and his acute ear for the vernacular. These two constituents became prominent features of all his plays. Twenty of his plays were produced on New York stages, such as *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *All God's Children Got Wings* (1924), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924) and others.

With *Strange Interlude*, he achieved a new dramatic language, which emphasized breakdowns in communication, as one stage direction runs, "They stare straight ahead and remain motionless. They speak, ostensibly one to the other, but showing by their tone it is thinking aloud to oneself, and neither appears to hear what the other has said."

In the last years of his life, he became estranged from all of his children. A man who always felt that he never "belonged", O'Neill died in a hotel in Boston, after crying out, "Born in a goddam hotel room and dying in a hotel room!"

As a dramatist, O'Neill is hard to classify. After starting with realistic plays, he persistently took off in new ways. He wrote nightmarish expressionistic works, costume dramas, bitter views of marriage, biblical fables, and free adaptations of classical tragedy. In writing nearly 30 long plays and a dozen short ones, as well as many unproduced works, he almost exhausted the stage's nonverbal resources through his use of masks, music, dance, pantomime, unusual scenic devices, and novel sound effects.

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