



Foreign literature of the 20th-21st centuries (Literature of Great Britain and the USA)

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FOREWORD

“Literature is the expression of society, just as words are the expression of human beings” (T.Huxley, 2011: p. 87). This is a famous quote by Professor Thomas Huxley, a British biologist and anthropologist. Indeed, multiculturalism in American literature is a powerful means for expressing the US society and its various aspects in the second half of the 20th century.

This old literary quote also applies to British and American literature of the XX-XXI centuries. Indeed, literature is a powerful medium for expressing society and its various aspects.

The guide book covers a range of British and American literature in the XX-XXI centuries. It also explores the impact of writing from the former colonies on English literature of the period and analyzes the ways in which conventional literary genres were shaped and inflected by the new cultural technologies of radio, cinema and television.

The book offers a comprehensive account of the influence of contemporary British and American literature on the culture of these countries and on the world in general. It analyzes literary works from a broad range of genres. It offers pertinent historical context throughout, and new critical perspectives on such key themes as multiculturalism and evolving cultural identities in contemporary British and American literature. The guide book also explores race, politics, gender, sexuality, identity, amongst other key literary themes in British literature. It will serve as a key resource for MA students of philology.

The use of the proposed materials in practical classes will ensure students’ mastery of program material, thematic vocabulary, literary and socio-cultural knowledge as components of successful communication. It will allow them to demonstrate awareness of the the UK and the USA literature of the XX-XXI centuries, work effectively in a team as part of a student group, carry out

research based on a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills.

INTRODUCTION

British and American literature of the XX-XXI centuries was greatly influenced by the historical events of that period. The Second World War discredited the ideas of traditional European humanism. The young generation of the 1950s and especially the 1960s painfully feels the loss of ideals, disappointment in the post-war reality, and lack of perspective. At the same time the war gave such examples as selfless heroism, and sacrifice in the name of others.

The whole paradigm of Western culture underwent a radical revision. The confrontation between the two socio-political systems during the Cold War years also left its mark on the literary texts and on their inner content. For Great Britain the collapse of the colonial system as a result of the victory of national liberation movements in the countries of the «third world» is a tangible blow. Independence encourages the development of their own literature in the countries of Africa and Asia, which will soon occupy worthy places on the literary map of the world. New trends, genres and forms of literature appear. One of them is an active development of eco-literature. Ecological warnings are described by science fiction writers, authors of dystopias and cautionary novels. All these factors influenced the formation of literature of the XX-XXI centuries.

LITERARY PROCESS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY

1. Social and cultural conditions

The traditional division of the literary century into the "first" and "second" halves is, of course, a convention that helps to organize the vast amount of artistic material. The watershed lines between divergent intentions of artists, understanding of the goals and tasks of literature, and aesthetic principles of its creation do not follow the calendar, but content coordinates, marked by shifts in human consciousness.

Likewise, it is logical to start counting its "second half" somewhat earlier than the beginning of the 1950s, namely, from the Second World War, because it was the war that forced the entire paradigm of Western culture to undergo a radical revision, in particular, the ideas about the limits of human capabilities. On the one hand, the mundaneness of inhumanity, which, unfortunately, was marked by the war, proved the illusoriness of moral boundaries, which man is seemingly unable to cross. They were dispersed by the smoke from the ovens of Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

The famous German philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno noted that it was impossible to write poems after Auschwitz. Usually, his statement should be interpreted metaphorically, not as a call to stop literary activity, but as a statement of the need to review its foundations, since traditional European humanism has discredited itself. On the other hand, the war also gave opposite examples, such as selfless heroism, and sacrifice in the name of others, which also, albeit in the other direction, expanded the knowledge of what a person is capable of.

Thus, we can talk about the philosophical lessons of war as one of the

factors in the development of literature.

The confrontation between the two socio-political systems, which took shape in the post-war world and gained its most acute expression during the Cold War years, also left its mark on the conditions of production and consumption of literary texts and on their inner content. It is also about the censorship of art in the countries of the socialist camp; and about the "iron curtain" due to which Soviet literature (including its Ukrainian component) was forced to develop in isolation from general European processes; and about imposing a single creative method on writers; and about the ambivalence of the position of many western literary liberals, who believed that despite all the negativity that plagues countries with communist ideology, they have no right to sharply criticize them, because this would harm democratic tendencies in the world. The tragedy of writers' destinies and untruth (or not the whole truth) in art are the main results of this situation.

In turn, the West was also not without its contradictions. Time dulls the memory of the horrors of the war, and in Europe, recovering from the ruin, and in the prosperous United States, a post-industrial "consumer society" develops, with its emphasis on material well-being, on the continuous cycle of procreation, and the satisfaction of desires.

The young generation of the 1950s and especially the 1960s painfully feels the loss of ideals, disappointment in the post-war reality, and lack of perspective. In the countries of Western Europe and in the USA, waves of protest are growing, taking different forms. In the culture of Great Britain and the USA, they are first expressed in the movements of "angry young people" and beatniks, later they are replaced by youth (mainly musical and visual) counterculture, hipsterism, and "sexual revolution". Then, during the "tumultuous decade" of the 1960s, student riots spread through France, Germany, America, and England, inspired by the ideology of the "new left."

This tumultuous atmosphere contributed to the strengthening of feminist sentiments, which branched out in many directions in the following decades. For European countries, in particular, Great Britain, the collapse of the colonial system as a result of the victory of national liberation movements in the countries of the "third world" is a tangible blow.

This process is manifested not only in the political and economic but also in the cultural and psychological sphere since the former residents of the metropolises have to say goodbye to their "imperial" skills. In addition, the acquisition of independence encourages the development of their own literature in the countries of Africa and Asia, which will soon occupy worthy places on the literary map of the world.

The literature of recent decades shows a special sensitivity to the results of the scientific and technical revolution, which takes various forms. One of them is an active development of the so-called eco-literature in our time. Environmental pollution and depletion of natural resources, which threatens life on Earth, has become one of the topics that unite writers on a global scale.

Other dangerous consequences of irresponsibility in science are written by science fiction writers, authors of dystopias, and cautionary novels. Another direction of possible connections between different spheres of social consciousness is revealed through the "mutual exchange" of formal techniques between literature and "technical" types of art such as cinematography, and photography. Today, Internet literature is being intensively formed, that is, hypertexts are being created, intended for reception in the electronic mode, where the role of the reader is significantly strengthened. Moreover, some writers use the appropriate technique to write "traditional" works on paper.

2. Ideological and philosophical factors

All these phenomena can be interpreted in the context of cultural globalization. It also enables many people to have almost instant access to texts

created anywhere in the world. The means of mass communication have fundamentally changed and accelerated the procedure of literary contacts, which affects the process of creating new texts and the level of intertextuality in these texts is incomparably increasing. The ancient idea of "world literature" acquires new meanings today.

At the same time, the globalization of culture has another dimension because mass culture is conquering the world. This phenomenon also deserves to be studied in order to find an antidote to the standardization of thinking and taste.

The collapse of the USSR and the world system of socialism in the 1990s became one of the events that led to disillusionment with any ideological constructions which determined the transition of the current era to the postmodern period. Postmodern literature is a significant component of the modern cultural process.

All these factors played an important role in the formation of literature of the XX-XXI centuries. Usually, it is not possible to exhaust all its features in a short introductory part, so here we focus only on those that seem to us to be the most important. More details about the poetics of modern literature will be discussed in the conversation about specific national variants of the latter and during seminar classes.

So, one of the fundamental features of modern literature is the multivariate artistic experience which is reflected in it. None of the directions or styles, none of the schools or currents can today, as it once was, claim a central role in the literary process. On the contrary, the writer feels like a descendant of all previous literary eras, among which he freely chooses what he needs to realize his plan. At the same time, the "playing field" has already gone beyond purely Eurocentric boundaries, since elements of other aesthetic systems, borrowed, for example, from the literature of the Far East, Africa, or Latin

America, are involved in the creation of modern texts.

Likewise, in the current situation, no subject position (male, white, European, etc.) can assert itself as dominant – the textual space is equally open to all, including those who were previously silenced or marginalized.

Despite the fact that mimetic (life-like) forms continue to play a significant role in art, in modern modifications of literary realism there is an active interpenetration of realistic and non-realistic tendencies, which each time, under the pen of each author, form new and unique fusions. "Classical" realism in the form in which it developed in the 19th century, almost without "mixtures", is practiced rather by writers of the second or third rank, while leading writers experiment with various types of conventional writing.

Among such types, the tendency to neomythologism and parable is worth mentioning in the literature of the XX-XXI centuries. Turning to these forms of foreign literature makes it possible to strengthen the universal sound of the work, to transfer it from the level of a specific story situation to a universal dimension, to emphasize the scale of problems and images.

In addition, the tangled internal structure of modern civilization, the complexity of the threads that connect continents and institutions, corporations and banks, science and production, do not allow them to be grasped by the external view of a realist observer. The main driving forces in today's society are difficult to interpret due to their decomposition into separate components, so writers tend to present them in the unbroken integrity of a myth.

The second half of the last century and the beginning of the contemporary one are characterized by the strengthening of the influence of mass culture, which leads to mutual penetration and mutual conflicts.

This process is most clearly expressed in postmodern literature, but it is not limited to it. Mass genres - detective, fantasy, thriller, women's novels - use philosophical and cultural theories in a reduced, clichéd version, while "high-

minded" writers do not hesitate to use the techniques of the same genres in their ideologically deep works.

As a result, much of modern literature has a multi-level structure, which makes it attractive both to experienced, well-prepared readers who seek intellectual pleasure, and to the mass reader who needs plot tension and an unexpected resolution.

In the same way, the borders between different genres, types, and even types of literature are weakening, and various "border" genre forms are emerging. Within the novel genre, it is almost impossible to distinguish its "pure" varieties, such as an educational novel, a historical novel, a detective story, etc.

A modern novel, as a rule, is characterized by polygenre or cross-genre, that is, it combines elements of different genres. In addition, a dramatized episode can "intervene" in a prose work, and a poem can be suddenly interrupted by a fragment of prose, not to mention the combination of verbal and visual texts. Thus, traditional categories do not always work in today's art practice.

3. The priority of style over content

An essential feature of modern literature is the **priority of style over content**. In light of widespread ideas about the exhaustion of possible plots and images (it seems that everything has already been written during the many centuries of the development of literature), the question of not "what" but "how" is gaining more and more importance - it is not so much the events depicted in the work (the plot) that are important as from whose person, in what words, in what order they are presented, that is, poetics and style.

Current literature largely relies on cultural and historical "texts" of the past, uses familiar situations or images - and then the reader, familiar with the content side of the work, shifts attention to how and why the writer "rewrites" the already existing text.

All the above-mentioned characteristics lead to a significant increase in the role of the reader in the constitution of the meaning of the text, which everyone who opens a modern work has to face. If the writer of the past carefully accompanied the reader along the paths of the text, explained the incomprehensible, and constructed the story in such a way that it was easier for us to follow its unfolding, the author of the late 20th century deliberately confuses the reader. He introduces unreliable narrators to him, mixes time layers, delays the revelation of mysteries, or leaves them without explanations at all. Such texts require active intellectual cooperation from us. But if we still agree to the author's terms, reading turns into an exciting intellectual journey that gives pleasure not so much in the result as in the process itself.

MYTH IN THE LITERATURE OF THE XX-XXI CENTURIES

1. The origin and meaning of the myth

What is a myth? It is quite difficult to establish the primary meaning of the word "myth". Its origin is associated with the ancient Indo-European language, which is considered the ancestor of Greek, Romano-Germanic, Slavic, and other languages. In ancient times, this word was used with many meanings.

An opinion, a piece of advice, a story about the life of ancestors, a rumor, even a fiction or a lie - all this was then called a myth. Gradually, the word acquired the meaning in which we use it today - an ancient folk tale or legend about natural phenomena, historical events, gods, or deified beings, which summarizes the eternal laws of human existence.

Myths were created to explain and make sense of what was happening in the surrounding world. They remain an eternal truth for people. The ability to understand them is an important step towards self-knowledge of a person. A myth is like an eternal mirror into which we look to learn more about ourselves. It has strong ties with culture, thanks to which they fruitfully enrich each other.

However, scientists still argue about the specifics of this relationship.

For example, the idea of a myth as an initial stage of cultural development and the assertion that its place is in the distant past look convincing. Meanwhile, the idea of the cyclical existence of a myth in culture, its "walking in circles" and its eternal return is finding more and more supporters.

This means that the myth is everywhere: in the past, present, and future. It appears as the only true story in which the abolished laws of death and life of everyone are just a recreation of mythological events. The personal human experience becomes unnecessary in the myth because the experience of all humanity is valued.

2. The mystery of nature in myths

In our time of relentless technological progress, the myth reliably preserves the mystery of Nature. The idea of a certain mysterious connection between us and the universe causes an irresistible desire to turn to mythmaking. The reproduction of the surrounding world in a figurative form becomes absolutely necessary for a conscious, meaningful life, and not a primitive existence.

Mythology is a country of inspiration, it lives according to its own dimensions of space and time. With the help of mythical thinking, a person tries not only to know the world but also, first of all, to evaluate it, to satisfy his spiritual needs. Mythical consciousness does not distance a person from the real world. In a myth, a person does not lose his individuality, but this does not prevent him from feeling part of the universe at the same time.

A mythical person is able to enter other images; they are like masks that help you experience someone else's life in order to better understand your own. Almost everything in the myth is personified. This form of pictorial representation of the world is called personification. The mythical world is created like the world of people. However, the kinship in the myth exists not

only between people but also between a natural phenomenon and an animal, between a person and a plant, etc.

A person's proper name and surname testify to his personality, emphasizing his uniqueness and genetic connection with his ancestors. The life of a rootless person loses its meaning and turns into a meaningless existence. Family relationships are like a big chain. They are strong and reliable. If such a connection is interrupted, the family disappears. Each person becomes a part of the family team.

That is why Ursula Iguaran from G. García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* cares so much about her family. She personifies the image of Mother Nature.

3. Infinity as a feature of mythical space

Infinity is a feature of mythical space. We watch the eternal return of spring, summer, or autumn. This vortex forms a mythical space-time. The movement of Nature's clock cannot be stopped, its mechanism is Eternity. A stop would mean "end," and Nature can have neither beginning nor end. She lives according to the cyclic dimension.

According to its laws, a dead hero can become alive again or appear in several places at once. The man of the myth is indifferent to his own age. He is a part of Nature, which means that his life will last forever: an elderly person must give way to a young one, but his death is perceived only as a means of eternal renewal. His life continues with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. In the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by G. García Márquez, a sign of such eternity is observed in the constant choice of names for the children of the Buendia family. Almost all the men have the name Jose Arcadio or Aureliano.

A mythical message is quite different from an ordinary one because the type of thinking characteristics of a mythical message excludes the concept of

"stories". They only talk about the past event. It can be evaluated, made more interesting than the real event, supplemented with one's own thoughts, and embellished with imagination. Contrary to the event of the past, myth does not know truth or fiction. Everything about it is considered completely reliable.

4. Myth and literature of the XX-XXI centuries

Myth is considered the primary basis of many arts. The culture of the whole world was influenced by it. Ancient mythology was reflected in the art of Ancient Greece. During the Middle Ages in Europe, the Christian myth reigned. The Renaissance turned to antiquity, a primordial creative source. In the era of classicism, the artistic value of works was measured using mythological heritage. Enlighteners of the 18th century also did not deny the myth but interpreted it in the spirit of contemporary philosophy.

The view of history as a sequential series of events changed the attitude towards the myth and became the main reason for its decline. The complex process of destroying the worldview inherent in mythical consciousness lasted for several centuries. In the 19th century the myth, having finally lost its significance as a model of the universe, turned into a source of poetic elements for secular literature; its depth and multiplicity contributed to this. It was then that the idea of creating a new mythology arose, which would combine ancient and medieval myths.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Western European society was gripped by a cultural crisis. It was caused by disbelief in social progress, despair on the eve of the First World War, and helplessness before the revolutionary element. It was the time of the birth of a new art - modernism. Having categorically rejected the idea of imitating the past, modernism treated the myth primarily as an artistic tool for his creative experiments. J. Joyce, T.S. Eliot, F. García Lorca, R. M. Rilke and other modernists actively used mythological heritage in their works. The time has come to revive the myth.

The myth becomes important material for the literature of the 20th century and is gaining popularity. Its capabilities are widely used to achieve philosophical and artistic goals. In the prose of the post-war years, the myth is more often used as a technique that emphasizes a certain conflict situation through a parallel to ancient or biblical mythology.

Writers build their works in such a way that they were perceived against the background of mythological models and, thanks to this, acquired a deeper and much more significant meaning (*The Centaur* by J. Updike, *Homo Faber* by M. Frisch, *The Forest King* by M. Tournier for example).

LITERATURE AND VISUAL CULTURE

1. The emergence of new paradigms of creativity

It is well known that postmodern civilization is based on the verbal system of expressing thought but prefers a visual form of its presentation, which greatly simplifies information and makes it more accessible. The process of forming a new visual culture began long time ago. Modern forms of social imagination of the Europeans were crystallized on the basis of cultural and historical products, which over the centuries formed aesthetic tastes, and created a context for the emergence of qualitatively new paradigms of creativity. At the end of the second millennium, the integration of cultures and the equal existence of arts, which do not so much influence each other as co-exist in the same time space, using the heritage of civilization, became a generally recognized norm. In the era of postmodernism, new codes of use of the iconic sign turned out to be relevant.

An iconic sign as a perceptual phenomenon not only presents a visual image of the real world but also produces new meanings. It becomes clear that not only literature influences cinematography, but also the dominant visual culture determines the nature and construction of the artistic image in literary

text.

Cinematography significantly affects the anthropological structures of the public imagination. Even at the beginning of the 20th century, the French philosopher H. Bergson used a cinematic image as a metaphor that allowed us to trace the functioning of consciousness: experiencing a moment, a person distances himself from it, builds a static image of it, and then thought begins to unfold and generalize the situation.

After the Second World War, a new stage of relations between literature and cinematography began. A. Malraux, J. Cocteau, J. Giono, famous novelists, poets and playwrights, adapted their texts for the cinema themselves and created scenarios for the films. In fact, they rewrote their own text, adapting it for visual perception.

The main direction of the development of sound cinematography in the 1950s was connected with adaptations of classical artistic texts. Focalization on dialogues rather than poetic descriptions of space confirmed the return to the practice of realistic storytelling.

The modernist film differs from the classic pre-war film in its compositionally looser narrative, weakened intrigue, the wide introduction into the frame of unclear secondary details of the second plan, which add "discussion" to the frame, but do not make the conflict clearer and do not affect the general passive position of the character, who is in a state of psychological crisis.

The new method of narration was based on the fundamental rejection of montage and the wide use of the semantic load of the second plan. In the philosophical aspect, this meant the transition from the abstract fragmentation of reality through montage to an integral vision of the world.

Many unrelated elements came into the viewer's field of vision, whose simultaneous coexistence in space provoked imagination and activated thought

in search of ever new possible interpretations of what is happening in the frame. While watching the film, the viewer could create many combinatorial interpretations of situations and characters, which already created a stereoscopic effect and overcame the realistic flatness of the plot.

The new narrative structure of the feature film was not based on the usual "plan", which contained an abstract view of the world. The shot itself was both a plan and at the same time a fact, an event, a fragment, a reality snatched from reality in its original brutal form, in all its ambiguity and contradictions. The development of technical means of filming also had an impact, which added considerable freedom to cameramen and directors.

Between 1990 and 1995, the concept of a cinematographic genre disappears, the boundaries of which become so blurred that critics speak of "author's cinema". In cinematography, the concept of "author's cinema" secures the director and his creative team the right to use all artistic means, styles, methods, and genre forms that are necessary for the realization of their vision of the world. Similar processes are taking place in literature, where from now on it is inappropriate to talk about genre, style, creative method, artistic trend, or direction of artistic development. Each work is unique and unique in its embodiment, although at the same time, it reflects already existing artistic discourses, quotes and refers to well-known texts, but is not connected with extra-textual, socio-historical reality.

The development of cinematography provided the literature of the late 20th century with new urgent questions, in the context of which the very concept of reality sounds problematic. Citations of previous works of art, comparison of iconic signs, and visual metaphors are examples of the techniques of cinematography included in a work of art of a large epic form.

The new writing technique and new narrative codes in literature are connected with the process of creating a collective poetic imagination, different

from the previous space, imbued with visual methods of representation. Earlier, the word itself defined time and space as dimensions of reality. A person at the end of the 2nd millennium uses other cultural codes, his imagination is fueled by other stereotypes, and his thinking processes are based on the latest archetypes. This is due to changes in the mentality of people of postmodern civilization. The spread of urban space, speed in its most diverse manifestations of human life, neon advertising and the intermittent nature of its impact on the retina of the eye, the noise of a big city and the loneliness of a person, the spread of mental illnesses affect the self-esteem and well-being of a person. After the Second World War in large industrial cities and cultural centers, the situation of anonymity, the lonely existence of an individual person in a large human conglomerate is growing.

The next round of the attack on visual culture falls during the period of the development of television culture. Television marks the emergence of a new perception of the world. Sitting on a comfortable couch at home, a person can observe events that took place nearby or tens of thousands kilometers away.

The ability to directly observe an event, to describe the world and form an impression of it as an objective reality observed in one's own senses, is replaced by a mediated representation of the world. A person increasingly uses linguistic clichés and repeats the experience of his predecessors. Ersatz affects the perception of spiritual culture, simplifies it, and makes it easily superimposed on what is already known, self-reproducing, and repeating in series that are easily recognizable and identifiable.

Artificiality and deception entered the consciousness of a person of the 20th-21st centuries as an experience of their own existence in an alienated, indifferent world. In order to survive, a person was forced to allow the experience of a bifurcated existence, that is, to escape mentally into memory, into a poetic imagination as a utopian space of wholeness and completeness.

2. The relationship between literature and cinematography

Contemporary art is dominated by an indirect view of the world. The literature widely uses the techniques of film and photography. In practice, it looks like the presence of thematic and compositional echoes, refractions as impressions in water and mirrors. They express the separation of man from the world. Our contemporary person feels as if he is not able to enter, fit in with the world, and engage in it with soul and body in order to love, actively act, and realize himself. Even death in this world has ceased to be a reality given in one's own senses. The character who acts in the novels reflects the experience of a contemporary, admitted only to the image of the world, distanced from its essence so much that he is able to catch only the flickering of the image. Posters, photos, commercials, covers of newspapers and magazines, and postcards are all examples of mass media products that repeat stereotypes of the image of reality. These are the technical means of reproducing visuality as the dominant culture of a large metropolis.

Man has lost his central place in the universe. Cinematic effects are capable of questioning humanity, as they are known to deprive a character of psychological depth. The cinematography does not exert, as it did in the pre-war culture, a positive influence on consciousness: increasingly it turns out to be a low-grade compensation, a pale ersatz of real life. In the cinematic image, there is necessarily a second-level imitation.

The relationship between literature and cinematography at the end of the 20th century is studied by modern literary and cinematographic science in three main directions:

1. Shared mistrust of visual culture as mass culture and pop cultures.
2. Spectator reception as a situation of fascination, "obsession", and identification of oneself with the hero on the screen.

3. Objective reality and its illusory counterparts in human perception.

Cinematic visual discourse is a specific language with its own stereotypes and jokes. This is a new reality, a new form of citation in a verbal text, which from now on does not need to be described in order to be recognized as it is enough to recall and reproduce one of the common stereotyped expressions so that the memory reproduces the situation.

LITERATURE OF GREAT BRITAIN

1. "Tradition and Dream" in English-language literatures

"Tradition and Dream" is what the English literary critic and novelist Walter Allen called his investigation of the two English-language literatures: one being that of Great Britain, and the other, the United States. Taken in the broadest sense, these categories, in his opinion, determine the main vectors of the literary development of the two countries: British writers, despite their active participation in all the aesthetic experiments of the last century, constantly return to the inexhaustible classical traditions of national literature, which were formed over many centuries. In turn, the core of the "younger" American literature remains the mythologeme of the "American dream", which inspired the Europeans of the 19th and 20th centuries to undertake a perilous journey across the Atlantic to build an earthly paradise in the New World. And although it has repeatedly changed its content throughout the history of the United States, the complex relationship with it - apologetics or criticism, controversy or efforts to restore its original meaning - continues to be in the center of the attention of American artists. Despite all the conventionality of such a division, it captures certain regularities in the literary progress of the two countries. So, continuing

along the paths of English literature of the second half of the 20th century, we will try to compare its diversity with the concept of tradition. We will be interested in the questions of which traditions are actualized in this or that segment of the post-war history of England, how fidelity to tradition correlates with its violation or denial, and how the classical traditions of some writers coexist with postmodern strategies.

2. Historical and cultural background of the literary process

The significance of the Second World War as a watershed in the history of the XX-XXI centuries is common to all European countries. Great Britain's experience is also exacerbated by the fact that the war hastened the collapse of the British colonial empire. Its disintegration, which took place over the course of twenty years, starting in the late 1940s, had an extraordinary impact on national self-awareness. After all, many generations of the British lived with the confidence that they were subjects of the greatest empire in the world, "on which the sun never set" - when it set over London, it rose over the numerous possessions of Britain in Africa and Asia. There were reasons for this: after the First World War, more than a quarter of the earth's territory and population were under the authority of the British crown. Such a system seemed eternal and gave the nation a sense of stability and confidence. So when it faltered, it led to a mood of confusion, a loss of foothold, and subsequently a need for a revision of national identity. The movement from "Great Britain" to "Little England" necessitated their re-evaluation of values. The national liberation struggle of the population of the colonies and the last convulsions of the empire were directly reflected in the works of J. Aldridge, D. Stewart, B. Davidson, N. Lewis, and G. Green. In a broader sense, the "fall of the empire" led to the presence in the literature of all post-war decades of the motif of rebuilding national consciousness, and rethinking one's English essence, which could no longer be constructed from a position of strength. The complex dialectic of this process is

addressed by J. Fowles in the novel *Daniel Martin* (1977): on the one hand, the generation that witnessed the demise of the empire felt relieved, freed from the "burden of the white man"; on the other hand, a vacuum is formed in the souls of these young people, and the desire to fill it could lead to "absurd nostalgia for the imperial, victorious past."

The question of the new formulation of "Englishness" is also complicated by the fact that the reality of everyday life in Great Britain includes the presence of a significant "non-white" population including natives of former African colonies, India, Pakistan, and the West Indies, which is constantly growing. The multi-racial and multi-ethnic nature of modern English society gives rise to a number of complex social, cultural, and psychological problems, including the problem of self-identification.

After all, excessive emphasis on the seemingly patriotic longing for "jolly old England" today can mask a chauvinistic desire for racial purity.

The general trajectory of public sentiment in post-war Albion can be outlined as a gradual increase in dissatisfaction (especially on the part of the younger generation) with the state of affairs, which reached its peak in the student riots of the 1960s, and then, in the 1970s, a return to a more conservative-style thinking both in politics and in other spheres of life. Roughly the same scheme is characteristic of many other countries of Western Europe and the USA, although in Britain, known for its restraint, the "tumultuous sixties" passed more calmly than, say, in France or America.

Different "colors of time" also affected cultural processes in the country - in the early 1950s, "angry young people" broke into English literature (J. Vane, K. Amis, J. Osborne, J. Brian); in the next decade, their emotional but not very focused protest was replaced by the so-called working novel (A. Sillitoe, S. Chaplin, S. Barstow) with its attention to the everyday life of the British working class.

Starting during these years and continuing throughout the rest of the century, the genre of the philosophical, or intellectual, novel successfully developed through the efforts of I. Murdoch, W. Golding, J. Fowles, A. Wilson, and L. Darrell. At the same time, writers of the older generation (G. Green, Ch. P. Snow, E. Waugh) who were already well-known and realistic at the time continued to create. The modern panorama of British literature, like that of any other country, impresses with a variety of directions, styles, and individualities, among which postmodern trends play a significant role.

In order to understand the dynamics of the literary life of England, it is also necessary to indicate the change of reference points in relation to the national literary traditions chosen for imitation. If in the 1950s they preferred to free themselves from the restrictions of bourgeois decency and therefore focused on the free spirit of the 18th century, in particular on the manner of a loose picaresque narrative, then in the 1970s, when a return to traditional values was on the agenda, the Victorian era (the last two-thirds of the 19th century) with its classic authors began to attract more writers (even the term "Victorian revival" arose).

Regarding the literature of our days, in terms of the traditions it uses, it can be called "omnivorous": one of the signs of the writing of the postmodern era is precisely the free play with cultural artifacts of all historical eras available to the author. No matter which era in the history of culture attracts one or another modern writer, one name remains attractive to all: it is the name of Shakespeare. The Shakespearean intertext incorporated into one's own discourse in different ways can be found in the work of many writers of the second half of the century (I. Murdoch's novels *The Black Prince* (1973) and *The Sea, the Sea* (1978), *The Collector* and *The Magician* by J. Fowles, drama by T. Stoppard, etc.), where it performs various ideological and aesthetic functions.

Let's dwell in more detail on some of the aforementioned literary

phenomena.

3. "Angry young people"

At the beginning of the 1950s, a whole group of works by relatively young authors was published at short intervals. Despite all the differences between the writers, their prose and drama are united by a typologically similar hero: a young, educated person who is actively and loudly dissatisfied with his life and the situation in the country in general. These include the novels of J. Wayne *Hurry Down* (1953), K. Amis *Lucky Jim* (1954), and J. Brain *The Way Up* (1957).

However, the public awareness that a new literary and social type had appeared in the country came only with the theatrical premiere of J. Osborne's drama *Look Around in Anger* (1956). It was the presence of "anger" ("anger") in its name that gave critics a reason to unite the named authors with the common definition of "angry", although they never belonged to any one formal literary school and denied their kinship in every possible way. (And indeed, the subsequent literary and life paths of the "angry" diverged significantly: some (K. Amis, J. Brain), like their own heroes, adapted to consumer society and were satisfied with commercial success, others (J. Osborne, J. Vane) continued the search for moral alternatives in a different social atmosphere). But then they were perceived as one cohort whose voice expressed the thoughts and feelings of an entire deluded generation.

The victory over fascism gave hope to young people for democratic changes in the hierarchical English society, and for expanding opportunities for self-realization. For a short time, it seemed as if they were starting to come true, at least in the area of higher education.

But young Englishmen from the middle or lower classes, even with education, found it difficult to make their way in society. A monotonous existence awaited them in a middle-class spiritless environment; hence the

disappointment, irritability, and outbursts of seemingly unmotivated and causeless rage, which sometimes affected the people closest to the protagonist (as was the case, for example, with Osborne's hero Jimmy Porter).

In the background of these manifestations is a powerless rebellion against the aimless everyday life, which extinguishes all impulses, dulls the intellect, and sharpens natural abilities and the will to act. The lack of a specific social or political target in the angry Philippic heroes, who splashed them on everyone and everything, determined the transience of the rebellion of the "angry". His energy exhausted itself at the end of the 1950s. From an aesthetic point of view, this movement in all genres is characterized by a simplicity of style that corresponds to the desire for the most faithful reproduction of reality in all its details; deliberate rejection of any techniques of artistic convention; with a very personal, ironic intonation.

At the same time, as already mentioned, in the vicissitudes that befall the unscrupulous protagonists, one can hear the echo of adventure novels of the 18th century, and they themselves sometimes resemble their heroes who are tricksters.

In the 1960s, the baton of protest against the consumer society was picked up by the "new left", whose activities were closely related to the activation of the student movement. In Britain, it did not reach the same scale as in France, Germany, or the USA; regarding the literary dimension, it did not produce interesting artistic achievements. The lessons of this experience were later interpreted quite critically, even satirically by English writers, who saw social immaturity, selfishness, and unfounded personal claims behind loud "leftist" phrases.

4. An intellectual/philosophical novel

The genre of the philosophical novel (when it comes to its English version, the Ukrainian researcher S. Pavlychko prefers the term "intellectual") is

one of the influential currents in the post-war literature of Great Britain. This genre is by no means the prerogative of any one national literature.

Having appeared a long time ago, it continues to develop in many cultures, acquiring specific features in each. Undoubtedly, any literary work carries a certain intellectual charge, and reflects the philosophical views of its creator; but when we talk about the works allocated to a separate genre, it is meant that their philosophical ideas are not simply "poured" into the text, but come to its surface, become one of the themes, determine its plot lines and structural elements. In such a novel, there are constant echoes of thinkers of different eras, it is rich in cultural quotations and allusions. His characters (their choice also reflects the nature of the genre - among them there are many intellectuals and people with creative professions) often conduct philosophical discussions, entering into a productive dialogue with each other.

The artistic conclusion of a philosophical novel is a palette of ideological positions presented to the reader. In this way, the reader is also involved in the polylogue, whom the text provokes to thought.

The presence of a powerful moral dominant can be considered a sign of the British intellectual novel. Murdoch, Golding, and other writers are not satisfied with just the game of the mind, or brilliant ideological equilibrium. For them, a moral lesson that can be learned from an ideological dispute is always important. It is not for nothing that Murdoch proclaims the thesis of the supremacy of Good.

Another characteristic feature of English philosophical prose is connected with the rootedness of British authors in the strong national tradition of good everyday and psychological novels in which ideological richness coexists in their works with detailed realities of everyday life, loving attention to the world of things, and masterfully drawn psychological portraits of characters.

4.1 William Golding's most essential questions of existence

In 1983 The Nobel Prize in Literature was also awarded to one writer of philosophical orientation, **William Golding** (1911-1992), for "covering the condition of man in the modern world." According to the members of the Nobel Committee (with which one can argue), the apparent tragedy of Golding's parables is not comprehensive and does not depress the reader.

The writer himself said shortly before his death that he would like to write another work in which the character of a person would be explored more deeply than he had been able to do before.

Golding's creative legacy is not very large in scope, but this did not prevent him from gaining recognition around the world and becoming one of the most famous novelists of the second half of the century. The reasons should be sought in the intensity with which the writer breaks through to the most essential questions of existence. He descends, in particular, into the underground depths of human nature, studying the symptoms of the "terrible disease of being human." Existentialist notes present in Golding's work do not overshadow the originality of his own worldview.

A teacher by profession, Golding served in the Navy during World War II. Both experiences – teaching and war – were indirectly reflected in his first novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954), which immediately attracted the attention of critics and the reading public both for the paradoxical nature of the idea and the artistic power of its implementation. It was the war that pushed the future famous author to the main theme of his work: the study of the diversity and ubiquity of evil.

If traditional liberal humanist thought was inclined to explain the negative sides of a person with unfavorable social circumstances, then the war, says Golding, proved to his generation that "there is more evil in a person than can be explained by the pressure of social mechanisms alone." And he devoted his writing talent to painstaking analysis of this phenomenon. Golding's prose

keeps turning our faces to the fact that "man produces evil as a bee produces honey", making us realize time and again the "sad truth of our cruelty and greed".

Therefore, it is not easy to read Golding since who wants to look into the secret hiding places of their own soul? But this difficult path, in the opinion of the writer, must be passed because in order to fight the evil in oneself, one must clearly imagine the strength and danger of the enemy.

It is quite natural that having set before himself a task of a moral nature, Golding chooses an appropriate artistic form. Most of his works are written in the genre of parable, which is subject to interpretation on several levels. Under the surface of the fictional story lies a deeper, more universal meaning, which allows you to read the work as an allegory, to interpret the situation presented in it as a comment on the general laws of human nature or the world system.

However, the allegorical nature of Golding's novels does not make them imaginary, abstract schemes, or illustrations of the author's philosophical ideas. Let us not forget that before us is an English writer who inherited from his literary predecessors a fascination with the material world, into which he carefully looks. Allegorism on the whole is combined in Golding's prose with extreme precision of details; he is a master of "enlarging" a detail, transforming it into a plastic image, endowed with absolute verisimilitude thanks to the power of the author's imagination, which does not exclude the presence of a metaphysical subtext. According to Golding's admission, his plots are not fairy tales ("something made up, such that lies on the surface"), but myths, on the contrary, the myth comes from the essence of things; it is the key to existence, the meaning of life, the experience given in undivided unity.

Lord of the Flies is not only a parable, but also a dystopia, a modern gloomy version of the Robinsonade, in which the optimistic Enlightenment belief in the unlimited possibilities of the human mind is debunked.

The idea of a work about English schoolboys stranded on a deserted island was born from the author's internal disagreement with a decent Victorian book for children, *Coral Island* (1858) by R. M. Ballantyne (1825-1894). Her little heroes behaved like true British gentlemen, triumphing over the forces of nature through reason and moral virtue.

Having modeled a similar situation in his own novel, Golding turns it upside down: now nature, understood as the embodiment of dark subconscious impulses, prevails over both social skills and rational impulses.

Golding's boys begin with an attempt to reproduce the English social order in miniature on the island but with frightening speed they obey the call of primal instincts, turning from a collective into a tribe, a pack, ruled not by intelligence in union with democracy, as the educators dreamed, but by the primal terror that power produces.

Those who morally or mentally resisted the wildness die - Simon, Roha; only thanks to external intervention, Ralph is lucky to be saved, but he too will forever have a scar on his heart from the terrible discovery of the "darkness" of the human soul. (The image of "darkness", "darkness", and "darkness" is one of the leitmotifs of Golding's work).

Thus, the writer goes beyond a specific situation, bringing the conversation to the level of a parable about the historical paths of mankind. He seems to rewind the "tape" of the progress of civilization, demonstrating how thinly it covers primitive savagery and with what impressive speed it is able to expose the irrational primitives that direct people's actions (they are symbolized by the image of the "lord of the flies" - a boar's head that becomes the idol of the small islanders).

The next novel, *The Heirs* (1955), can be perceived as a kind of continuation of the first, as a philosophical addition to it. In the work, the writer set himself the goal of tracing the genesis of evil and therefore turns to the

primeval era in the history of mankind. His rather pessimistic conclusion again contradicts the traditional notions of social progress: Joto Zarietz, which replaces the Neanderthal, is cruel, merciless, and immoral. Civilization does not soften but strengthens the evil inherent in man. Then *Pincher Martin* (1956), and *Free Fall* (1959) appear.

In 1964, one of Golding's most significant work was published, *The Spire*. The action of the novel is attributed to the Middle Ages, but despite the carefully written historical body and the convincing reconstruction of the types of medieval thinking, before us is a story "with a double bottom". In terms of the plot, this is the story of the construction of a high spire over a cathedral that does not have a sufficiently deep and strong foundation (although the place of action in the novel is not specified, it is not difficult to recognize in it real facts related to the glorious cathedral in the city of Salisbury - especially since Golding for some time taught there). At the allegorical level, we have before us reflections on the imbalance between a person's creative urges and their practical implementation.

The image of the majestic spire comes to the abbot of the cathedral, Joslin, in a dream, and he perceives this vision as God's command addressed to him personally. From this moment on, his whole life is subordinated to one goal. Despite the opposition of the clergy, despite the arguments of common sense and the laws of physics, he inevitably goes to its embodiment. Along the way, he has to enter into an ambivalent relationship of attraction-repulsion with the direct executor of his crazy plan, Mason Roger, who understands the impossibility of its implementation, but as a true master of his craft accepts the challenge. The Joslin-Roger couple can be interpreted as two sides of the human being, ideal-imaginative and practical-acting, which are in a dialectical relationship.

The construction of the spire requires more and more new victims, people

die, the life of Joslyn's beloved parishioner, Goody, is destroyed, and Roger goes crazy. Joslin himself is becoming more and more alienated from people, becoming a slave to his own dreams. Were these sacrifices worthwhile? Is any abstract idea, even the greatest, worth even one human life? These questions torment Joslin in the face of death. He cannot get rid of a terrible thought - what if the vision of the spire was not sent to him by the Most High, but by his bitter enemy?

And the last image of beauty that attracts his attention on earth is not a man-made spire, but a branch of a blooming apple tree, created by nature itself. However, another argument in the discussion – already beyond the text – is the real spire of Salisbury Cathedral: its existence defies the laws of gravity, but it has been towering over the city for more than seven centuries.

The story is extremely subjective - all events are presented through the prism of Joslin's excited consciousness. Descriptions of oneiric states - dreams, hallucinations, delusions - play a significant role in the narrative. The complex, sometimes confused and incoherent style, which seems to choke on words, conveys the amplitude of fluctuations in the inner world of the protagonist between ecstatic religious elation and the black abyss of depression. The novel is rich in symbols - they include, first of all, the image of a spire, which acquires, among other things, erotic connotations. And Father Joslin himself appears as a humanized embodiment of medieval dualism - the struggle between Light and Darkness, Angel and Devil.

In *The Pyramid* (1967), Golding probably came closest to the generally uncharacteristic genre of the traditional social-psychological novel. Dissent goes to the subtext, and at the textual level, there is a sharp comment on the hierarchical division of people according to their place on the social "pyramid", which is still influential in British society. The next novel, *Darkness Visible* (1979), is one of the darkest in the writer's work, the tonality of which is

generally far from cheerful and joyful colors. This book about the Second World War is full of Miltonic and biblical allusions, mysticism, and time shifts, which makes it one of the most difficult to interpret. *Paper Men* (1984) is a work dedicated to the academic environment, to which the author is very critical.

The action of Golding's "sea trilogy" (*Rites of Passage*, 1980; *Close Quarters*, 1987; *Fire Down Below*, 1989) takes place on board a ship bound for colonial Australia in the first half of the 19th century. Taking advantage of the maritime theme familiar to English literature (R.L. Stevenson, J. Conrad), the modern writer rethinks it in order to solve his cherished problem of the duality of human nature. Finally, the basis of an unfinished novel

The Double Tongue (one of its variants was published in 1995) contains myths and historical facts related to the cult of Apollo and the Delphic oracle, Pythia. The story is told from the person of a simple girl, who was destined to become an Oracle, announcing the will of the gods whose words are then interpreted by priests. This situation allows the author to reach the metatextual level of reasoning about the truth and falsity of language and about the arbitrariness and bias of any interpretations. Here, his artistic experiment, like that of A. Murdoch resonates with the postulates of linguistic philosophers and theoreticians of postmodernism. Another point of convergence with them is the motif of the game as a metaphor for life, which throws a bridge from Golding to the next author to be discussed, namely, John Fowles.

If the work of I. Murdoch and V. Golding can be rightly called "philosophical", then the definition of "intellectual literature" is more suitable for the achievement of their younger contemporary John Fowles (b. 1926). Although the influence of the ideas of existentialism also affected his prose (including in the form of polemics with them), in the case of Fowles it is better to talk about its general cultural saturation than about the deployment of specific philosophical concepts in it.

According to the researcher V. Skorodenko, Murdoch's and Golding's artistic prose grows out of a certain system of ideas, and "builds on the frame of this system", while Fowles' ideas are born from the thicket of reality.

The writer's novels, novellas, short stories, and essays are united by a certain range of problems: the acquisition of self-identity as a necessary condition for a person to achieve freedom; a breakthrough to life, its beauty and love, through the resistance of dead matter.

To solve them, Fowles often resorts to the technique of "magic theater", initiated by H. Hesse: the characters of many works take on the functions of "directors" who arrange a "play in life" for the protagonist in order to give him a better idea of his own "I" and thereby take a step towards freedom (this is the role played by the mysterious Conchis in the novel *Magic*, the no less mysterious Sarah Woodruff from *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the artist Breasley in the story *The Ebony Tower*). The motif of "theatre" determines the huge role of the game category in Fowles's artistic world, and the game takes place not only with actors but also with reality and with literary conventions, which allows us to discuss the presence of a noticeable postmodern stream in it.

4.2 Phantasmagoria of John Fowles

John Fowles, a philological teacher by profession, made his mark in the early 1960s with the short novel *The Collector* (1963). As with his colleagues, the meaning of the story he tells goes beyond its plot, acquiring the status of a parable. An average, ordinary person - the clerk Frederick Clegg - has the talent to win a significant amount of money.

A collector of butterflies, Clegg uses the money to furnish the purchased house with a comfortable prison, where he places the kidnapped art student Miranda Gray, wanting to win her love. The content of the novel is the relationship between these polar opposite characters: the emotionally

underdeveloped "collector" Clegg kills everything he touches (because a collection is dead objects or creatures); the artist Miranda, with her subtle sense of beauty, personifies the life-giving beginning. Understanding between them is impossible.

In ancient Greek, the same word meant both butterfly and soul; Miranda, who came from the world of movement, creativity, search, and is a soul, "anima". Clegg's world is immobile, it is a reified closed space where a living soul is doomed to perish. Miranda's beauty is not the beauty of a frozen ideal, but of a moving spirit, and therefore Clegg is not given to possess her, he can only kill her.

Let's pay attention to the prevalence of the motif of "collecting" in modern literature as the antithesis of authentic experience (P. Suskind). Shakespearean allusions are clearly heard in the work. Miranda is not only the namesake of the heroine of *The Tempest*, she is typologically related to her; and Clegg, who calls himself Ferdinand (that was the name of Miranda's lover in Shakespeare), can, ironically, be only an ugly Caliban for her, because he deprived her of her freedom.

The final of the novel leaves a feeling of anxiety: after the death of Miranda, Clegg is already looking at a new potential victim, but this time he will choose someone simpler... In the text, the voices of both characters are heard, and different views of the same events are presented - Clegg's first-person narration alternates with pages of Miranda's diary. Thanks to the style - vocabulary, syntax, intonation - the author skillfully reproduces two antagonistic models of being in the world. At the same time, Fowles himself emphasized the social dimension of his everyday phantasmagoria, explaining the evil caused by Clegg by the circumstances of his origin, upbringing, and environment. It seems that Fowles' novel confirms the opinion of the famous philosopher of the 20th century, Hannah Arendt about the "banalization of evil" that can hide behind the

inexpressive face of the average person.

In 1966, the novel *The Magus* was published, on which Fowles had been working for a long time and which he reworked again 11 years after publication, removing the element of the supernatural. However, even in this version of the novel, enough secrets remained, which did not hinder (and perhaps contributed to) its commercial success.

In *The Magus* there are genre features of the novel of upbringing, in particular, the "education of feelings", which the main character receives in an unusual way. Escaping from his external and internal problems to a remote island in Greece, the teacher Nicholas Erfe (the narrator) falls under the influence of the charismatic stranger Maurice Conchis (this is the "magician", a modernized version of Prospero from the same Shakespeare's *The Tempest*). He subjects Nicholas to strange tests, in which the events of the past come to life, masked actors portray life situations in natural "scenery", and the hero has to make an existential choice time and time again.

The result of these rather cruel hoaxes is Nicholas's realization of his selfishness, the false understanding of freedom only as the possibility of unlimited satisfaction of desires, and his own inability to love.

The dramatic story, saturated with elements of detective fiction, guarantees the reader's unwavering attention. At the same time, the novel poses not only moral but also important aesthetic problems, in particular about the power of the text. Conchis, the creator of the phantasmagorical "text" within the novel, into which Nicholas falls, is assimilated into the author. He is a kind of "novelist without a novel" who, like any writer, draws the reader into the game with invented images-illusions. In this connection, the question arises about the moral position of the "player" himself and about his right to manipulate other people's thoughts and emotions.

In the next work, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), the author

enters into a dialogue with the English realist tradition (J. Austin, C. Dickens, Sh. Bronte, etc.). The novel is written as the imitation and at the same time an ironic reinterpretation. The topic of self-determination of the individual is placed at the intersection of the Victorian concept of determinism and ideas of the 20th century about freedom of will.

The text appears as a brilliant stylization of a novel of the 19th century; each page evokes numerous literary associations and loving attention to the world of things, characteristics of characters, especially minor ones, and a linguistic "portrait" of a long-gone era.

The hero, Charles Smithson, fits into this series. But you cannot say this about the heroine: the image of Sarah Woodruff signals the invasion of the orderly world of Victorian England by modern concepts of identity and freedom. Like Conchis, she brings theatricality to the novel; but, unlike him, Sarah directs her own life first and foremost. It turns out that she herself committed a "sin" that condemns her to the role of a pariah in society. After all, her desire for greater social mobility, for choosing her own path, can be realized only by going beyond the boundaries of the social circle that obeys strict conventions. Under the influence of a meeting with Sarah, Charles realizes the artificiality of his previous life.

The ambiguity of the future fate of the characters is emphasized by the open ending of the novel as the author offers the reader several options for the ending, thereby strengthening his role in the process of creating a text, which is characteristic of postmodern art.

The theme of the power of conventions in creativity and love resonates in the story *The Ebony Tower* (1974). The juxtaposition of two artists - David Williams, a flourishing abstract artist, and Henry Breasley, a classic of painting of the 20th century, allows Fowles to raise a number of topical ethical, aesthetic, and philosophical questions. Having arrived for a few days in the "enchanted

kingdom" - the estate of old Bresley in France - David, decent, but bogged down in his routine existence, cannot stand the test of "authenticity" in life and art. He is unable to respond to the call of love, nor to depart from his commercially successful but lifeless writing style. But he, at least, realizes his own inability, passing judgment on himself: "he was, is, and will be eternal mediocrity."

Fowles' next novel *Daniel Martin* (1977) confirmed the artist's potential to work in a traditional realist manner. Even the title of the novel testifies to this as a common practice in classical literature is to name a work after the name of the main character. Having set himself the goal of "the study of Englishness", the author creates a social canvas united by the consciousness of the protagonist, a writer of the second half of the century. In the story of the hero, which is at the same time the history of a generation and society, the emphasis is on "the transition from a nation of dumb-headed patriots to a collection of individuals turned inward," that is, the growth of individualism associated with the loss of former ideals and values. Fowles does not abandon the experiment here either: the work is built as a "novel within a novel", based on the combination of the principles of objective and subjective analysis, which is achieved, in particular, by switching the narrative register from the first to the third person, sometimes even within the limits of one sentence

Mantissa (1982) was written in a completely different way, a work whose genre nature is not easy to determine. This is a metafictional story, "text about the text", where the relationship between the writer and the world is presented in the form of a playful allegory: the relationship between the author and his muse. Erotic scenes become a metaphor for creativity, which emphasizes the parodic nature of this thing (an allusion to popular culture). Many favorite Fowles motifs are played anew here in an ironically lowered key, and the main one is the relationship between fiction and reality in creativity.

The last great novel from Fowles dates from 1985. Its polysemantic title is

difficult to translate. The word "maggot" means "light musical piece", and "whim", and both of these meanings are actualized in the text. To some extent, the author returns in it to the mystery of *The Magus*, which has not been revealed until the end.

The historical background (the action takes place in England in the 18th century, and some real characters are even involved in the novel) turns out to be just a skillfully constructed scenery for another experiment, in which we encounter techniques already familiar to us from Fowles' previous works.

The story of the investigation of the mysterious disappearance of the son of a nobleman is not only stylized with the virtuosity characteristic of Fowles according to the literary and official documents of that era but also offers several versions of events - from domestic and criminal to scientific fiction and even religious and mystical.

Thus, the multi-layered, aesthetically refined work of Fowles returns to the reader/researcher in different ways: his literature of ideas can also be interpreted as a variant of a postmodern game.

5. British Postmodern Realism And Historiographic Metal

Literature

Let's move on to consider other versions of literary postmodernism in contemporary British literature. According to some researchers, such trends as "British postmodern realism" and "historiographic metal literature" can be conditionally distinguished in it (which can be combined within the scope of the work of one writer or even one work).

The name of the first of them seems internally contradictory: because postmodernism seems to completely deny the realistic/mimetic representation of reality, the objective nature of which it questions in general. However, their "meeting" in certain texts is made possible by the specificity of English literature with its more than once-mentioned fidelity to the classical tradition,

which is usually understood as the tradition of realism of the 19th century. So, we are talking about works that supposedly work in a realistic paradigm, that is, they reproduce the surrounding, including the social, world based on the postulate of the rational motivation of the characters' actions. But the fact is that reality itself increasingly appears to be devoid of cause-and-effect relationships, incomprehensible, fundamentally unexplained with the help of "grand narratives" - in a word, postmodern. In this way, the mimetic (plausibility) of the narrative, which marks realistic writing, is combined with the ontological (that is, essential) uncertainty characteristic of the postmodern worldview.

As a rule, the transition from one mode to another is psychologically determined: the protagonist experiences a personal crisis, as a result of which his traditionalist worldview collapses, and a postmodern one takes its place. Examples of such texts include Graham Swift's novels *Waterland* (1983) and Martin Amis's *Money* (1984).

The novel by Graham Swift (b. 1949) is written in the form of an oral narrative in the first person: the history teacher Tom Crick, instead of the planned lecture, tells the students about everything that happened to him.

So, the plot itself provides not just a reflection, but the construction of the world through narration. The fact that Crick has just experienced two traumas - being fired due to curriculum cuts and his wife's mental illness - psychologically justifies the chaos and lack of logic in the world he models with words. His profession is by no means accidental - because it is in history that people have always looked for persistence, coherence, "filling the gaps, dispelling the fear of the dark." And instead, he now sees in it only riddles - stories do not explain the world, but only endlessly generate new narratives. Starting another story, Crick hopes that in the process of telling the story, the meaning of what is happening will be revealed, and a cause-and-effect chain will be built between the past and the present - but in the postmodern world, this is an illusion, and each story ends

not with the final truth, but with new questions, new secrets, which require new stories. As Crick himself tells his students: "I taught you that by constantly trying to explain, we can arrive - not at an Explanation, but at an understanding of the limits of our ability to explain..."

A master of subtle psychological analysis, who at the same time responds sensitively to the modern philosophical aura, Swift also appears in the novel *Last Orders* (1996).

5.1 Postmodern allusions of Martin Amis

At the core of **Martin Amis's** (1949-2023) novel *Money: A Suicide Note* (1984) is the blurring of boundaries between "reality" open to experience and its representation. The world of the novel flows into reality outside the text - the hero of the novel is going to stage a movie called "Money"; the work features a character named Martin Amis; the text is full of allusions to other works of the author. All these are signs of postmodern poetics.

At the same time, the story does not ignore the class problems relevant to England, focusing on the gloomy urban landscapes of modern metropolises (the action takes place in London and New York). The virtuality of the modern globalized economy finds a plastic figurative embodiment in the novel. Money begins to live an autonomous life.

The protagonist of the work, John Self (myself) is a victim of modern tricksters, unable to distinguish reality from simulacra. Thus, the "self" equals individuality, which was not questioned in realistic prose, appears here as an empty shell, suitable for any filling with the "trash culture" of today. Social marginals, drugs, pornography, counterculture - these are the components of the artistic palette of Amis, who tries to tell more truthfully what it means to be alive today. His later work *London Fields* (1989) acquires the features of a dystopia or a cautionary novel, transporting the reader to the capital of Britain after a nuclear disaster.

5.2 David Lodge and his contribution to the theory of prose and the history of the English novel. Combination of satirical-realistic tendencies with postmodern ones

A completely different social slice is offered by another writer, in whose novels satirical-realist tendencies are combined with postmodern ones. The environment of the novels of **David Lodge** (b. 1935) is a university professorship and other representatives of the intelligentsia. Lodge himself represents the symbiosis of artist and scientist typical of postmodernism (he is the author of influential investigations into the theory of prose and the history of the English novel). The 1995 features of the traditional "university novel" genre are intertwined in his trilogy about academic life with humorous and phantasmagoric motifs, as well as with a whimsical play on the culture of the past.

For example, in the novel "Small World" (1984), the details of the (pseudo)scientific life of modern humanitarians, accurately captured in all their absurdity by the satirist's observant eye, are superimposed on archetypes borrowed from the Arthurian cycle of medieval knightly novels (the motif of the search for the Grail).

At the same time, they are doubled with allusions to T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which at one time also relied on Arthurian mythologies. Everything together forms a sophisticated intertextual lace, the untangling of which will bring real pleasure to the knowledgeable reader (while a less intelligent reader can simply laugh at the comic plot vicissitudes).

As for "historiographic metal literature", the name suggests that the works in this direction have an historical dimension. Indeed, their action (or at least part of it) takes place in different eras of the past, which, however, performs different functions than in known types of historical novels.

Immersion in history, on the one hand, is not an end in itself - the authors

do not set themselves the goal of a true reproduction of the pictures of the past (that is, they do not reveal the traditional historical consciousness initiated in British literature by Walter Scott).

Secondly, their goal is not to use the past to better illuminate the problems of the present, which often happened in historical prose of the 20th century. From the postmodernist point of view, the concepts of "past" and "present" lose their meaning, all human culture exists simultaneously, in the horizontal mode of myth, and not in the vertical mode of history - therefore, in the works in question, the detailed signs of former times are only a prop, a stage entourage that allows you to effectively draw the reader into the literary game. (Writer J. Winterson mentions the language of the Hopi Indians, in which there are no separate tenses - past, present, future. "This division does not exist. What does this tell us about time"?). It is not by chance that many of these novels also feature the plane of modernity, that is, the autonomy of the past is denied, and all times fit into a single cultural continuum.

English writer Maureen Duffy defines their goal as trying to "dazzle with your brilliance as if you were entering Aladdin's cave, where piles of shining jewels lie." Indeed, the boundless ingenuity of the writer's imagination, brilliant pastiche stylizations and dizzying changes in time perspective turn reading the works of J. Barnes, P. Ackroyd, J. Winterson and others into an exciting adventure.

5.3 Julian Barnes and his multi-volume scientific work

The title of the work of **Julian Barnes** (born 1946) - *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* (1989) - immediately gives rise to conflicting expectations: the definition of "world history" conjures up a multi-volume scientific work, while "half a chapter" looks somewhat frivolous, setting up for irony. Indeed, although the work begins with an event that can be attributed to the "beginning of time" - the global flood - its further movement destroys all

possible assumptions about "serious" history.

To begin with, what should be expected from Barnes is a coherent, chronologically organized account of important historical events. After the biblical ancient times, we are immediately transferred to the present, then, by the will of the author, we get to the Middle Ages, and then to the 19th century, and again to our time... That is, the novel (if such a genre definition is at all applicable to the unusual Barnesian idea) has a non-linear structure, freely moving forward and backward along the historical axis.

Further, it does not in any way refer to the events defining human civilization from the standpoint of official history. Each chapter tells about an episode that has a purely partial meaning. Thus, in practice, Barnes realizes the shift noted by J.F. Lyotard from "big narratives" to "small" or "local" ones.

The sections are not related to each other in terms of plot - a certain degree of unification is achieved on a different, figurative level, thanks to the ubiquitous motif of water space and some kind of "watercraft" - if not an ark, then a ship, boat, raft... No less obvious de-heroization and the decentralization of the historical discourse, which begins already in the story about Noah's ark - its builder is not at all the righteous person depicted in the original (biblical) version of this story.

In the words of the author, the postmodern concept of history is formulated not as a series of indisputable facts, but as a text subject to multiple interpretations: "History is not at all what happened. History is just what historians tell us... History of the world? This is just an echo of voices in the dark that shine for several centuries and then disappear; legends, old legends that sometimes seem to echo; whimsical echoes, nonsensical connections."

5.4 Peter Ackroyd as an author of exquisite pseudo-historical pastiches

Peter Ackroyd (b. 1949) also shares this view of history, but, unlike

Barnes, he is not interested in the history of humanity as a whole - a broad panel, "made up" of individual fragments - but a person against the background of different eras that converge in the only artistic time. In the novels *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* (1983), *Hawksmoor* (1985), *Chatterton* (1987), *The House of Dr. Dee* (1993), *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994), *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree* (1995), *Milton in America* (1996), *The Plato Papers* (2000) and others, Ackroyd showed himself as an author of exquisite pseudo-historical pastiches, an unsurpassed master of stylization for entire literary eras of the past and individual mannerisms of famous writers.

In his works, real historical figures coexist with fictitious ones, complex models of chronotopic organization combine different times, and the Dickensian traditions of subtle psychologism and colorful humor are combined with elements of detective fiction, fiction, and horror poetry.

One of Ackroyd's constant "heroes" is London - starting from the first novel (*The Great Fire of London*, (1982) - a paraphrase on the theme of "Little Dorrit" by C. Dickens) and to the last ones in terms of writing time (they also include the work *London: The Biography*, (2000) the writer tirelessly imprints the signs of his beloved city on his pages.

Ackroyd widely resorts to the travesty of stereotypes, which prompts to review long-known facts from a different point of view. *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* is a fictitious diary of the scandalously famous Englishman, which Wilde allegedly kept in Paris shortly before his death. Before us is a kind of continuation of his famous prison confession.

De Profundis is written in the style of the original source, it at the same time refutes the traditional view of this work of Wilde as evidence of his repentance and regeneration. The imitation is so filigree that it is difficult to distinguish it from the original - Ackroyd imitates not only the unique manner of writing of his character (in this way a kind of language mask of Wilde is

constructed), but also his famous paradoxes and parables, imperceptibly placing in them the semantic accents of the end of the 20th century. In particular, the idea of a person's tragic lack of freedom from normative social attitudes runs through - and this is characteristic not only of Victorian England with its strict moral taboos but also of any era.

The novel *Chatterton* uses a narrative technique based on the interweaving of past and present storylines, pastiches, and the destruction of stereotypes. The era of the protagonist is a young poet who died early in the 18th century. Chatterton correlates immediately with two other time dimensions - the late Victorian era and our days.

A number of postmodern ideas are artistically and inventively updated in the text. The main one, perhaps, is the impossibility of accurately reconstructing the past, since we always look at it through the veil of historical, cultural, and personal ideas and prejudices. Ackroyd ironically demonstrates that the romantic idealization of Chatterton in later eras has nothing to do with reality. The writer also subtly plays with the popular concept of the "death of the author" - after all, Chatterton became famous for his forgeries of Old English poetry, so the theme of renunciation of one's own personality, the tragic gap between different "roles" of a person arises in the novel.

The idea and its implementation in the novel *Milton in America* is no less exquisite - it can be called an experiment in the genre of "alternative (cultural) history". After all, it is common knowledge that the genius poet of the 17th century, the author of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton, who was an ardent Protestant and an associate of Cromwell, never visited America.

Ackroyd begins with What if? - what could happen if the Puritan Milton got to the English colonies in the New World, whose inhabitants also professed Puritanism? The writer's version, in which he once again confirms his virtuosity as a stylist (the text is full of variations on the themes of Milton himself, the

Holy Scriptures, and early American literature), makes us think about the problems of moral rigorism and religious fanaticism, shows their hostility to living life.

So, Ackroyd's brilliant pastiches carry an ambivalent burden - on the one hand, they pay homage and love to the English literary tradition, on the other hand, they subject it to revision in the context of the postmodern project. At the same time, the horizon of moral values, which, as noted above, is generally inherent in British red literature, never disappears from them.

5.5 The feminist ideas of Janet Winterson

The pseudo-historical works of **Janet Winterson**, who embraces her feminist ideas in the garb of frank grotesque, are characterized by even greater freedom of experimentation. The novels *The Passion* (1987) and *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) are characteristic in this regard. Carefully selected chronotypes (Venice during the Napoleonic Wars, London during the Civil War in the middle of the 17th century) are nothing more than exotic and bright scenery.

Against their background, whimsical stories of characters unfold, whose fantasticness is revealed through bodily signs. In *The Passion* she is the first female gondolier (her uniqueness is emphasized by the webbing on her legs), in *Sexing the Cherry* she is a giant Dog-Woman who can absorb her lover during sexual intercourse.

It is obvious that when creating these heroines, folklore motifs were synthesized with ironically reinterpreted Freudian positions. Through the dizzying phantasm of the narrative, however, a critique of the patriarchal system, based on the deconstruction of many Western cultural myths, is clearly visible.

5.6. Versatility of dramatic approaches. Tom Stoppard

A conversation about British varieties of postmodernism would be incomplete without mentioning the work of one of the best playwrights of our

time - **Tom Stoppard** (b. 1937). Stoppard is a Czech by birth (real surname Straussler), and although he has lived in England since childhood, perhaps the fact that English is not his native language caused the writer's extraordinary attention to all shades and nuances of the language, which he skillfully uses.

The playwright's creative work includes about three dozen plays, which are characterized by a combination of high and low, tragedy and farce, a drama of ideas and buffoonery (among them *Jumpers* (1972), *Travesties* (1974), *The Real Thing* (1982), *Arcadia* (1993), *The Invention of Love* (1997), *The Coast of Utopia* (2002)). Stoppard is the author of philosophical and political drama, but he is capable of both deep lyricism and painful irony.

The second son of a doctor for the Bata shoe manufacturing company, Thomas Straussler (Stoppard) was born on July 3, 1937, in Zlin, Czechoslovakia. The family fell victim to the Nazi racial laws, a wide-ranging set of laws enforced by Germany's radical Nazi Army that were aimed at severely restricting the freedoms of Jews and other minorities. Since there was "Jewish blood" in the family, his father was transferred to Singapore in 1939, taking the family with him. When the Japanese invaded that city in 1942, Thomas's mother fled with her children to India. Dr. Straussler stayed behind and was later killed.

Thomas attended an American boarding school in Darjeeling, India. In 1946 his mother married Kenneth Stoppard, a British army major, and both of her sons took his name. The Stoppards moved to Bristol, England, where Thomas's stepfather worked in the machine tool industry. Thomas continued his education at a preparatory school in Yorkshire, England.

At age seventeen Thomas felt that he had had enough schooling. He became first a reporter and then a critic for the *Western Daily Press* of Bristol, England, from 1954 to 1958. He left the *Press* and worked as a reporter for the *Evening World*, also in Bristol, from 1958 to 1960. Stoppard then worked as a

freelance reporter from 1960 to 1963. During these years he experimented with writing short stories and short plays. In 1962 he moved to London, England, in order to be closer to the center of the publishing and theatrical worlds in the United Kingdom.

Stoppard's first radio plays for the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* and *M Is for Moon Among Other Things*, aired in 1964. Two more, *Albert's Bridge* and *If You're Glad I'll Be Frank*, followed in 1965. His first television play, *A Separate Peace*, appeared the next year, as did his only novel, *Lord Malquist and Mr. Moon*, and the stage play that established his reputation

The year 1968 saw another television play, *Neutral Ground*, and two short works for the theater, *Enter a Free Man* and *The Real Inspector Hound*. In 1970 Stoppard returned to the BBC with the two radio plays, *Artist Descending a Staircase* and *Where Are They Now*. He also authored the television plays *The Engagement* and *Experiment in Television* as well as the stage work *After Magritte*. It was about this time that Stoppard became acquainted with Ed Berman from New York City's Off-Off-Broadway. Berman was attempting to establish an alternative theater in London. For him Stoppard composed *Dogg's Our Pet*, which was produced in 1971 at the Almost Free Theater.

In 1972 Stoppard had presented *Jumpers*, which begins with circus acts and evolves into religious and moral philosophy (the study of knowledge). Although critics reacted warmly to the play, *Jumpers* did not enjoy the same praise that had greeted *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*. Theater critic Stanley Kauffmann labeled it "fake, structurally and thematically," while another critic, John Simon, wrote that "there is even something arrogant about trying to convert the history of Western culture into a series of blackout sketches, which is very nearly what *Jumpers* is up to."

Two years later Stoppard produced his third major work, *Travesties*. It is

based on the coincidence that Russian exile politician Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924), Irish novelist James Joyce (1882–1941), and the father of the French Dadaist movement in literature and art, Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), were all in Zurich, Switzerland, at times during World War I (1914–18; when German-led forces pushed for European domination). It is assumed that they never met in reality, but their interaction in Stoppard's play asks the question of what defines art. The author's conclusion seems to be that its sole function is to make the meaninglessness (complete emptiness) of life more bearable.

In 1977 Stoppard offered *Every Good Boy Deserves Favour*, a remarkable achievement performed for the first time at the Royal Festival Hall by the Royal Shakespeare Company and the one hundred-piece London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andre Previn (1929–). Brought to the United States, it was presented at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City with an eighty-one-piece orchestra.

Stoppard summed up his life's work as an attempt to "make serious points by flinging a custard pie around the stage for a couple of hours." Some of his serious points must have been heard in 1999, when he shared the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay with Marc Norman for their work on the movie *Shakespeare in Love*. The movie also won the award for Best Picture of the year.

6. The Polyphony of Contemporary British Writing: Voices of The 'Other'. Multiculturalism

The multiculturalism of the literary process in the country is ensured by many factors: the presence of an ancient Celtic element in it (writers from Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), the development of a tender and feminist stream, and confessional heterogeneity. Let's dwell on only one of the factors - ethnicity, which owes its appearance to the post-colonial reality. In recent decades, a circle

of talented writers has been successfully active in British literature, who, despite not being English by birth, make a significant contribution to the history of English-language literature. Their creativity is a product of multicultural mixing, generated by the "reverse colonization" of Great Britain after the Second World War (this was the name given to the phenomenon of resettlement to the former metropolis and assimilation in it of a large number of descendants of those Africans and Asians whose countries were under the rule of Albion until recently).

The emigration of other writers to England is not connected with the collapse of the colonial system, but the consequences are the same. These "new Englishes" absorb traditional British culture that is superimposed on their native cultural archetypes, resulting in the hybridization of their texts. On the scale of national literature, thanks to this influx of fresh artistic ideas, there is a constant enrichment of the aesthetic arsenal.

6.1 Postmodern experiment of Salman Rushdie

The most famous and most talented of these writers is certainly **Salman Rushdie** (b. 1947). Rushdie comes from a Muslim family that lived in Bombay and then moved to Pakistan due to religious strife. The future writer was educated in England, where he later settled. His pen includes the novels *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001), a collection of short stories *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990), a nonfiction book *Imaginary Homelands* (1991).

Rushdie's work is seen as a meeting ground of two influential trends in modern culture - postmodernism and multiculturalism. In his multi-layered writing, heterogeneous cultural currents (in a broad sense, Western and Eastern) form a unique alloy that manifests itself at all levels of the work - plot, image, and language. His texts give the impression of excess, their juicy multicolor

overflowing over the edge, confusing the reader, but also charming him.

A sharp political orientation is combined in them with an exquisite postmodern game, with techniques of the grotesque and fantastic, which make us think of "magical realism".

Thus, the satirical component prevails in the novel *Shame* (it is about Pakistan shortly after the formation of this country, and the main characters are directly written off from its then leaders), but the criticism of a specific political regime is carried out with the help of mythological images, which gives the work a more universal sound. The novel *The Satanic Verses* made Rushdie scandalously famous - the highest Muslim dignitary, Ayatollah Khomeini, sentenced the author to death for "blasphemy" (the archangel Gabriel, who brought the Koran to people, is transformed in Rushdie's writing into an Indian actor).

After the death sentence, the announcement of a million-dollar reward for the writer's murder, and the public burning of his work, the author was forced to go into hiding, which, of course, affected not only his life but also his subsequent work.

In the underground, Rushdie continued to write, and in 1995 one of his best novels *The Moor's Last Sigh* was published. At the plot level, he tells about the religious enmity between Hindus and Muslims in modern India, and about the danger of radical right-wing terrorism. But the plot as such is largely lost under a rich cultural layer, which is a polylogue of many cultures - Indian, Portuguese, Arab, and Jewish.

The multicultural genealogical tree of the heroes of the novel, where real, semi-fictional, and completely fictitious characters are mixed, symbolizes the trans-ethnicity and racial mixtures not only of India but also of the entire future of humanity. Bombay, a metropolis that has always been at the intersection of the historical destinies of many peoples of Europe and Asia, was chosen as the

place of action for a reason.

One of the main characters, Aurora Zogoiby, is an artist, and it is in her works that hybrid cultural images literally come to life. "Living" works of art, as well as incredible in life, but completely appropriate in a fairy tale, the physiology of the hero-narrator Moraes, nicknamed Moor (son of Aurora) - life processes occur in his body at a speed that is much higher than normal - allow us to talk about the mythmaking of Rushdie, who is at the same time an interpreter of native and world history.

6.2 Lyricism of Kazuo Ishiguro

The work of **Kazuo Ishiguro** (b. 1954) is also symptomatic from the point of view of the merging of the cultural horizons of the East and the West in it, but he is talking about another East. A writer of Japanese origin, Ishiguro created one of the most "English" novels of the 1980s, *The Remains of the Day* (1989).

His "Englishness" is defined, first of all, by the problem - this is the story of the old butler Stevens, which could only be born in Great Britain with its still powerful state borders. During the telling of his story, Stevens gradually realizes the truth - his life was destroyed by blind loyalty to the master, who was not worth it because during the war he sympathized with Adolf Hitler.

The novel is imbued with the lyricism of late autumn, unspoken sadness for a love that did not happen. And although ideologically it can be read as an invective against the hypocrisy of British society with its rigid division into castes, the theme of loyalty to the suzerain is also surprisingly Japanese. As for the poetics of the work, its restraint, watercolor, taciturnity, and lack of open expressions of emotions fit into the paradigm of Japanese culture, reminding one of ancient landscape engravings.

6.3 Social orientation of Hanif Kureishi

Just like the hero of his novel *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1991), **Hanif**

Kureishi (b. 1954) was born in London to a family of people from the East. The narrator, a teenager named Karim, lives with the awareness of his own identity crisis. Moreover, it is not only a matter of national or cultural identity - other aspects of it, for example, social and even sexual orientation, are questioned in the novel.

The hero of the modern picaresque, Karim, constantly finds himself in front of a whole fan of different possibilities for choosing "himself" - as an Indian or as an Englishman, as a Muslim or a Christian, as a resident of a London suburb or a prestigious area, as a heterosexual or homosexual. The vicissitudes of this period in his life unfold against the background of London, but this is a completely different city compared to the image in Murdoch or, say, Ackroyd, because other topos are actualized in it. The narrator's ironic intonation envelops this multicultural mini-epic about the difficulty of understanding one's self with additional charm.

6.4 Timothy Mo as a "singer of two empires"

Timothy Mo (b. 1950), a Chinese living in England, is called a "singer of two empires." The epic scale of the narrative in the novel *The Monkey King* (1978), enriched with comic detail, reproduces the picture of Hong Kong society presented in a double focus - from the point of view of the Chinese and British experience. In the ability of the Anglo-Chinese writer to see and depict the real at the intersection of "native" and "foreign", the meeting of ancient traditions and rapid changes of the present is embodied. In another popular novel by Mo, *Sour Sweet* (1982), the life of a simple Chinese family of emigrants is described against the background of London's Chinatown. In the center of the story is the Chen family, which is tested for strength both by the unwanted attention of the gangster Chinese triads and by the unpredictability of the British.

Many more names of writers of different generations could be added to

this list: Nobel Prize laureate V.S. Naipaul (1932-2018), native of India, Vikram Seth (b. 1952), and Nigerian, Ben Okri (b. 1959) and others.

LITERATURE OF THE USA

In the second half of the 20th century, the literature of the United States of America continues to be inspired by the changing concept of the "American dream", in a productive dialogue with which new models of aesthetic relations with the world become clearer. The most noticeable feature of American writing of this period is radical pluralization - modern US literature reflects the multiplicity of experiences, abandoning the monomyth of previous decades. What exact metamorphoses has the "American dream" undergone during the last half-century?

The United States emerged from World War II as the richest and most powerful country in the world. In contrast to exhausted Europe, America, which had a considerable profit from the war, stood against the background of the spoiled Western civilization as a beacon of hope for economic well-being. In the context of the "cold war" with the socialist camp, it finally assumed the role of an outpost of democracy. Moreover, at this time, according to the expression of Alfred Kazin (1915-1998), "America's unexpected function as the custodian of Western culture in a world destroyed by fascism" revealed itself.

At the same time, the first postwar decade went down in the nation's history as "prosperous but alienated." The titles of sociological works of this era: Sloan Wilson's "Man in a Gray Flannel Suit" (1955), David Riesman's "*The Lonely Crowd*" (1950), and William H Whyte's "*The Organization Man*" (1956) - emphasize the conformism inherent in the epoch. The fear of being "not like everyone else" was further reinforced by the paranoid mood of fear and mutual distrust of the McCarthyism era (from Senator McCarthy's surname), marked by the persecution of anyone suspected of sympathies with the "left". However,

under the surface of the economic prosperity and ideological unanimity of the "one-story America", new forces were already bubbling, which in the next decade led to the "explosion of differences".

As the Ukrainian researcher T. Denisova rightly points out, "the seeds of nonconformism, individual rebellion on American soil are laid by the entire American tradition. They germinated in the 1950s as well." It was then that many writers began their journey in literature, whose voices would determine its general sound for decades to come. They include Norman Mailer (1923-2007), Philip Roth (1923-2018), Saul Bellow (1915-2005), John Updike (1932-2009), and Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007). One such voice belonged to Jerome David (J. D.) Salinger (1919-2010), more precisely, to his hero, Holden Caulfield in "*The Catcher in the Rye*" (1951), and was heard almost all over the world. This may seem strange because the voice of the sixteen-year-old narrator is constantly broken, his story is incoherent, and the hero does not find the right words, and replaces them with faded stamps of youth jargon. But through this (skillfully orchestrated by the author) indecipherability, such a sincere, real pain due to the need to live in the "unreal" world of adults can be seen, that it touched the heart of more than one generation of young people, who recognized in Holden's clumsy but passionate rebellion their own despair.

Somewhat later, in the mid-1950s, the sleepy peace of the "silent decade" was disturbed by authors from the "Beat Generation," the so-called Beatniks: Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997), L. Ferlinghetti (1919-2021), Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), G. Corso (1930-2001), and others. We are talking about a kind of subculture of the middle of the century, whose representatives not only with their aesthetics but also with their outrageous lifestyle, denied the basic values of the American mainstream, in particular, its consumer orientation. They declared disdain for social conventions and violated all possible taboos both in life and in creativity: through them, the world of drugs, prisons, freedom from a

permanent place of work, from family, from sexual restrictions broke into the measured life of the middle class. Their protest, devoid of a clear ideological or political content, had a purely individual, existential character.

According to one of the founders of this movement, writer Henry Miller, the Beatniks were driven by the desire to "break away from the America of the atomic bomb, the country of business and standardization." Emphasis on the search for sources of spirituality other than Protestant ethics leads to interest in Eastern religious and philosophical teachings, in particular, Zen Buddhism. Both the appeal to the wisdom of the East and the shift of emphasis from "having" to "being", i.e. affirming the value of, not accumulated material goods, but of experiencing every moment as fully as possible, brings the worldview of the Beatniks closer to the philosophical position of Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), an American transcendentalist of the mid-19th century. The first widely known text of beat culture was Ginsberg's poem "*Howl*" (1956).

In contrast to the tendencies towards refined, perfect form dominant in the poetry of the United States at the time, Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) brought to the poem not only new themes, but also the looseness of Walt Whitman's (1819-1892) free metric verse, the colloquial language of the streets, frank political engagement, and with them democracy. Beatnik's poetry was not intended for solitary reading by connoisseurs-aesthetes but for oral perception by a large heterogeneous audience.

In the prose and life of Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), the motif of escape inherent in American culture was embodied ("*On the Road*", 1957; "*The Dharma Bums* ", 1958), which in the context of disappointment in all models of being offered by society took the form of "movement for movement" - from social roles, from oneself, from responsibility. The rhythm of constant movement structured Kerouac's text; his free-flowing style corresponded to the author's ideal of "spontaneous prose", which was supposed to convey

"unspeakable visions of the individual". The writer created a myth from his life, experiencing everything he wrote about in his own experience. His heroes, in whom it is easy to recognize real people, set before themselves the sole goal of drinking life until the end; they are "madly eager to live, madly eager to speak, madly eager to save themselves, desirous of everything at the same time, they never yawn or utter platitudes." The desire to emotionally fill every moment explains the combination in Kerouac's image of Buddhist teachings and bitter drunkenness, recluse and exhibitionism.

Stresses, neuroses, and alienation of the 1950s broke out in the next "tumultuous decade" with its numerous social movements - protests against the unpopular war in Vietnam, the struggle of US ethnic minorities for civil rights, and feminist performances. The "New Left" of the 1960s justify their philosophical position in the form of a counterculture that opposes the ratio centricism of Western civilization. puts forward the principles of the "aesthetics of silence" associated with the discrediting of any artistic means of expressing thought and/or feeling in a pragmatic-bourgeois society. Music becomes the universal language of youth communication, which gives a sense of unity in opposition to the "dead" world of adults.

A sexual revolution is raging, the 'Hippie' movement is born. Calling to push the boundaries of existence and delve into the bowels of one's self, these "Flower Children," as they called themselves, at the same time said no to the American Dream as it had become for their parents' generation. Documentaryism is increasing in literature, and the boundaries between fact and fiction, novel and reportage are blurring (*"In Cold Blood"* 1966 by T. Capote 1924-1984; works by Thomas Wolfe 1900-1938, written in the technique of "new journalism" with a combination of documentary prose and fiction techniques).

The fading of impulses of open protest leads to the "new conservatism" of

the 1970s, which manifests itself in culture through a return to more traditional forms of writing. The 1980s were called the "decade of the self", referring to the weakening of interest in social issues and the focus of people, instead, on their own problems. At the same time, realistic tendencies in today's literature combine with elements of other currents; modern novel forms are distinguished by their synthetic nature, and US literature as a whole is characterized by a high degree of intertextuality. In the development of narrative genres, there are signs of "various" influences - from European existentialism to Latin American "magical realism", from mass culture (cinema, comics, fashion, popular songs) to the latest philosophical and cultural ideas.

1. An intellectual novel by Saul Bellow

Unlike British literature, the genre of the philosophical/intellectual novel has not gained much popularity in the US, which is due to the traditional focus of American culture on practicality. However, its peculiar version develops in the work of one of the "elders" of US literature, the Nobel laureate (1976) Saul Bellow (1915-2005). His prose is centered around the problem of human alienation from the materialized society of consumption.

In the case of Bellow, the universality of this problem is specified through the national "otherness" of the Jewish characters, who feel alienated in a society dominated by the values of the WASPs (White Americans of Anglo-Saxon origin, professing Protestantism). The same motive is inherent in the work of P. Roth and B. Malamud. Bellow's early, rather tragic novels ("*The Dangling Man*" (1944), "*The Victim*" (1947) were significantly influenced by existentialism, which later, although it did not disappear from his work, was softened by a kind of bitter humor (in the following works "*The Adventures of Augie March*" (1953) and "*Henderson the Rain King*" (1959) have the compositional principles of the picaresque, while the stylistic dominants relate them to the "ironic-comic" epic).

Starting from the 1960s, the protagonist of S. Bellow increasingly became a person of intellectual work - teachers ("*Herzog*", 1964, "*The Dean's December*", 1981), writers ("*Humboldt's Gift*", 1975), philosophers ("*More Die of Heartbreak*", 1987). As the author himself notes, "in American novels of the 20th century, few heroes are distinguished by mental abilities", and therefore, the problem of alienation returns with a new dimension - it is about searching for one's own "niche" in a fundamentally hostile social environment to intellectualism. A university professor, a specialist in the problems of romanticism, Moses Herzog, at a critical moment in his life, like many of his predecessors - characters in American literature - embarks on a journey across the country. However, his adventures (at the level of the plot) are important, first of all, as an occasion for intense inner work, the purpose of which is to determine the place of an intellectual in the modern world. "What does it mean to be human? In town. In the century. In mass. Transformed science. Under the power of the force. The subject of constant control. In the conditions of social mechanization. After the collapse of radical hopes. In a society where sociability is lacking and personality is devalued."

The state of uncertainty is revealed at the stylistic level in the discontinuity and fragmentation of the discourse, colored by self-reflection and self-irony. At the same time, in this, as in other works, Bellow resorts to the centuries-old Jewish cultural tradition - both in the high version of Talmudic scholarship and folklore images (many of the writer's characters bear the traits of a "shlemiel", a perennial loser from Jewish stories).

2. Moral Literature" by John Gardner

In an age that has already begun to lean toward the postmodern relativity of all truths, John Gardner (1933-1982) most eloquently defended the function of literature as a bearer of moral values. In the work "*On Moral Fiction*" (1978), which caused a wide critical response, he emphasizes the primacy of the writer's

ethical position compared to any bold technical innovations.

The role of the writer, according to Gardner, is to "impose spiritual order with the help of imagination, and oppose chaos and decay with the preaching of love and unity." The author's responsibility for what is written is emphasized, his duty to be in a constant creative search and to be sensitive to "feedback" from the reader. Gardner's devotion to the traditional values of family, friendship, and duty did not prevent literary experiments.

On the contrary, his original compositional and narrative solutions significantly enriched the prose palette of the last third of the 20th century and demonstrated the possibilities inherent in the combination of realistic and conventional conventions. Gardner was a specialist in English literature of the Middle Ages; therefore it is no coincidence that his novel "*Grendel*" (1971), which was a huge success, retells the Beowulf epic poem from the point of view of the monster Grendel, a technique common in postmodern literature.

This paradoxical move in combination with the philosophical saturation and ambiguity of the work, which denies the possibility of a single "correct" interpretation, allowed the author to once again emphasize the complexity of human nature and the problem of the ratio of good and evil in the human soul. The need for a dialogue between the "universe of order" and the "universe of rebellion" became the subject of consideration in the complex polygenre novels "*The Sunlight Dialogues*" (1972) and "*Nickel Mountain*" (1973). Among Gardner's innovative techniques, we should mention the use of "text within a text" (the novel "*October Light*", 1976).

Fragments from a "black comic book" about smugglers read by the heroine are interspersed in the almost anecdotal plot about the quarrel and reconciliation of two old people - brother and sister living in rural New England. Thus, the story of provincial life, told with gentle humor and sympathy, alternates with a fragmented text of popular culture. Subtly and unobtrusively,

based on the principles of both similarity and contrast, "bridges" are built between the two planes, designed not only to confirm the writer's commitment to the traditional moral principles of which the characters are carriers but also to subject them to a somewhat ironic revision. Neo-Gothic motifs are actualized in Gardner's last novel, "*Mickelsson's Ghosts*" (1982).

3. The drama of everyday life by John Updike

John Updike (b. 1932) is one of the most famous writers of the USA (both at home and abroad), whose work largely determined the face of national literature in the second half of the last century. The winner of many prestigious awards and at the same time the object of not only admiration but also harsh complaints from critics, Updike writes mostly about the average inhabitants of "one-story America".

In his own words, he seeks to convey the hidden tragedy of the everyday life of the average American. Such a task is determined, it seems, by relying on life-like, purely mimetic poetics. Indeed, Updike's greatest strength is perhaps his attention to detail, his ability to sensibly convey the colors, sounds, and smells of the physical world, as well as his psychological mastery. It is not for nothing that he is considered the best stylist among modern writers. At the same time, Updike's art is characterized by numerous "raids" beyond the boundaries of classical realism, which can take various forms, from mythologizing the story ("*The Centaur*", 1963) to choosing Shakespearean characters as his own heroes ("*Gertrude and Claudius*", 2000).

Updike largely owes his popularity to a series of four novels about Harry Engstrom, nicknamed "Rabbit". Since 1960, they have been regularly published at the beginning of each new decade, summarizing the social, political, and economic history of the United States of the previous ten years, presented through the prism of the consciousness of the "average American". Together, they made up a subjective epic of the country's life over forty years.

According to Updike, "in books about the everyday life of ordinary people, there is much more connection with modern history than in textbooks..." - because in fiction, history is not given in abstract facts or figures, but "flows" through human destinies, materializes in them. The first novel of the tetralogy is "*Rabbit, Run!*" (1960) – which reflected the alienation and loss of purpose of the 1950s generation; former basketball star and now humble employee Harry Engstrom constantly tries to escape from the family hearth, although he is tormented by a sense of guilt before his loved ones (and this, the author believes, distinguishes him from another "runaway" and rebel of this period - the lyrical hero J. Kerouac).

"*Rabbit Redux*" (1971) finds Harry just as dissatisfied with being sucked into everyday life, but signs and figures of the turbulent 1960s burst into the limited world of the character - hippie girl Jill, African-American Skitter, who force the protagonist to open his eyes to the problems of the wider society. The self-centeredness of the selfish and wealthy 1970s becomes the background of the novel "*Rabbit is Rich*" (1981), in which Harry appears as a complete conformist; he openly enjoys the comfort that the unexpected wealth - an inheritance from his father-in-law - brought him. In the last work of the series - "*Rabbit at Rest*" (1990) - there is a reconciliation of the hero with life, nostalgic notes are heard as the aged Harry, already a grandfather, inevitably approaches the last stop in his life's race - death (a theme that constantly attracted Updike since his early fascination with existentialism).

In parallel with the purely realistic manner of the tetralogy, another line of Updike's gift is developing. Thus, in "*The Centaur*" (1963) - a largely autobiographical novel about a provincial school teacher, George Caldwell, who resembles the writer's father - not only the narrative position changes several times, but also a mythological plane important for interpretations of the work emerges. Caldwell, obviously, does not know how to adapt in life - he did not

have a remarkable career, but, on the contrary, has many problems with students, the principal, and an eternal lack of money. He is often laughed at, which hurts his son Peter (the author's alter ego). But, as it turns out already in the first chapter, Caldwell, while not ceasing to be a teacher in the town of Olinger, has another guise - he is at the same time the wise centaur Chiron, also a teacher, but on the Olympus of ancient times.

The transition from a weak man to a god-like being can happen within the same sentence - here is Caldwell, wounded in the leg by an arrow fired by a student brawler, limping awkwardly down the school corridor, and then his gait turns into the clatter of centaur hooves. All characters and situations in the novel have mythological counterparts, more or less encrypted in the text. One can (and should!) interpret the functions of this foreign language plan in different ways, but it seems that its very presence signals the author's desire to give universality and scale to both the main character of the novel and trivial episodes of everyday life.

Among the many subsequent works of the writer, the novel *"The Witches of Eastwick"* (1984) gained significant publicity (also thanks to its film adaptation with the participation of a galaxy of popular actors). The supernatural initial situation (the phenomenon in a stagnant provincial town of the modern embodiment of the devil) allows us to emphasize one of the "eternal" themes of US literature - the hostility of a frozen lifestyle to living life - from an unexpected angle. In this version, the forces of life, as it should be, are represented by female images - three "witches" who are closer than men to the primordial principles of nature. The neo-gothic entourage of the novel is reduced by its ironic intonation.

As if in response to critics' criticism of the insufficient or biased depiction of female characters, in *"Gertrude and Claudius"* (2000), Updike imagines the events preceding the beginning of Shakespeare's Hamlet from the perspective of

the Danish prince's mother, Gertrude. This enables him to demonstrate the fatal flaws in the patriarchal construction of women's space.

4. A Woman's Perspective by J. C. Oates

Joyce Carol Oates's (b. 1938) rich creative output includes novels, short stories, poetry, drama, and essays. Marked by extreme inner tension, the works of this fragile woman are marked by uncompromising tragedy; the attempts of her passionate characters (often but not exclusively female) to self-actualize in a hostile, even grotesque environment are usually doomed to failure.

Oates is known as a master of socio-psychological prose, where the problems of evil and violence come to the fore. Perhaps, it is precisely the interest in them that can be explained by the second direction of her work - turning to American Gothic, where the same questions return from the other side - not as woven into a colorful social fabric, but as cardinal primary elements of human existence.

According to the correct observation of T. Denisova, the novels "*The Garden of Earthly Delights*" (1967), "*Them*" (1969) and "*Do with Me What You Will*" (1973) form a kind of triptych, in the center of which are three broken female destinies. At the same time, despite the writer's detailed description of the psychological dynamics of the heroines, these and other works of Oates have an epic beginning, the inclusion of individual history in social history.

On the other hand, in such books as "*A Bloodsmoor Romance*" (1982), mystical and romantic elements with their mystery, final ambiguity, and invasion of otherworldly forces into the textual world play a significant role. The author also gives the subtitle "romantic novel" to one of her most recent works, "*Middle Age: A Romance*" (2001). Paradoxically, the story centers around the fallen hero (mentioned in the prologue), the sculptor Adam Behrendt, a mysterious figure whose real name and motives for behavior are revealed, as dictated by the poetics of romanticism, only gradually as the plot unfolds. Here

the American metaphor of the "New Adam" is actualized, and the whole novel acquires the characteristics of a moral parable with its emphasis on the personal responsibility of a person, on the motive of sin and redemption, and on the ability of a strong personality to change the lives of those around him. Oates herself connects the development of "American Gothic" with the horror of the first Puritan settlers of the 17th century in the vast expanses of the New World and in front of "the tragic ambiguity of human nature with its tendency to what Christians call "original sin". In the works of US writers of the 20th century (to which Oates herself can be included), in her opinion, the "supernatural" and the bad "subconscious" merge together.

Thus, the writer, who was initially classified as a naturalist, turned out to be capable of boldly expanding the genre and poetic range (from a family saga to a horror novel), characteristic of modern prose, although this sometimes brings her criticism for eclecticism and the lack of a clearly expressed individual style.

5. Genre models of the historical novel

As a relatively "young" nation, Americans are respectful of their own history, both material, political, and spiritual. At the same time, the rejection of many aspects of modern life in America, together with the spirit of critical revision of the past inherent in the era of postmodernism, caused a lack of piety in reference to the previous stages of the country's development.

The celebration of the bicentennial of the United States in 1978 also spurred interest in history - for some, the round date served as a signal for a new wave of apologetics against American values and the "American dream", while for others it became an occasion to look in the past for the causes of today's problems and troubles. One of the most famous authors who contribute to the understanding of historical lessons is Gore Vidal (1925-2012).

A professional politician who, thanks to his social status (Vidal's family

is related to the Kennedy clan), had every opportunity to study the American "corridors of power" from the inside, he is at the same time endowed with the ability to distance himself from his circle and look very critically at it from the side. Vidal's series of novels about US political history is considered the most successful - *"Washington, DC"* (1967), *"Burr"* (1973), *"1876"* (1976), and *"Lincoln"* (1984).

Parts of the series are written in a rather traditional manner, inherent in the genre of the historical novel in its "classic" version. Work on each work is preceded by thorough professional training, and it is not for nothing that critics speak of the author's "intimate" acquaintance with his heroes - "founding fathers" G. Washington, T. Jefferson, A. Hamilton, A. Burr, President A. Lincoln.

At the same time, the writer openly emphasizes the fundamental "non-objectivity" of his approach, due to his vision of the system of government in the USA as such, which, despite its electability, represents only the interests of large corporations that control the government in the same way as the mass media. The worst choice that he believes the average American has is between the "conservative" and the "reactionary" parties. It is not surprising that after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Vidal took an unpopular position, blaming what happened, first of all, on the wrong policy of America itself. The characteristic title of his non-fiction book on this topic: *"Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: How We Got to Be So Hated"* (2002); Vidal refers to the current owners of the White House as the "Cheney-Bush junta."

Unlike Vidal, who is primarily interested in the formation and evolution of American politics, E L Doctorow (1931-2015) offers a different approach to history, closer to its understanding by postmodernists. His novels, which take place in the past, would be more correct to call "quasi-historical". A peculiar genre of "retro novel", started in *"Ragtime"* (1980), was developed in the

following works - *"Loon Lake"* (1980), *"World's Fair"* (1985), and *"Billy Bathgate"* (1989). For "retro" poetics, epoch-making historical events or personalities are not so much important as the living feeling of the era with its colors, sounds and fragrances. The "taste of time" is reproduced with the help of a mass of small details; using the principle of montage, the author creates a vivid mosaic in which real historical figures have the same status as fictional characters, references to significant world and national events coexist with fragments of popular culture, and philosophical and political ideas affect people equally with phantoms of mass consciousness.

The action of the novel *"Ragtime"* is set in the decade of 1906-1916. On the one hand, the ironic voice of the narrator distanced in time, and on the other hand, music in the style of ragtime, marked by broken rhythms and intermittent syncopations, serves as a single factor for the motley signs of the era. It structures a narrative in which the main melody - the tragic story of a black pianist, whose injustice of the "establishment" forces him to take the path of terror - enters into a contrapuntal relationship with other lines (they are led by nameless representatives of two typical families - "real Americans" and recent immigrants), combining in a common theme: man in time.

Doctorow's kaleidoscopic story is characterized by an obvious polemic about the idyllic American perception of the carefree times of the beginning of the century, which is evidenced by the very beginning of the novel: "Sex and death were walking openly all over America" (this phrase also serves as a connecting link between two chronological layers - the time of the novel and the time of his writing).

6. The American version of literary postmodernism

Since the worldview and poetic principles of this cultural direction (see the section "Postmodernism") were crystallized by scientists from many concrete examples of art/literature of the second half of the 20th century, it is

quite natural that many of them are also found in the works of the USA writers.

At the same time, we are talking about specific variants of literary postmodernism in different regions and countries, which are connected with a number of factors: different models of interaction with the world and own traditions, the influence on the literature of the conditions of its deployment, and different genesis. In this aspect, the postmodern trend in American literature is characterized by the fact that it is an organic continuation of trends in national culture that were sufficiently manifested in the 1950s and 1960s.

Some of the historical and cultural prerequisites that formed the basis for the development of postmodern attitudes were considered above: this is the maturation of nonconformism in the depths of the "silent fifties", and the movement of the Beatniks, and later the "new left", and the influence of mass culture, marked by the integration of elements of purely American genre varieties (musicals, westerns, "soap operas") into literary texts. Among the forerunners of American postmodernism, we should mention the names of Henry Miller (1891-1980) and William S. Burroughs (1914-1997), whose life and work merged into an inseparable continuum, shocking in relation to accepted social and literary conventions.

The immediate "predecessor" of postmodernism in the USA can be considered the so-called school of black humor, to which critics of the 1960s and 70s attributed, among others, J. Barth, J. P. Donleavy, D. Barthelme, S. Elkin, K. Kesey, K. Vonnegut, J. Heller. It was these authors (they were also called "fabulators") that formed the core of American postmodernism. their "comic novels" became a kind of laboratory of postmodernism, where its fundamental principles were tested: the perception of the world as chaos; playing with the possibilities of the myth with the help of burlesque, parody, travesty; multi-layer construction; emphasized relativity; experiments with language; total irony. A cruel laugh prevailed in them over the official

"benevolent smile".

The work of Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) constantly baffles critics who try to fit it into a single "shell": after all, it unfolds at the junction of several genres and directions. In his novels, there are features of science fiction and "black humor", postmodern play and sharp social satire. The "double coding" of modern literature is inherent to them to the greatest extent - on the one hand, they are part of the favorite reading circle of young people of more than one generation, together with the latest works of mass culture; on the other hand, they raise the most painful questions of our time - the price of scientific and technological progress, war, humanity's tendency to self-destruction.

It is no coincidence that Vonnegut is the author of the comparison of the writer with a canary, which is first launched into a mine to make sure its atmosphere is suitable for breathing: like this small bird, the writer is endowed with increased sensitivity to danger, only not physical, but moral and social. Vonnegut's artistic world is frankly conventional, fragmentary, and grotesque. He early invented his unique style - "short sentences in short paragraphs of short sections" - which he later called "a little telegraph-schizophrenic". The genre synthesis characteristic of the novelist took shape in his fourth novel - "*Cat's Cradle*" (1963).

The theme of the scientist's moral responsibility is intertwined in it with a grotesquely hyperbolized, but recognizable picture of a dictatorial regime on the fictional island of San Lorenzo. And although the book ends with the death of the world - as a result of the irresponsible use of the powerful substance "ice-nine" on the planet comes eternal winter - the very fact that we, today's readers, still hold Vonnegut's novel in our hands, encourages us to read it as an apocalyptic prophecy about the doom of earthly civilization, and as a warning about the possible course of events. In this aspect, his work is perceived as a dystopia.

The next novel, *"Slaughterhouse-Five, Or the Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance With Death"* (1969) is inspired by the writer's personal memories of the horrors of being in German captivity during the Second World War and of the barbaric (and from a strategic point of view, unnecessary) bombing of Dresden by Allied aircraft in February 1945. This experience is transferred to the hero of the novel, Billy Pilgrim.

The anti-war orientation of the work is combined with the science-fiction motif of time travel, which is hinted at by the hero's last name - "pilgrim", that is, a traveler (although what happens to Billy can be interpreted as a mental disorder and attributed to his "post-traumatic stress syndrome"). The inhabitants of the planet Tralfamador, where the protagonist also falls, develop a concept of the structure of time that is completely consistent with the postmodern one - because for them "every moment of the present, past and future has always existed and will always exist." Then death does not exist - and in the light of this new understanding, the darkly cynical refrain of the novel "So it goes" which sounds every time someone dies, can be interpreted not only as a statement of the inevitability of death but also as a reconciliation with it. Despite the tragic nature of what is depicted, the work ends on an optimistic note of chirping birds in the spring, which brings hope.

In the following novels of the writer, were written in approximately the same, only more complicated manner (*"Breakfast of Champions"*, 1973; *"Jailbird"*, 1979; *"Galapagos"*, 1985; *"Bluebeard"* 1987; *"Focus Pocus"*, 1990 and others), the pessimistic assessment of the ability of modern civilization to resist self-destruction is corrected by the hope that humanity can still survive if it learns from the lessons of its tragic history.

Many researchers consider the opposition between man and system to be the core of the American version of postmodernism. A high level of technical development, on the one hand, and a significant degree of standardization of

social life, on the other, led to the maximum "compression" of the individual in the United States. And since not only masculinization but also individualism have deep historical roots in the country, the conflict between them is inevitable. As we have seen, at each stage it found its expression in literature. Postmodern modeling of the world also appears as an attempt to free the individual from the shackles of uniformity, but not in real life, but in some other plane (mythological? gaming?). Let's look at how the recognized meters of American postmodernism do it.

According to the already-known postmodern paradigm of the functioning of literature, **John Barth** (b. 1930) is not only a practitioner but also a theoretician of his art. His pen includes, in particular, two programmatic essays: "*The Literature of Exhaustion*" (1967) and "*The Literature of Replenishment*" (1984).

The first of them is a kind of manifesto of postmodernism, which declares the exhaustion of grand narratives and classical narrative forms; but due to ascertaining this fact, the author comes to the conclusion not about the death of literature, but only about the completion of a certain epistemological situation.

The next essay (which separates from the first one by almost twenty years and which is based, among other things, on the own experience of Barth the writer) postulates a way out of the impasse: it can be a playful rethinking of the culture of the past.

The textbook example of a postmodern text was Barth's novel "Lost in the Funhouse", which gave the title to the collection of 1968. With the help of various metanarrative techniques, the illusion of "plausibility" is debunked, the artificial nature of writing and reading is emphasized; the reader's faith in the reality of textual events is constantly destroyed by reminders that they are constructed by the author. Barth's early, more traditional novels ("*The Floating Opera*" (1956),

"The End of the Road" (1958)) reflect the influence of existentialism and exploit the motifs of escape and wandering popular in the 1950s. In the 1960s, Barth's writing increasingly moved away from realism with a simultaneous increase in the comic element.

The reader of the magazine "The Guardian" feels himself in the "room of laughter", where reality is passed through many crooked mirrors; they hypertrophy some features and hardly reflect others. *"The Sot-Weed Factor"* (1960) is a parody of a picaresque poem of the 18th century. Under the same name, while *"Giles Goat-Boy"* (1966) has a more ambitious task: here the entire system of the world structure is presented in a reduced register, which is presented through the metaphor of a university. The collision of a natural being with a bureaucratic machine reveals the theme of confrontation between man and system in an original way.

The novels *"Chimera"* (1972) and *"The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor"* (1991) are distinguished by their rich inter- and metatextuality, in which Greek mythology and the tales of "A Thousand and One Nights" are chosen as the subject of playful reconfiguration. In the context of modern ideas about the textual nature of reality, "love" appears to Barth to be identical to "writing", which is emphasized both by the cross-use of units of one semantic field to denote another, and by their joint ability to "creativity", the birth of a new (child or literary work).

Thus, the common denominator of Barth's inventive texts turns out to be the genre's capacity for parody and self-parody. They present the concept of the human personality as the creator of one's own life-journey-text woven (by means of the game) from a continuous cultural space. Equally important for the writer is the task of destroying the illusion that literature reflects reality.

In contrast to Barth, who was prone to relatively large forms, **Donald Barthelme** (1931-1989) felt best in the genres of short prose - for example, the

short story, which acquired fragmentation and discreteness under his pen. Even after thinking of writing a novel, the writer complained that the text falls apart into short fragments. After all, as one of Barthelme's characters noted, "the fragment is the only thing worthy of my trust," and this recognition clearly echoes postmodernism's "vote of no confidence" in "grand narratives." In addition to collections of short stories, the most famous of which was probably the first - *"Come Back, Doctor Caligari"* (1964), he has the story *"Snow White"* (1967) and several novels, including the posthumously published *"The King"* (1990), in which modernized and trivialized the medieval Arthurian legend.

Barthelme's artistic style is determined by the principle of collage, thanks to which realities and allusions "extracted" from different cultural layers coexist in the text on one plane. In the process of creating the characters, their multifacetedness is programmed – the everyday dimension coexists in their structure with the mythological one, and the Barthelme myth could be borrowed from both "high" and popular culture (which is clearly visible in the reduced circulation of the well-known fairy-tale heroine Snow White). Language can be considered Barthelme's main "hero". He brilliantly uses it as an instrument with the help of an alternation of heterogeneous styles - from elitist-elevated to familiar grassroots, as a result of which his prose can be read on several levels and is able to satisfy both a demanding philologist and a mass reader.

Thomas Pynchon (b. 1937) is one of the most mysterious American writers, who is often called the "invisible writer." Like Salinger, he avoids contact with the press and the public. It is assumed that during his studies at the university, he could listen to V. Nabokov's lectures. Pynchon's erudition in the most diverse fields of human knowledge is impressive - from philosophy to physics, from anthropology to popular music. Intertextuality, which takes the form of ironic eclecticism, is an important component of his poetics.

Pynchon's works are imbued with open and hidden quotations and

allusions, a linguistic game with words, saturated with images of mass culture. The reality in his books appears elusive and multivariate, the narrators are unreliable, and the storylines can lead the reader astray and leave him there. Most of the writer's novels are similar in structure: as a rule, they are about some bizarre but sinister conspiracy (sometimes on a planetary scale), the disclosure of which becomes the goal of one of the main characters - in this way he/she tries to create order from chaos.

So, exposing a conspiracy is metaphorically equivalent to deciphering the world. At the same time, in Pynchon's prose, the actively exploited nowadays sound loudly in different "tiers" of literature, motives of a grand mystery, keys to its solution, confusing codes (see "*Foucault's Pendulum*" by U. Eco, "*The Da Vinci Code*" by D. Brown, etc.). The reader is also involved in the search, and the text forces him to find secret meanings and symbols in the banal and routine. This paranoid vision of the world does not recognize any time-space boundaries. Pynchon is known for his masterful use of techniques and symbols from popular culture, particularly science fiction and detective fiction.

The first novel of the writer, strangely named "V." (1963), gained the attention of many. It is about the search by a character named Herbert Stencil (from stencil - drawing, scheme) for some mysterious woman or, perhaps, a force or organization that has undergone many incarnations, which greatly influenced the fate of the world, but the only thing that is known about her is the fact that all her numerous names/titles begin with the letter V. Throughout the work, this initial acquires various decodings: "Venus", "Virgin", "Void", etc. The stencil has its double in the novel with the opposite sign, the down-to-earth Benny Profane (profane - worldly, unholy), with whose image the satirical episodes of the work are connected. All the journeys and searches of the heroes (whose pairing can be interpreted as a parody of the "*Don Quixote*" - Sancho Panza couple) lead to nothing, the mystery remains unsolved, once again

testifying to the fundamental unknowability of the world. Pynchon's next work, the short novel "*The Crying of Lot 49*" (1966), is built according to the same scheme and defiantly breaks the conventions of the detective genre, which implies the disclosure of the mystery in the denouement.

The novel "*Entropy*" (1960) became programmatic not only for the author but also for the postmodern episteme as a whole. Borrowed from the exact sciences, the concept of entropy, the gradual equalization of temperatures in the universe, which will lead to its death, is metaphorized by Pynchon to express his view on the progress of modern civilization. The following novels - "*Gravity's Rainbow*" (1973), "*Vineland*" (1990), "*Mason and Dixon*" (1997) - continued to mesmerize readers and critics, but did not reveal any fundamental shifts in Pynchon's manner regarding his vision of the world or poetics.

In American critical works, the theory and practice of postmodernism are often analyzed together with the concept of "difference".

After all, it was the postmodern recognition of the multiplicity of truths, experiences, and interpretations that opened the way for multiculturalism with its emphasis on the equality of cultural manifestations of all groups (racial, ethnic, regional, tender, and others) that make up the modern social mosaic of the United States. Literary achievements of minorities, ignored or marginalized by the "mainstream" for a long time, confidently entered the general fund of modern American literature, where the freshest aesthetic discoveries often arise in them.

7. Multiculturalism and US literature

Literature of the United States of America of that period continues to be inspired by the changing concept of the "American dream", in a productive dialogue with which new models of aesthetic relations with the world become clearer. The most noticeable feature of American writing of this period is radical pluralization - modern US literature reflects the multiplicity of experiences,

abandoning the monomyth of previous decades. What exact metamorphoses has the "American dream" undergone during the last half-century?

After World War II the United States of America became the richest and most powerful country in the world. In contrast to exhausted Europe, America, which had a considerable profit from the war, stood against the background of the spoiled Western civilization as a beacon of hope for economic well-being. In the context of the "cold war" with the socialist camp, it finally assumed the role of an outpost of democracy.

Moreover, at this time, according to the expression of **Alfred Kazin** (1915-1998), "Modern American literature was born in protest, born in rebellion, born out of the sense of loss and indirection which was imposed upon the new generations out of the realization that the old formal culture-the "New England idea"-could no longer serve" revealed itself (A.Kazin, 2013: 31). At the same time, the first postwar decade went down in the nation's history as "prosperous but alienated."

The United States of America is known to be a country of immigrants; her face from the beginning was not only white, but also red, black, yellow, and brown. Despite this, for many decades and even centuries, America's multicolorism was ignored. Political, moral, and aesthetic values were accepted as the norm in it, which was professed by only one segment of its population - "white men from the middle class". By tacit consent, it was their tastes that came to be considered universal. It was convenient for those with power and money, and it was with the bearers of these standards that all Americans were to identify themselves. However, the nature of national self-awareness has changed over the years, its dynamics during the last third of the last century can be succinctly characterized by a change of metaphors: from a "melting pot", implying the mixing of all cultural ingredients into a homogeneous mass, to a "patchwork quilt" ", where the presence of a single whole does not negate the individuality

of its components.

In the second half of the twentieth century, the literary culture of the United States underwent a paradigm shift, a transition from monoculturalism to multiculturalism. The 1960s were marked by tumultuous events in the social and political life of the country, which left their mark on the contemporary American literary culture. These were the years of active the struggle of blacks for their civil rights, the feminist movement for equal rights for women and men, anti-war protests against American military actions in Vietnam (1957-1975), politicization and exacerbation of contradictions in social life. In the light of these events American literary culture appeared as a terrain with the same flaws that many radical and progressive Americans no longer wanted to put up with in the social, structural, political, and economic spheres of society.

They began to realize that racial discrimination, restrictions on women's rights, and dismissive attitudes toward national and ethnic minorities were fixed, strengthened, and sometimes reinforced by the traditional literary culture of the United States. It became obvious to many that the literature of the so-called mainstream was inherently discriminatory. It was created and developed predominantly by white men of Anglo-Saxon descent, of Protestant religion, shaped by the influence of Western European civilization.

The radical democratic public was faced with the task of desegregation of the entire American culture, revising the traditional cultural hierarchy of values.

The shifts that took place in the public consciousness of America in the 1970s were caused by a number of factors. Among them, we should mention the alternation of generations because the first-generation immigrants sought assimilation in the new environment as quickly as possible, while their grandchildren already felt "at home" in American society, and therefore were fondly interested in the traditions and cultural ways of their former homeland. Radical demographic changes in the structure of modern immigration to the

USA also play a big role: most of the early new arrivals came from Europe, and now the majority of immigrants are from Asian countries and Latin America. According to census data, the composition of American society in the near future will undergo radical changes in terms of racial and ethnic affiliation of citizens, in particular, the number of white Americans will significantly decrease, while representatives of minorities - Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans - will have a much larger share of the general population. The social movements of the "tumultuous decade" of the 1960s, especially the struggle of black Americans for civil rights, which served as an example for other minorities, provided a powerful incentive to revise fixed ideas. We should not forget the already mentioned tendency of the post-industrial consumer society to depersonalize its citizens. Therefore, the desire for cultural and ethnic self-determination turned out to be one of the means of resistance to this pressure. Finally, in the academic environment, where the struggle for cultural pluralism was widespread, the influence of the latest philosophical and cultural currents, subversive of the establishment and aimed at deconstructing it from within, was also felt. All these factors led to a radical revision of both America's ideas about its own identity and the "American dream". Now it was postulated not in a single but in multiple dimensions.

From the point of view of the literary development of the United States, these changes had multifaceted and far-reaching consequences, which also do not remain unchanged with the passage of time. In the early stages of the "revolution of differences", it was of fundamental importance to highlight individual branches in the general stream of a national literature, the literature of ethnic and other minorities, and to create a corresponding literary corpus around them. The most significant achievement of that era was the realization of the importance of the contribution of ethnically marked writers to American literature and the attempt to theoretically understand the thematic and artistic

specificity of their texts. The aesthetic value of what representatives of different cultural groups do in literature is determined, among other things, by the fruitful combination of heterogeneous artistic traditions in their work. One of the richest ethnic kinds of literature in the United States in terms of volume, scope, aesthetic achievement, and social influence is **African American literature**.

It encompasses a vast array of texts, both written and spoken, produced by black Americans over the more than 250-year period of their presence on the North American continent. Over the centuries, Negro literature developed in extremely unfavorable conditions (slavery, discrimination), which significantly emphasizes its current striking achievements. Its origin dates back to the third quarter of the 18th century, although blacks had already been on American soil for more than a hundred years before that. However, access to writing was closed to them for a long time due to the rightful fears of slave owners about giving slaves such a powerful tool of knowledge as writing. Since then, the connection between the ability to read/write and freedom has become one of the common topos of African-American literature. Among the characteristic features inherent in black literature, we note its reliance on oral (folkloric) modes of expression and the development of the unique slave narrative genre, which became a model and a source of inspiration for many generations of African-Americans. One cannot ignore such a feature as the inseparable and organic connection of Negro literature with various musical genres and trends (blues, jazz, rap, hip-hop). Music performs several functions in literature, acting as a theme, a source of motifs, characters, tropes, and structural principles. Not to mention external obstacles, every black writer has always had to solve the difficult question of the ratio of political/social issues and purely artistic tasks, racially specific and universally human, in his own work. All these features are inherent in modern modifications of Negro literature.

Its most prominent representatives in the 1940s-1960s are **Richard**

Wright (1908-1960), Ralph Ellison (1914-1994), and James Baldwin (1924-1987). Wright was the first black writer to become widely known outside the black community. In different periods, his work was influenced by social criticism, naturalism, and existentialism. Wright's novel "*Son of America*" (1940) received the most publicity. The main character, Bigger Thomas, an uneducated black youth, accidentally becomes a murderer and must be executed. The piece sounded like a harsh but necessary commentary on the state of racial inequality in the United States. Ellison's literary fame is based on a single novel "*Invisible*" (1952) and several collections of short prose. Unlike Wright, Ellison rejects traditional realism, preferring modernist techniques of grotesque, hyperbole, and symbolism to brand a society incapable of providing its citizens, both white and black, with decent ideals and living conditions. Its nameless protagonist leads a ghostly existence in a dungeon, where he hides after a negative social experience destroys all the illusions of his youth. The title of the novel embodies one of the constant themes of Negro literature - the "invisibility" of blacks as individuals in a society affected by racial prejudice. A representative of the next generation, Baldwin took issue with Wright, arguing that in order to achieve greater effectiveness in their art, African-American writers must move from racial protest and outspoken social criticism to deeper themes such as the search for one's own identity and universal issues of concern for all people. A number of novels belong to this subtle and perceptive artist ("*Go and Tell from the Mountain*", 1953; "*Another Country*", 1962; "*Tell me when the train left*", 1968; "*If Beale Street could talk*", 1974, etc.), as well as collections of essays on racism, the role of the artist, and literature.

During the social upheaval of the 1960s, there was also a powerful surge of African-American culture, which is called the "second Negro revival" (the first dates from the 1910s-1930s). All forms of art, including literature, were significantly politicized and acquired a militant and aggressive character. Black

artists set out to change the ways in which American Negroes were represented in US culture. Representatives of the movement "black art" advocated "functional, collective and engaged" art, which would connect its creators with black communities. they were also characterized by Afrocentricity, i.e. turning to the foremother Africa in search of inspiration, wisdom, and different from Western aesthetic principles. In this "revolutionary" period, poetry (Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez) and drama developed most actively. In particular, theater and drama, with their direct impact on the audience, became the "public voice of the Negro revolution" (plays by A. Baraka, E. Bullins, A. Kennedy, etc.).

In the following decades, the works of African-American writers of all genres occupy an increasingly prominent place in the literary panorama of the United States. In contrast to the previous era, the new flourishing of Negro literature ("the third revival") is not so much connected with the theme of protest as with the in-depth study of the personality of the African-American, his/her relations with the community, ways of assimilating his/her heterogeneous cultural heritage (African, European, American) and accepting one's own past. Therefore, this period is characterized by a heightened interest in history. Modern black writers use all the complex and sophisticated ("Western") techniques of writing, which under their pens enter into "chemical reactions" with African and African-American artistic models.

Along with active male authors (Ernest Gaines, Leon Forrest, Ishmael Reed), the modern era is marked by the emergence of a large group of gifted female writers who quickly gained creative maturity (Alice Walker, Toni Cade Bambara, Gloria Naylor, and others) on the literary scene. Black women authors combine criticism of racist practices with condemnation of sexism; the theme of black women's sisterhood resonates loudly in their works. The most famous of them is undoubtedly **Toni Morrison** (b. 1931), laureate of the Nobel Prize for

Literature in 1993. In her unique creative manner, her fearless depiction of the cruelest reality is combined with philosophical scale, bright metaphoricality, originality of symbolism, colorfulness, and musicality of language. In one of the interviews, Morrison said: “I only have 26 letters of the alphabet; I don’t have color or music. I must use my craft to make the reader see the colors and hear the sounds.” (T.Morrison, 2023)

“Language, when it finally comes, has the vigor of a felon pardoned after twenty-one years on hold. Sudden, raw, stripped to its underwear.” (T.Morrison, 2023) The first novel, “*The Bluest Eyes*” (1970), shows the detrimental effect of internalizing societal standards of beauty on the development of the African-American child's personality. “Her color is a cross she will always carry.”(T.Morrison, 2015:2) The following works (“*Sula*”, 1973; “*Song of Solomon*”, 1977; “*The Resin Scarecrow*”, 1981) reflect the process of changing landmarks in the Negro consciousness, which focuses on the individual struggle for self-affirmation and self-realization. The tragic novel of 1987 “*Beloved*” can be called a true masterpiece. The plot, in which ruthless truth is intertwined with mythological and mystical elements, tells about the slave woman Seti - convinced that her escape with her children was unsuccessful, she kills her young daughter in order to “save” her from the fate of slavery. Twenty years later, an unknown young woman appears in Seti's life as a ghostly reproach. Deep immersion in painful African-American history is not intended to open up national wounds, but to look into the eyes of the past in order to overcome its horror and burden - otherwise, neither black nor white Americans can move on. Conflicts within the black community itself, as well as the unnaturalness of stereotypical “racial” definitions, interest the writer in the novels “*Paradise*” (1997) and “*Love*” (2003).

“Today’s multiculturalism mirrors the appreciation of the folk cultures, from Appalachia to Cajun Louisiana and New Mexico Indo-Hispano, brought to

light by the New Deal; bioregionalism is little different from the regionalism that rose up as the socio-political facet of that awareness" [Alfred Kazin's America]. Today, due to the concern of many researchers about the division of American literature into separate racial, ethnic, and tender branches, it is proposed to revise the concept of cultural pluralism, built on the principle of a rainbow, where colors coexist, but do not mix. In contrast to it, the culture of the USA is positioned as fundamentally hybrid, or "creole". The change in perspective requires new research strategies, which include demonstrating the social construction of the categories of "blackness" and "whiteness", substantiating the "mixedness" of the American nation from its beginnings, as well as - in the field of literary studies - focusing attention on the interpenetration and interaction of heterogeneous cultural elements on levels of texts. Inter-racial, inter-national, and inter-ethnic cultural exchange becomes an important source of national literature.

8. Native American Literature

Native American written literature is relatively young; in it, the features characteristic of Indian culture continue to live: a feeling of deep kinship with nature, the predominantly oral nature of the transmission of the narrative tradition, developed mythology, artistic syncretism. A value system based on harmony with nature allowed Native Americans to develop quite complex ideas about justice, equality and shared responsibility for life, as well as the concept of the individual as a link in a chain connecting the past and the future. In the work of contemporary Native American writers, these traditional points of reference are often incorporated into Eurocentric narrative structures. Their focus is on the social problems of reservations (poverty, alcoholism, lack of a future) and broader issues of cultural identity and relationships with nature.

Writer and artist **Scott Momaday** (b. 1934) is considered the founder of modern Indian literature and its most significant representative. He declared

himself with the multi-genre book *"House Made of Dawn"* (1968), followed by the poetic *"The Way to Rainy Mountain"* (1969). In approaching the central problem of the Native American search for himself, Momaday combines the history and mythology of his tribe, personal observations, and creative imagination in an innovative conglomerate where the word coexists with the visual image. The growth of Native American self-awareness in the writer's prose is largely conveyed through the unexpected and creative use of language. Among other authors, **Leslie Marmon Silko** (b. 1948) and **Louise Erdrich** (b. 1954) received special approval from critics and the readership. Silko's very popular work *"Ceremony"* (1977) has the features of a "song novel", the structure of which reproduces the structural elements of healing rituals used by the Laguna Pueblo tribe (it deals with the return to a full life of a young Indian, psychologically traumatized by participation in ethnic war and the unenlightened existence in the reservation). Although some works of Asian Americans written in the 19th century have survived to our time, Asian-American literature as a whole body of texts was formed in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In recent decades it became not only a worthy stream of the pluralistic culture of the modern USA but also an object of serious interest of researchers. Asian American writers explore the experiences of racial and cultural minorities who have long been considered outsiders in America. The term "Asian-American" itself covers people from various regions of Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, etc.), with cultural differences no less significant than between them and white Americans. For more than a century, people with Asian roots in America were either denied representation at all or were depicted with the help of derogatory stereotypes. These people are said to have "dropped out of the textbooks" because their history was not recorded in written sources. That is why the restoration of history - personal, family, ethnic - plays such a large role in Asian American

literature. The neglected pages dealing with Asia in America fit into the national historical paradigm today. The genre of autobiography is popular, where the formation of a personality is traced in the context of a double identity. Modern writers, turning to this ancient genre variety, give it complex and inventive forms. The most famous work of this type is **Maxine Hong Kingston's** (b. 1940) book *"Warrior Woman: Memories of Childhood Among Ghosts"* (1976), which was included in school and university programs and translated into many languages of the world. This largely autobiographical work attempts to synthesize two cultural models—the inherited Chinese and the acquired American—in a way that enriches both. For this purpose, Kingston resorts to a creative reinterpretation of Chinese mythology, in particular, the legend of the famous female warrior Fa Mulan, whose exploits and fate the protagonist, living in America in the middle of the 20th century, seems to try on herself. According to her, it is precisely by telling old myths "in a new, American way" that she provides them with further life. Although the author was declared a feminist on the basis of this book, in subsequent novels ("*China Men*" (1980); "*Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*", (1989) she also explores male versions of the Asian-American experience. Kingston paved the way in literature for her compatriots, such as Amy Tan (b.1952), whose novel about two generations of Chinese-American women - mothers and daughters - *The Fun Club* (1989) held a high position on the national bestseller list for almost a year. The greatest success among Asian-American playwrights fell to **David Henry Hwang** (born in 1957), the author of the technically sophisticated play *"M. Butterfly"* (1986), aimed at destroying the stereotypes of the mass consciousness regarding East-West and male-female relations.

The creativity of **Spanish-American** writers (who are also called "Latino") is a relatively new phenomenon on the country's literary horizon; it covers different groups: Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and people from

Central and South America. Nowadays, they are all sometimes combined under the name "Chicanos", which originally applied only to people of Mexican origin. Today, they make up one of the largest ethnic groups in the United States with the highest rates of demographic growth. At the same time, it is one of the most problematic minorities due to a significant percentage of uneducated and unqualified people who often do not speak English. The spiritual and cultural rise of Chicanos occurs in the 1960s-1980s, when, along with other achievements, their own literature is formed. Bilingualism became one of its defining features - Chicano writers widely use Spanish along with English, which creates a special artistic effect. The multiplicity of origins of Chicano literature causes the involvement of a number of powerful traditions in it. Among them are ancient Mexican ones, containing both the mythology and worldview of pre-Columbian civilizations (Aztecs and Mayans), as well as the influence of the Spanish conquests, in particular, the Catholic religion. At the same time, there is also a later Anglo-American component in this literature.

The leading Chicano writer is **Rudolph Anaya** (b. 1937), author of the famous novel *"Bless Me, Ultima"* (1972). In the center of the story is the story of the narrator, a teenager who dreams of serving his people by becoming a priest in the southwestern United States. An important place is occupied by the image of the old healer Ultima, which symbolizes the life-giving forces and ethnic folk roots of Mexican Americans. The protagonist faces a difficult moral dilemma - how to reconcile the prescriptions of the Catholic faith with ancient magic? Other Spanish-American authors include the Pulitzer Prize-winning Cuban-born writer **Oscar Ihuelos** (the novel *"The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love"*, 1989), the novelist **Sandra Cisneros** (the collection *"Woman Hollering Creek"*, 1991), poet, novelist, and essayist Gloria Anzaldúa, who proposed her own theory of Chicano literature, in which the leading role belongs to the concept of "border" or "border".

Usually, in the modern literary palette of the USA, other colors can be distinguished, since writers with different cultural "baggage" work in it - for example, in recent years, writers of Greek origins, such as radio journalist **David Sedaris**, the author of witty and shocking books, have been actively asserting themselves are based on his family history (eg. "*Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*", 2004). The o-American component (that is, the English-language literary creativity of the descendants of Ukrainian immigrants) is also developing in the countries - its worthy spokesman is, in particular, **Askold Melnychuk** (b. 1954). His first novel - "*What is told*" (1994) - combines an artistic and figurative commentary on the historical fate of Ukraine in a universal context with the violation of the problem of self-identification, urgent for the entire American culture of the second half of the last century. At the level of poetics, the mythological layer, which owes its specific content to Ukrainian folklore, is mediated by a generally ironic postmodern tonality. So, the strength of the so-called ethnic works of literature lies in their multi-rootedness, in their combination of cultural traditions of different regions, nations, and ethnic groups. However, the modern multicultural panorama of American literature is not limited to them. There is also a feminist note in it, which was initiated by the program work of "social feminism" of the 1960s - "*The Feminine Mystique*" by Betty Friedan (1963), in which a woman's right to self-realization in professional activity was substantiated in a journalistic form. One of the most notable writers of this direction is Erika Jong (b. 1942). her novel "*Fear of Flying*" (1973) caused a wide resonance, because its heroine, the alter ego of the author Isadora Wing, seeks to "happen" primarily in the sexual sphere. The title of the work metaphorically embodies everything that prevents her from feeling free - inner stiffness, guilt, awareness of social conventions, etc. At the end of the work, after a series of journeys - both in the "real" time of the novel and in the depths of her own memory - Isadora gets rid of her "fear of flying" and comes to terms

with her physicality: "I looked at my own body... A beautiful body. My. I decided to keep it for myself." In addition to the time-marked writing of the heroine's thoughts about the always relevant problems of human relations, the novel attracts with its natural intonation - ironic and trusting at the same time. In recent decades, writers of non-traditional sexual orientation have come to the forefront of American literature (playwright Tony Kushner with the famous dramatic diptych "Angels in America", poet Adrienne Rich and others), in the works of which this theme organically fits into the motif of the search for identity.

Among other literary consequences of the "**multiplicity revolution**" in the USA, we should note the contribution of American authors (E. Said, G. Ch. Spivak) to the development of postcolonial theory (the concept of "orientalism" developed by Said was of particular importance). A real "canon explosion" took place in the field of teaching and research of literature. It means revising the list of "must read" works, aimed at increasing the percentage of texts in it belonging to authors from previously marginalized groups - non-white, non-male, non-middle class. This process was accompanied (and continues to be accompanied) by fierce discussions, which were called "culture wars", because it is about fundamental changes in the approach to the criteria for evaluating literature, which cannot but cause a clash of opinions.

In terms of poetics, the literature of the analyzed era is marked by the interaction of multidirectional philosophical and artistic vectors, the synthesis of elements of different directions, genres, and styles. Realistic writing of recent decades, being in the postmodern field, borrows some techniques and techniques of conventional currents. With the passage of time, American literature increasingly acquires a cross-cultural, multi-genre, and multi-discursive character, the most suitable for verbalizing the modern situation of globalization and hybridization.

Conclusion

The victory over fascism gave hope to young people for democratic changes in the hierarchical English society, and for expanding opportunities for self-realization. For a short time, it seemed as if they were starting to come true, at least in the area of higher education. But young Englishmen from the middle or lower classes, even with education, found it difficult to make their way in society.

A monotonous existence awaited them in a middle-class spiritless environment; hence the disappointment, irritability, and outbursts of seemingly unmotivated and causeless rage, which sometimes affected the people closest to the protagonist (as was the case, for example, with Osborne's hero Jimmy Porter). In the background of these manifestations is a powerless rebellion against the aimless everyday life, which extinguishes all impulses, dulls the intellect, and sharpens natural abilities and the will to act. The lack of a specific social or political target in the angry Philippic heroes, who splashed them on everyone and everything, determined the transience of the rebellion of the «angry». His energy exhausted itself at the end of the 1950s. From an aesthetic point of view, this movement in all genres is characterized by a simplicity of style that corresponds to the desire for the most faithful reproduction of reality in all its details; deliberate rejection of any techniques of artistic convention; with a very personal, ironic intonation.

At the same time, as already mentioned, in the vicissitudes that befall the unscrupulous protagonists, one can hear the echo of adventure novels of the 18th century, and they themselves sometimes resemble their heroes who are tricksters. In the 1960s, the baton of protest against the consumer society was picked up by the «new left», whose activities were closely related to the

activation of the student movement. In Britain, it did not reach the same scale as in France, Germany, or the USA; regarding the literary dimension, it did not produce interesting artistic achievements.

The lessons of this experience were later interpreted quite critically, even satirically by English writers, who saw social immaturity, selfishness, and unfounded personal claims behind loud «leftist» phrases. It is obvious that the panorama of contemporary writing in Great Britain offers a fairly wide range of artistic directions, problem nodes, and imaginative solutions; common for the artists is the synthesis of the latest concepts of the world and its verbal representation with centuries-old traditions of English literature.

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