



MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Study guide on the history of foreign literature

(for the 2nd year students MA of the Philology department)

**ЗАКАРПАТСЬКИЙ УГОРСЬКИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ ІМЕНІ ФЕРЕНЦА РАКОЦІ ІІ
II. RÁKÓCZI FERENC KÁRPÁTALJAI MAGYAR EGYETEMÉI**

**Кафедра філології
Filológia Tanszék**

Szerző(k)/Készítők / Автор(и)/Разробник(и):

**Горенко Олена Павлівна, доктор філологічних наук, доцент кафедри філології
Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ**

**Баняс Наталія Юліанівна, кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри філології
Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ**

**Modern American Literature
Навчальний посібник**

Oktatási segédkönyv filológus hallgatók számára
Другий (магістерський) / Mesterképzés (MA)
(ступінь вищої освіти / felsőoktatás szintje)

03 Гуманітарні науки» /
03 Humán tudományok”
(галузь знань / képzési ág)

035 «Філологія» / B11 „Filológia”
(спеціальність / szak)

Філологія (мова і література англійська
(освітня програма / képzési program)



Берегове / Beregszász

2026

УДК 82(100).09(07)

Навчальний посібник «Modern American Literature» призначений для вивчення дисципліни «Зарубіжна література ХХ-ХХІ ст. (Література США)» студентами ІІ курсу МА ОПІ 035 Філологія (мова і література англійська). Метою викладання навчальної дисципліни «Зарубіжна література ХХ-ХХІ ст. (Література США)» є розкриття закономірностей літературного процесу США у ХХ-ХХІ століттях, з'ясування своєрідності розвитку літературного процесу цих країн, поглиблення знань з теорії літератури та вміння аналізувати й інтерпретувати художні твори в контексті сучасних літературознавчих і культурологічних тенденцій.

Затверджено до використання у навчальному процесі на засіданні кафедри філології
Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ
(протокол № 121 від «20» квітня 2026 року)

Розглянуто та рекомендовано Радою із забезпечення якості освіти
Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ
(протокол № 4 від «29» квітня 2026 року)

Рекомендовано до видання у електронній формі (PDF)
рішенням Вченої ради Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ
(протокол № 4 від «30» квітня 2026 року)

Підготовлено до видання в електронній формі (PDF) кафедрою філології
спільно з Видавничим відділом УР

Розробник(и):

Олена ГОРЕНКО, доктор філологічних наук, доцент кафедри філології Закарпатського
угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ

Наталія БАНЯС - кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри філології Закарпатського
угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ

Рецензенти:

Наталія ВИСОЦЬКА - доктор філологічних наук, професорка кафедри теорії та історії
світової літератури Київського національного лінгвістичного університету

Еніко НАДЬ-КОЛОЖВАРІ, доктор філософії, доцент кафедри філології Закарпатського
угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ

Відповідальні за випуск:

Аніко БЕРЕГСАСІ — доктор гуманітарних наук, доцент, завідувач кафедри філології
Закарпатського угорського університету імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ

Олександр ДОБОШ — начальник Видавничого відділу УР

За зміст навчального посібника несуть відповідальність розробники.

Видавництво: Закарпатський угорський університет імені Ференца Ракоці ІІ (адреса: пл.
Кошута 6, м. Берегове, 90202. Електронна пошта: foiskola@kmf.org.ua)

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	8
INTRODUCTION.....	10
1. DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN REALISTIC PROSE IN THE XX CENTURY.....	12
1.1. Social, political, religious, and historical situation in the USA at the beginning of the XX century.....	12
1.2..Naturalism and Realism. Continuation of the tradition.....	14
1.3.Theodore Dreiser: Naturalism and Realism.....	15
1.4. Sinclair Lewis: Satire and Realism	16
1.5. Sherwood Anderson: Psychology and Realism.....	17
1.6. Thomas Wolfe: Epic novel.....	17
1.7. William Faulkner: Individuality vs. changing reality.....	18
1.8. Ernest Hemingway: Lost generation and triumph of human endurance.....	19
1.9. John Steinbeck: Versatile approach to genuinely American problems.....	21
2. HIGHLIGHTS OF AMERICAN XX CENTURY POETRY.....	23
2.1 Edwin Aldington Robinson- a poet of transition.....	23
2.2 Robert Frost: the “sound of sense,”	24
2.3 Modernists: the poetic avant-garde	27
2.4. World War II as a watershed in the development of American poetry.....	30
2.5. Wallace Stevens and the supreme fiction.....	31
2.6. Elizabeth Bishop and the confessional mode.....	32
2.7. Langston Hughes: the poet of Harlem Renaissance.....	33.
2.8. Multifaceted poetry of Robert Lowell.....	34
2.9. Contemporary mix of poetic subcultures.....	35
3. AMERICAN DRAMA: ITS BIRTH, MATURITY, AND EVOLUTION.....	37
3.1. Early Colonial Drama.....	37
3.2. The origin of American national drama.....	38

3.3. Eugene O’Neill: success of a one-act play.....	40
3.4. Thornton Wilder: stability of principles and modes of life.....	41
3.5. Tennessee Williams: memory play.....	41
3.6. Arthur Miller: “Death of a salesman”.....	43
3.7. Edward Albee III: “The American Dream”.....	44

4. THE INCIPIENCE OF GOTHIC TRADITION AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICAM MODERN LITERATURE.....47

4.1 The origin, concept and historic interpretation of the term “Gothic”.....	47
4.2 Incipience of Gothic literary tradition in Europe	48
4.3 Gothic tradition in American 19 th century literature.....	49
4.4 Development of Gothic technique in American XX century literature. ...	50
4.4.1 .Howard Philips Lovecraft	50
4.4.2. Conrad Aiken	51
4.5. Gothic stories by Ray Douglas Bradbury	51
4.6. Gothic fiction by Stephen King	53
4.7 Neo-Gothic and Mainstream literature.....	53
4.8. Gothic elements in Postmodern literature	54

5. WORLD WAR II IN AMERICAN ANTI-MILITARIST NOVEL56

5.1. “The adventures of Wesley Jackson” by W. Saroyan	56
5.2.“From here to eternity” by James Jones	56
5.3. “The naked and the dead” by Norman Mailer	57
5.4. “Slaughterhouse-5” by Kurt Vonnegut	58

6. NEW TRENDS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX CENTURY.....61

6.1. “Black humour”.....	61
6.2 “Catch 22” by Joseph Heller	62
6.3.“Beat generation”:	64.
6.4“On the road” by Jack Kerouac	66

7. CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE (SINCE 1970).....68

7.1. Historical and social context.....	68
7.2. Dominant genres and literary forms.....	71

8. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL NOVEL.....72

8.1. John Updike	73
8.2. John Gardner	74

8.3. Saul Bellow	77
8.4. Jerome David Salinger	78
8.5 Edgar Lawrence Doctorow.....	79
8.6. Religious revival in post-war American literature.....	80
8.7. Mirror image of freedom toward sex in American prose.....	82
8.8. African-American literature.....	83
8.8.1. Tony Morrison	83
8.8.2 Alice Walker	86
8.9. The development of Science Fiction.....	87
8.9.1. Isaac Asimov	88
8.9.2. Clifford Donald Simak	89
8.9.3. Ursula Le Guin	92
8.9.4. Robert Anson Heinlein.....	93
8.9.5. Samuel R. Delany.....	95
9. POSTMODERN LITERATURE.....	97
9.1. Characteristic features, precursors, common themes and techniques of Postmodern literature.....	97
9.2. The main devices: irony, playfulness, black humour	99
9.3. The role of Intertextuality in Postmodern text	100
9.4. Pastiche	102
9.5. Metafiction and fabulation.....	103
9.6. Historiographic metafiction and temporal distortions.....	105
9.7. Techno culture, hyper reality and paranoia.....	106
10. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE XX CENTURY AND THE FIRST DECADES OF THE XXI CENTURY.....	108
10.1. The return “to the sources” in the end of the 20 century.....	108
10.1.1. Frontier experience of American Romanticists in the novels of Thomas Eidson.....	108
10.1.2. The themes of lonely childhood in Donna Tartt’s novels “The little friend” and “The Goldfinch”.....	108
10.2. New trends in American literature in the first decades of the 21 century.....	109
10.2.1. Junot Diaz	110
10.2.2. Marilynne Robinson.....	110
10.2.3. John Irving.....	112
10.2.4. Edward P Jones.....	112

10.2.5. Colson Whitehead	113
10.2.6. Delia Owens.	114
CONCLUSION	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

FOREWORD

The proposed study guide outlines the genesis of American literature in its development from the beginning of the XX century up to the first two decades of the XXI century. Its objective is to enlarge the scope of students' knowledge in the sphere of American literature within the frames of its evolution from one cultural, aesthetic, and historical period to another. The work focuses not so much on ample information introducing some material, but on the structure of this material as a system which may be widened and deepened.

The study guide is a presentation of a basic course in American literature consisting of ten units. Each of them besides general information characterizing the corresponding literary stage also incorporates some anthological excerpts from the area of literature, politics, history, the arts, thought and popular culture of their respective periods. The units are thematically organized. The works of the most prominent writers, poets, and playwrights are studied from a broad range of genres and in a wide historical context, opening new critical perspectives on such key themes as postmodern and post postmodern literature. Simultaneously, the continuity of American tradition is emphasized and cultural identities in contemporary American literature are surveyed.. With this regard, the works of literature have been selected to provide an overview of national culture and to accentuate its most important aspects.

Thus, the literary works discussed in each Unit are chosen to offer pertinent samples in the American literature of the twentieth century. They should be approached as illustrations of a social and cultural climate, and also as the authors' personal response to such climate. Readers should therefore notice the specificity of the stylistic and ideological traits contained in each work.

Thematically, its ten Units have been outlined in the knowledge that the present design is just one of the many possible methods of distributing the subject. Not only have aesthetic or chronological reasons been taken into account in its organization, but the readers' learning and reading processes as well.

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; will allow them to demonstrate awareness of the American literature of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century, 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

"Literature gives in principle the power to say everything, to break free of the rules, to displace them, and thereby to institute, to invent and even to suspect the traditional difference between nature and institution, nature and conventional law, nature and history"

Jacques Derrida

Modern American literature of the 20th century, like any other national literature, was greatly influenced by the historical, social, and cultural events of the period. Two World Wars discredited the ideas of traditional morality, humanism, and prosperity. The young generations of the 1920s, 1940s, and especially the 1960s painfully mirrored 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 events of the World War I and World War II had a crucial impact on human consciousness and left a salient mark on the literary texts and on their inner content. For the United States of America this century became the period of lost illusions and new expectations, political turmoil and economic struggle. At the same time this period celebrated some important artistic discoveries and insights, the incipience of new genres, trends and aesthetic ideas. National liberation movements in the countries of the «third world» influenced the development of Afro-Asian literature in the USA, encouraged new participants to be involved into literary process. Multiculturalism became the hallmark of American literature in the second half of the XX century. At the same time, American literature, preserving the continuity of traditions, poignantly reacts to the most urgent societal, race, ecological, and national problems, tries to meet the challenges of a new epoch. The last decades of the XX century and the first ones of the XXI century saw the rise

of psychological and philosophical writings, feminist and eco-literature. Ecological warnings are described by science fiction writers, authors of dystopias and cautionary novels .All these factors influenced further progress of literature in the 20th –beginning of the 21 centuries. Despite the fact that in the 21st century American literature still features a strong current of postmodern writing the last decades, nevertheless, have convincingly revealed the return to thematic diversity of American classical literature, mainly to its moral problems studied by famous American Romanticists – J.F. Cooper, N. Hawthorne, H. Melville and others.

I.DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN REALISTIC PROSE IN THE XX CENTURY

1.1. Social, political, religious, historical background in the USA up to the beginning of the XX century.

As it is stated by a contemporary literary critic Carl Bode, „by the end of the 19th century the complacent, optimistic tone of the popular poets and novelists had been challenged by such authors as Mark Twain, Crane and James, to name only the best known; and the enduring writing of the first quarter of the 20th century is, more often than not, critical of the quality of American society. Its tone is satirical; the stereotyped American is made a figure of fun or an object of pathos; the American dream is shown to be illusory“.

The scholar claims that “ millions of Americans who had fought in "the war to make the world safe for democracy" (as President Wilson called it and as many Americans justified it), together with the millions more whose lives had been much affected by it at home, helped to produce a society in the 20s which was new in many ways. Called the "roaring twenties," it was a time in which women were finally enfranchised and "emancipated," and revolutions in dress, manners, and morals took place“. Prohibition came, so called „Noble Experiment" which made alcohol illegal), leading to notorious public graft, corruption and law breaking; there was more widespread affluence and conspicuous consumption than ever before in American society; and more emphasis on fun and less on duty became a part of the daily scene. It was a time of exaggeration, experiment and change a time which invited satirical treatment and was permissive enough to accept it, even to embrace it.

Industrialization and technology, moreover, transformed life entirely in its widest scope, from domestic habits to personal relations. The Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad met in Utah in 1869, thus completing the American railway system; in 1889, the first skyscraper was erected in Chicago; Henry Ford founded his company in 1903; in 1905, the first movie theatre was opened in Pittsburgh. A mass society was under way, and its most accomplished

representation was the assembly line. Life became faster in many aspects, among which physical mobility became one of the most interesting for sociological and artistic reasons. To begin with, the advent of automobiles provided Americans with a machine that entailed mythical power and freedom, instead of entrapping them like the machines represented in late nineteenth-century works. In addition to this emerging mythology of car power, the technologies of rapid mobility as seen in automobiles, trains and airplanes forced a shift in the perception and understanding of time. Temporal and spatial dislocation would soon permeate the art of the first decades of the twentieth century. The first years of the century revealed the intellectuals' affirmation of an American culture. V. W. Brook's book *America's Coming of Age* (1915) can be considered a new «American Scholar» address to his generation, similar to Ralph Waldo Emerson's in the previous century, calling for an era of independent, creative living, a rejection of the irrelevant past and present to embrace a freshly assertive future. Another important ingredient of the new American panorama was the disappearing frontier in its double role: as economic factor and as myth. The closing of the frontier in the 1890s —more specifically, historian Frederick Jackson Turner announced such closing in 1893— implied a «running out of West,» i.e. the disappearance of an economic and psychological territory for opportunity and freedom. In his famous essay *The Frontier in American History*, Turner claimed that such had been the importance of the frontier in American history and life that its disappearance inevitably opened a new, uncertain era for the United States. Although Turner's thesis has long been discarded, and despite the fact that it mainly referred to the economy and politics of the nation, literary critics have easily adopted its stress on individualism and opportunity as essentially American features. Its imprint on twentieth-century life and culture, consequently, cannot be overlooked. To begin with, the frontier as the fundamental American myth —that is, as ideal territory where answers for personal and collective existence are provided— was in danger of extinction, mainly because the frontier used to resolve the clash between the natural, «uncivilized» American and «civilization» (both terms should be used with

restraint). At the turn of the nineteenth century, the nation was well immersed in a process of industrialization and mechanization that threatened the pastoral image that the Americans had about themselves. The following Units will explore the evolution of the myth as it hinged itself into different historical situations. The myth of the frontier used to be, also, articulated in gender, class and ethnic terms, as a masculine, middle-class and white principle. The period under observation here will see an important progress in the conquest of rights for women and minority groups, clearly ignored by the myth before. As with other cultural premises, frontiers and boundaries undergo revision. Lastly, the insistent advance of mechanization and technology instigated a reevaluation of the pastoral myth that had impregnated the way the Americans understood and represented themselves. The so-called American Dream had its parallel in a fantasy of the open land and of a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. The American literature of the twentieth century would consequently mirror the disintegration of such fantasy, and the resulting efforts to cope with its disappearance.

1.2 Naturalism and Realism. Continuation of the tradition

During the period from the end of the Civil War until World War I, the United States experienced explosive population growth. Its economy was powerfully expanding. As a result, the nation was focused on pragmatic matters that absorbed its immediate attention. The so-called “Age of Realism” (1870–1910) was a high point in the development of the American novel. So, what is Realism as a method? It is an attempt to regard the work of art as a reflection of real life. Social, political, religious, historical background is depicted as real or at least plausible, and the characters are described in their interrelation with the surrounding, which usually moulds, shapes them, and motivates their behaviour and deeds. In the United States of America in the last decade of the 19 century- and the first decades of the 20 century Realistic method nearly blurred with naturalistic approach. So, What is Naturalism? This trend originated in France and was based on the ideas of a French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-

1857). He introduced a new trend- positivism which was later developed by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). The term 'positivism' was coined because each step forward in the process of scientific cognition was regarded as positive as it is deprived of moral content and helps to accumulate new knowledge. One of the postulates of Positivism was the idea that social phenomena in history must be connected with physiological ones. Thus, human being was understood as an intersection between society and hereditary laws. The interconnection of these two perspectives became the object of investigation for the writers belonging to this trend.

1.3. Theodore Dreiser (1871 -1945)

He was the first important new American voice of the 20th century. Perhaps because of his childhood of bitter poverty in an immigrant family which suffered all the deprivations brought about by lack of education, skill and status, Dreiser was more concerned with society's effect on a person.

In his novels he made an attempt to treat human beings scientifically. In social Darwinism as well as in the theory of Zola and other naturalists he tried to find the explanation to the fact that man is the product of social processes and natural forces.

His books struck a chord of response in many puzzled Americans who recognized that a gulf existed between the dream that America promised on the one hand, and the reality of graft, hypocrisy and callousness that was apparent, on the other. Dreiser's tone is always serious, never satirical or comic. His best works are based on his own experiences or those of his immediate relatives, like *Sister Carrie*, or are fictional re-creations of actual happenings, like his well-known novel, *An American Tragedy*. In retrospect, Dreiser's work is significant for its stubborn honesty and realistic traits which were to appear again in the American writers who succeeded him on the literary scene.

1.4. Sinclair Lewis (1885 -1951)

He was another bright representative of American realism, though with a specific satiric bend. He altered the ordinary literate American's view of himself. Like Dreiser, Lewis was a Middle Westerner from a small town in Minnesota, which is the setting for his most famous novel and the first great success, *Main Street*. But unlike those poor sons of immigrants, Lewis was thoroughly middle-class. He was a son of a doctor, and after graduating from Yale University, he served as secretary to Upton Sinclair (an author of the novel *The Jungle*, exposing the meat packing industry in Chicago). Afterwards, he spent years as a journalist in Europe, and was married to a famous foreign correspondent and commentator, Dorothy Thompson. His work soon became successful; the names of some of his characters, such as *Babbitt*, entered the language as type-names, like those of Dickens. Despite their satirical effect, Lewis' novels were realistic in highly original ways. He had a keen comic sense and a true ear for everyday speech. He was a great mimic and actor, a great story teller and conversationalist. And these qualities are evident everywhere in his novels, especially his earliest (and best). What he had to say in *Main Street* and *Babbitt* and *Dodsworth* about the pretensions of small-town society, the thinness of its culture, the pathos and pettiness of the lives lived by its businessmen and their wives, Americans saw, with a shock of recognition, to be true. At the same time, none of this way of life was a tragic matter. In a vein of exuberant comedy, Lewis invited his readers to laugh, not at themselves, but at his characters, whose unawareness of their own absurdities he exposed. Novels like these are not necessarily among the greatest in literature, but they may be enormously influential on their times. They render palatable the unpleasant truths which lie just beneath the surface of life. This underlying seriousness was what won Lewis the Nobel Prize, and made him the first American novelist to be so honoured.

1.5. Sherwood Anderson (1876 – 1941)

He was a precursor of contemporary American prose, a brilliant short story writer, his style being at once laconic and metaphoric, realistic and emotional. To some extent his short stories are reminiscent of James Joyce's collection of stories „Dubliners“. In Sherwood Anderson's short stories we find the same penetration into the psyche of the characters through realistic details and special atmosphere of affinity and kinship with the portrayed characters. The readers also live through this specific moment of epiphany, a sort of revelation open to them after having read the story. And this feeling lingers in reader's perception for a long time, making them return once and again to the character and his life story. His collection of stories „Winesburg, Ohio,, is considered to be the most widely read book by Sherwood Anderson.

1.6. Thomas Wolfe (1900 -1938)

His most important novels are: „Look homeward, angel“(1929), „Of time and the river“(1935), „The web and the rock“(1939), „You can't go home again“ (1940). All these novels may be regarded as one whole book, which had to express the fullness and completeness of American life. Following Walt Whitman's tradition to embrace everything in one detail, phenomenon, using the technique of the „stream of consciousness“, of internal monologues, he created a sort of subjective epic, which reflected social being of America through the consciousness of the main character personifying the author himself. And by doing so he creates a special type of narration – lyrical epic narration. And it makes an important contribution to realistic literature.

Like F.S. Fitzgerald he belonged to the writers of „lost generation“. But at the same time his artistic method was much wider – „, to place on the end of the pen the entire experience of human heart“. It is a quotation by W .Faulkner, who regarded him the greatest American contemporary writer. Eugene Gant, the main character of novels „The web and the rock“ and „You can't go home again“, is a

provincial who is striving to a mega polis, because he perceives New-York as a personification of “American dream”, the town of spiritual life. But coming in contact with a real New-York, not an imagined place, he feels that he got into stone wasteland, indifferent to human being. Young Gant believes in love. But his mature counterpart becomes convinced that this feeling is subordinated to the laws of Philistine morality. He wanted to become rich, but having seen the world of prosperity he discovers its deeply immoral and egoistic essence and breaks with it to preserve his own creative freedom.

What signifies the author’s new level of social maturity is his humanistic protest against fascism. Thus the „subjective epic” turns into the real picture of world being. At the same time his prose is permeated with powerful optimism inherited from Walt Whitman. This feeling is evident in solemn, pathetic, biblical rhetoric so characteristic of his style. In the last chapter „Credo“ of his novel „You can’t go home again“ he states: “ I believe that real discovery of America is still ahead.

1.7. William Faulkner (1897-1962)

An outstanding writer, Noble prize winner, the Laureate of two Pulitzer prizes and National

Awards. He came into literature as a poet, the author of a poetic collection „The Marble Faun“. The verses were too much dependent on the poetry of Stephane Mallarme to introduce Faulkner as a new figure on the horizon of American poetry. Fame came to him much later – with a publication in 1929 of two novels – „Sartoris” and „The sound and the fury“. In these novels he introduced a new region on the map of literary America – Yoknapatawpha - an invented district plunged in the depth of American South and which, in essence, is its convincing allegory. And here all the events of his future works will take place. It is difficult to delineate the creative style of his works. Many things are intertwined here - biblical allusions, historical facts, realistic details, philosophic considerations. The message of his novels is to show real process – the crash of old slavery order and

disintegration of a spiritual-psychological complex, connected with it. Faulkner's prose is characterised by acute emotional tension.

Though Faulkner never became an expatriate as Hemingway did, he nevertheless returned home as an outsider. He tells his own story most directly in "Sartoris". When young Bayard Sartoris comes back to the Mississippi town he had left when he went to war, he is desperate to know what to do. He knows that something inside him is wrong, but he is not really sure either of the disease or its cure. He wanders around the town and the surrounding countryside, talking with people, sometimes quarrelling with them. He drinks liquor the more eagerly because the nation has passed the Prohibition law and alcohol is now illegal. The liquor, however, gives him only temporary forgetfulness. The desperation is still there. In a key section of this novel by Faulkner we follow Bayard Sartorius through a reckless, futile day. He gets drunk in the backroom of the local store. Then he goes with a friend to look at some horses and sees a very spirited stallion. He jumps on it; the horse runs off wildly and Bayard is knocked unconscious by a tree limb. He regains consciousness, but he can't regain the pre-war feeling of happiness. He also belongs to the „lost generation“, but his feeling of loss isn't caused by the horrors of war, but by his internal inability to get adjusted to the changing surroundings. He is not lost but at a loss, he doesn't know how to live in this suddenly alien world. And it creates his internal, tragic conflict. In the finale he willingly endangers his life and dies.

1.8. Ernest Hemingway (1898 – 1961)

Hemingway was born in Illinois. His family took him, as a boy, on frequent hunting and fishing trips and so acquainted him early with the kinds of virtues, such as courage and endurance, which were later reflected in his fiction. After high school, he worked as a newspaper reporter and then went overseas to take part in World War 1. After the war he lived for several years in Paris, where he became part of a group of Americans who felt alienated from their country. They considered themselves a lost generation. It was not long before he began

publishing remarkable and completely individual short stories. The year he left Paris he published the powerful novel, *The Sun Also Rises*. His themes were often war and its effects on people, or contests, such as hunting or bullfighting, which demand stamina and courage. Hemingway's style of writing is striking. His sentences are short, his words simple, what was later defined as a telegraphic style. Yet these short sentences are charged with such powerful emotion, which sometimes can't be felt in a more exuberant style. A careful reading can show us, furthermore, that he is a master of the pause. That is, if we look closely, we see how the action of his stories continues during the silences, during the times his characters say nothing. This action is often full of meaning. There are times when the most powerful effect comes from restraint. Such times occur rather often in Hemingway's fiction. He perfected the art of conveying emotion with few words. In contrast to the Romantic writer, who often emphasizes abundance and even excess, Hemingway is a Classicist in his restraint and understatement. He believes with many other Classicists that the strongest effect comes with an economy of means. The first novel to bring him worldwide fame is „A farewell to arms“(1929). Here truthful, realistic depiction of war scenes intertwines with lyricism and philosophic profundity. The atmosphere of tragic love of Lieutenant Frederic Henry and medical sister Catherine Barkley challenges the pictures of war with its cruelty and stupid atrocities.

The novel „To have and to have not” centres round the personage of Harry Morgan, who by force of circumstances, turns into a smuggler, contrabandist and has to commit a crime because of poverty. He has his own way of revelation, epiphany, and realises that it is society that is criminal, as it dooms ordinary people to hunger and poverty. The novel „For whom the bell tolls” proclaims the pathos of private responsibility for everything occurring in the world.

The short novel „The old man and the sea" is an anthem to human endurance, valour, courage and invincibility. „A movable feast” is a novel published

posthumously, though it describes his life in 1920 in Paris with his first wife Hedley.

1.9. John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

He did not start his literary career until Lewis and Fitzgerald had reached their peak. He seemed to be from a different world – the world of the Great Depression, the world of mass poverty. It was a world as far removed from that of Lewis as from that of Fitzgerald. A Californian, Steinbeck was an athlete and president of his high school class, who went to Stanford University in between various jobs. He learned to know the poor, in particular the migrant farm workers, American and Mexican, and he wrote from their point of view. By the middle 1930s, when Lewis and Fitzgerald were past their writing prime, Steinbeck had authored some very popular novels. *Tortilla Flat* was a humorous story about a Mexican-American colony in Monterey. This novel is written in a humorous style, reproduces rather warm atmosphere of life in a poor district. The characters are alive and charismatic, the events are quickly unfolding and everything is permeated with nostalgic feelings of good friendship, real relations and sincerity. The novel *Of Mice and Men* is a touching and rather popular tale of two migrants and their mutual dependence and shared dreams. Steinbeck portrayed their odd friendship with great sympathy and understanding, and the work has been made into an equally successful play and movie. His greatest success came in 1939 with *The Grapes of Wrath*. It is an anthological novel, realistic in its each word.

One of his last works is the novel *The winter of our discontent*. The main character is Ethan Hawley, a former member of aristocratic society in Long Island, but now, because his father lost the family fortune, he has to work as an ordinary salesman in a grocery shop belonging to an old Italian immigrant. As it was defined in the presentation speech of the secretary of Swedish academy, awarding J. Steinbeck with a Noble prize: “In “*Winter of our discontent*” the author attained the same standard which he set in “*The grapes of wrath*”. Again

he holds his position as an independent expounder of truth with an unbiased instinct for what is genuinely American, be it good or bad“. This is a tale of degeneration, corruption and spiritual crisis.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF AMERICAN XX CENTURY POETRY

2.1 Edwin Aldington Robinson- a poet of transition

As the twentieth century began, poetry was greatly overshadowed by the novel. American poetry lingered in the twilight of the late nineteenth century, unable to enter the modern world or break with the conventional formulas and sentimental diction of earlier decades. In this atmosphere a period of transition was needed. And Edwin Aldington Robinson (1869-1935) became such a poet of transition. Born in a well to do family, he studied about two years at Harvard (from 1891 to 93), then he returned to his native town Maine and tried to find job. First he worked as a clerk at Boston Harbour, like Nathaniel Hawthorne 50 years before, and then worked at New-York Customs house, where Henry Melville passed his last days. All this time he composed poetry. But fame came to him late, only before WWI.

Suddenly, with the poetic revival which preceded World War I, Robinson began to play a major role as a poet. After going his own way quietly for so many years, he became widely read and exerted a strong influence on other poets, notably Frost. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for poetry three times in the 1920's, a record exceeded only by Frost, who received the prize four times in all.

The core of Robinson's philosophy is the belief that man's highest duty is to develop his best attributes as fully as possible. Success is measured by the intensity and integrity of his struggle; failure consists only in a lack of effort. Robinson was most interested in people who had either failed spiritually, or who seemed failures to the world but had really succeeded in gaining spiritual wisdom. Despite his apparent pessimism he refused to subscribe to a naturalistic view of life. Being by nature introspective and conscious of psychological depths, he was acutely aware of the spiritual side of man and relatively uninterested in the surface aspects of man's life as a social creature. Robinson's most well-known statement on emptiness of conventional idea of success in life is evident in his lyrical poem "Richard Cory".

One night he fires a bullet through his head. We are left asking why, and Robinson does not give an answer. We can only suppose that what other people think and feel is not as important as what a person himself believes. Since Cory knows his life is worthless in spite of his "success," he puts an end to it.

RICHARD CORY

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favoured, and imperially slim.
And he was always quietly arrayed
,And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses
When he said, "Good morning,"
And he glittered when he walked.
And he was rich yes, richer than a king
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.
So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

2.2 Robert Frost: the “sound of sense,” (1874-1963)

In his most famous critical formulation, Frost advocated what he called the “sound of sense,” by which he meant that poetry should communicate through its sound even before we grasp its semantic meaning. Frost also applied the “sound of sense” to the use of poetic meter. For him the poem can be made to sound natural (or at least as natural as any transcription of actual speech) at the same time that it achieves the heightened musical quality of lyric. Frost’s theory allowed him to introduce a rural New England dialect that had never been used in poetry before, and it made possible the use of flexible rhythms within a regular metrical structure. Like Robinson, Frost had a difficult early life. He was born in San Francisco in 1874, but his impulsive and alcoholic father died in 1885 at the age of thirty-four and the family moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts. Frost entered Dartmouth College in 1892 but dropped out after one semester; five years later he was able to

enter Harvard as a special student, but once again withdrew before completing his education. On the advice of his doctor, Frost bought a farm in Derry, New Hampshire, hoping the country air would benefit his health. But providing for himself and his growing family as a chicken farmer (supplemented by a small bequest from his grandfather) was a constant struggle. As a result of the constant shortage of money and the isolation of rural life, Frost at times contemplated suicide. Frost spent eleven years in Derry, engaging in many of the activities described in his poems: mowing fields, mending walls, hiking, blue berrying, and cutting wood. The authenticity of this outdoor experience was itself to make him a very different poet from his more “genteel” contemporaries. He rejected the insipid romanticism of most American verse of the time, and he set out to write a poetry more grounded in the reality of rural life and the immediacy of its spoken language. As a result of Frost’s unconventional approach, his poetry was not easily accepted in his own country. By the age of thirty-eight, he had yet to publish a book of his verse and had succeeded in placing only a few of his poems in magazines. Frost decided to move to England, where he felt his poetry might find greater acceptance. With the help of Ezra Pound, already part of the English literary scene, Frost was able to gain access to London literary circles and published several poems there. When Frost returned to America in 1915 he began published in American magazines. Frost’s poetry differed from that of the modernists in several respects: in its adherence to a traditional formalism (as opposed to the formal dislocations and direct challenges to conventional forms found in much modernist writing); in the ordinariness and rustic simplicity of its subject matter; in its resolutely narrative quality; The chief hallmark of Frost’s style, particularly in the early volumes, is its simplicity. Frost tends to use a plain and idiomatic language marked by a lack of multisyllable words, a relative avoidance of formal or literary diction, and a generally straightforward syntax. He uses a highly colloquial style, avoiding words that would seem unusual or unnatural in actual speech and attempting instead to duplicate the rhythm and syntax of speech. Frost claimed the

simplicity of his language as one of the great virtues of his poetry, Despite all of these examples of colloquialism and apparent simplicity Frost was a sophisticated writer who was well versed in Latin poetry and who knew as well as any poet of his time how to make effective use of formal and rhetorical strategies. Frost's style is dualistic rather than simplistic: he uses the poetic form to hold thematic dualities in ironic tension, while at the same time using formal devices to create tensions or ironies within the language of the poem. Frost is a master at embedding rhetorical devices within apparently simple poems, making effective use of punning and word play, repetition, prosody (the use of rhythm and meter), and metaphor.

Frost was a nature poet, but he uses the rural world as a source of emblems and symbols, creating *paysages moralises* through the use of complex images and extended metaphors. Frost could find in almost any natural or man-made object an apt symbol, or emblem, for a more general idea.

Good Hours

I had for my winter evening walk—
No one at all with whom to talk,
But I had the cottages in a row
Up to their shining eyes in snow.
And I thought I had the folk within:
I heard the sound of a violin;
I had a glimpse through curtain laces
Of youthful forms and youthful faces.
I had such company outward bound.
I went till there were no cottages found.
I turned and repented, but coming back
I saw no window but that was black.
Over the snow my creaking feet
Disturbed the slumbering village street
Like profanation, by your leave,
At ten o'clock of a winter eve.

The poetry of Robinson and Frost suggested one possible direction for American poets in the twentieth century: a reworking of traditional lyric forms that would

require no radical break from nineteenth-century poetic convention. In the eyes of some modern poets, however, the work of Frost and Robinson did not go far enough in the direction of a stylistic, formal, or conceptual breakthrough. Poets who participated in the poetic avant-garde of the 1910s and early 1920s, such as Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, T. S. Eliot, and Marianne Moore, saw the poetry of Robinson and Frost as merely continuing an outworn tradition of verse. For these self-declared “modernists,” poetry needed to undergo the same kind of transformative process that was taking place in the other arts: cubism and collage in painting, chromaticism and atonality in music, and functionalism in architecture. Further, poetry had to reflect the reality of a rapidly changing modern world.

2.3 Modernists: the poetic avant-garde

The world had indeed changed a great deal since the end of the nineteenth century. First of all, there was the new urban landscape and the increasing speed of communication and transportation. The construction of bridges, skyscrapers, and factories was radically altering the American landscape, while the radio, the telephone, the trolley, the subway train, and the automobile were transforming American life.

The changes in consciousness were brought about by these new technologies, by a devastating world war, and by crucial developments in the fields of psychology, philosophy, and the natural sciences challenged many of the underlying assumptions of nineteenth-century thought.

The experience of World War I, which brought many Americans into contact with Europe for the first time, further bridged the gap between American and European culture, and it prepared the ground for an international modernism in which Americans would play a crucial part. The war was traumatic not only for the soldiers in the trenches but also for artists and writers whose sensitivity to the effects of warfare made them, as Pound put it, the “antennae of the race.”

It was in Europe, and especially in London and Paris, that American poets first came into contact with the new ideas and artistic movements of the early century, such as symbolism, cubism, futurism, and expressionism. From the time Ezra

Pound first arrived in London in 1908 until the publication of Eliot's *The Waste Land* in 1922, there was a constant effort by American poets to absorb and put into practice the ideas of the European avant-garde.

The first generation of American poets to respond to this modern world included Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings. It was with this generation –all of whom published their first books between 1908 and 1923 – that the artistic achievement of American poetic writing was clearly established. Among these poets, Pound was perhaps the most strident voice for a new poetry .He is studied within the frames of British literature.

In T. S. Eliot's epoch-marking poem *The Waste Land*, he evoked a post-war world in which traditional systems of belief and established social structures had been radically altered. The changed understanding of human society and human nature brought about by the war contributed to the large-scale literary and artistic movement known as “modernism.” As James Longenbach suggests, the war “presented a generation of judiciously limited lyric poets with an epic subject.”¹ The realities of war caused a total rethinking of the purpose of poetry in the twentieth century. During the years 1920–26 alone, American poets produced an extraordinary body of work, including Modernist expatriates: Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and T. S. Eliot (1888- 1965) – Noble Prize winner in 1948.

Eliot's “The love song of Alfred Prufrock” puts the sort of demands on its readers that later modernist poems like *The Waste Land* and *The Cantos* would greatly intensify. In order to fully grasp the poem, the reader must recognize and place in a new context a number of literary and Biblical allusions, including Dante's *Inferno*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Marvell's “To His Coy Mistress,” Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and the stories of Lazarus and John the Baptist. Further, Eliot's use of imagery, diction, and figurative language contribute to a style utterly different from that of any previous American poem.

The reader is drawn into the speaker's world by the opening lines, which are among the most famous in American poetry:

Let us go then, you and I,

When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells;
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

The impossibility of human communication would also be a central theme of *The Waste Land*, written in 1921, heavily edited by Pound, and first published in *The Criterion* in October 1922. In fact, the poem's "essential psychology" is "that of someone who can perceive but cannot act, who can understand but cannot communicate." Such a pessimistic vision of life is not surprising, since Eliot was recuperating from a nervous breakdown during the period in which he wrote the poem. *The Waste Land* is certainly difficult, though it no longer seems as impenetrable as it did to its first readers. The difficulties are of at least four kinds: its disjunctive and discontinuous form, its quotations in foreign languages (Latin, German, French, Italian, and Sanskrit), its multiple allusions, and its mythic structure. It is Eliot's allusions that will probably cause the most problems for the average reader: references to at least thirty-seven works of art, literature, history, and music can be found in the poem. Further, as Eliot's use of explanatory footnotes suggests, these allusions are not always obvious. Whereas the allusions in "Prufrock" were relatively familiar, the references in *The Waste Land* are often arcane, including not only the central texts of Western literature (the Bible, Virgil, Ovid, St. Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, and Spenser) but also poems by Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Nerval, plays by Thomas Middleton, Ben Webster, Thomas Kyd and John Lyle, operas by Wagner, a book by Hermann Hesse, and Buddha's Fire Sermon. Like Pound's *Cantos*, Eliot's poem is conceived as a compendium or archive of Western civilization, a civilization that has fallen into disrepair and needs to be put back together. David Perkins explains the use of these allusive "fragments" in the poem: The title of section I, "The Burial of the Dead,"

is a phrase from the Anglican burial service that refers to the dead of World War I but also to the dead body of the Fisher King, and thus, symbolically, to the death of civilization itself. It begins with some of the most celebrated lines in all of modern poetry:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful show, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.

The first line clearly echoes the opening of another famous long poem, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*: "Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote The droughte of March hath perced to the roote." Yet it is an ironic echo: where Chaucer's prologue celebrates the renewing and engendering powers of spring, Eliot's speaker points to the unresolved memories and desires.

2.4. World War II as a watershed in the development of American poetry

World War II represented another watershed in the development of American poetry, marking a definitive historical and generational break with modernism. The post-war poets of the 1950s and 1960s took a number of different guises: there were the academic formalists following the tenets of the New Criticism; there were the "confessionals" with their more intensely personal approach to the poem; and there were the Beats and other countercultural movements which sought to liberate poetry from what they saw as the rigidity of academic verse. Against the political, social, and cultural conservatism of the post-war era, the poetry of the New American Poets took on a subversive aura in the 1950s, serving as a forerunner to the larger social movements of the 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s, American poetry entered its third generational phase. During this period, the number of published poets continued to grow, bolstered by a burgeoning network of journals, presses, and academic creative-writing programs. Despite worries about the "death of poetry," movements such as the avant-garde "Language Poetry" and the "New Formalism" helped revitalize American poetry. In the final decades of the century,

two other tendencies emerged in American poetry. The first of these was the turn toward oral and performance poetics; the second was the increasing use of computer-assisted technologies for generating poetic texts.

2.5. Wallace Stevens and the supreme fiction (1879 1955)

Poetry, Stevens claimed, was the “Supreme Fiction” in a world in which “one no longer believes in God (as truth).” It is this belief in poetry as a Supreme Fiction that places Stevens in the Romantic tradition of Emerson and Whitman; Stevens can be seen as the major twentieth-century exemplar of what Harold Bloom has called “High American Romanticism.” But what exactly is the Supreme Fiction, and what is its significance for American poetry in the twentieth century? It is an alternative world, a world of the imagination which “weaves its always changing, always delightful, fictive covering” over the world of reality.³ Stevens himself describes this fictive world in highly Romantic terms: the “imaginative man” (i.e. the poet) delights in the world of the imagination rather than in the “gaunt world of reason,” creating “a truth that cannot be arrived at by the reason alone, a truth that the poet recognizes by sensation.” The purpose of poetry, then, would be to give the reader a glimpse of such a world, to provide a sense of reality transformed by the poet’s imaginative powers.

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;
And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter
Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,
Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place
For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

As we approach the present day, however, there is far less consensus about who

the major poets are. It is still difficult at this juncture to refer to a “canon” of post-war American poetry, although poets like Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Platte and John Ashbury would certainly come close to qualifying.

2.6. Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) and the confessional mode.

Bishop’s poetry resists easy classification, and despite her friendship with Lowell and her generational affinities with the confessionals, her work displays great degree of reticence and restraint .Bishop’s life history would seem to have made her an ideal candidate for

the confessional mode. Her father died eight months after she was born and her mother – deeply disoriented by her father’s death – spent the next five years in and out of mental asylums. She was declared permanently insane in 1916, and Bishop would never see her again. After spending a year with her maternal grandparents in Nova Scotia, Bishop was brought back to Massachusetts to live with other relatives. Problems with her health as a child prevented her from attending school regularly, and as a result she felt more comfortable with books than with most other people. Her life was spent in various parts of the world, much of the time living as a guest in other people’s homes. As a woman poet who was a lesbian, who was never part of any literary “movement,” and virtually all of whose poetic contemporaries were men, she felt marginalized within both literary culture and American culture at large. Many of Bishop’s poems deal either directly or more covertly with themes of isolation, alienation, or loss. This is particularly true of the poems written after 1967, when her long-time lover and companion Lota de Macedo Soares (with whom she had lived in Brazil since the early 1950s) committed suicide

I lost my mother’s watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn’t hard to master.
I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss then, but it wasn’t a disaster.
– Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan’t have lied. It’s evident
the art of losing’s not too hard to master

though it may look like (*Write it!*) like disaster.

2.7. Langston Hughes (1902-1967): the poet of Harlem Renaissance Langston Hughes is another representative of this period. He is often called the poet of the Harlem Renaissance. Besides being a poet, playwright, novelist, songwriter, biographer, editor, newspaper columnist, translator and lecturer, Langston Hughes also included in his prolific career earlier stints as a merchant seaman, a chef (in Paris), and a beachcomber (in Italy and Spain).

By 1925, Hughes, together with other Negro writers, had formed a group in the Harlem section of New York City for the purpose of exchanging ideas, encouraging one another, and, eventually, sharing in the triumph created by the sudden popularity of their work. As a spokesman for the group, Hughes published an article, "The Negro Artist and The Racial Mountain," which amounted to a public declaration of the intent of Hughes and his contemporaries to break from their literary heritage and to initiate a new trend in Negro literature. For new black writers, Harlem and its people were to provide the inspiration for much of their artistic work. Boldness was a hallmark of the early Hughes. His 1926 essay "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" announces again the New Negro, able to stand on his own and indifferent to the opinions of whites or blacks. "We younger Negro artists . . . intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves."

Hughes soon proved to be a magpie when it came to poetic technique, in that, like the magpie who steals objects to build its nest, Hughes readily absorbed whatever was around him. By the time he had completed his first collection of poetry, *Weary Blues* (1926), he had begun the poetic practice that would characterize his work: picking up rhythms from songs, especially African American blues and jazz, whether from the Harlem musicians of the 1920s or from Dizzy Gillespie and

Charlie Parker. He wanted to be a poet of the people, and he used the diction of the common people and adapted their popular structures for his poetry.

DREAMS

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly
.Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

2.8. Multifaceted poetry of Robert Lowell (1917-1977)

Of the many poets writing in the United States in recent years one of the most outstanding was Robert Lowell. Related as he was to such earlier American poets as Amy Lowell and James Russell Lowell, Robert Lowell came by his interest in poetry naturally. His first book of poems, *Land of Unlikeness*, was published in 1944. From this volume he selected the best poems, which he reworked and published as *Lord Weary's Castle*. This collection won the Pulitzer Prize in 1946. Other volumes of his poetry are: *The Mills of the Kavanaughs* (1951), *Life Studies* (1959), and *For the Union Dead* (1964). Lowell taught at a number of schools, including Kenyon College, Boston University, and Harvard. Lowell's earlier poems, especially those that appeared in *Lord Weary's Castle*, represented an involvement with the traditions of the poets of the generation of T. Eliot and Allen Tate. However, in both subject matter and language, his later poems seem a departure from these traditions and assume a more contemporary posture. Because of his early traditional approach and later divergence, Lowell was one of the most transitional of contemporary American poets. Perhaps the chief characteristic of Lowell's poetry is its vitality. He never over-elaborates about a feeling or thought just so that it will fill a poem, but instead packs the lines he writes with exuberant energy. Sometimes he may prove difficult to understand, yet he is not one who loves obscurity for its own sake. His rhyme and rhythm are regular, and the beat of his verses is strong; we can feel the pulse in them. When one of his rhymes is off or a rhythm is wrenched, it is for a poetic purpose.

THE DRINKER

The man is killing time there's nothing else.
No help now from the fifth of Bourbon' chucked helter-skelter
into the river, even its cork sucked under.
Stubbed before-breakfast cigarettes
burn bull's-eyes on the bedside table;
a plastic tumbler of alka seltzer'champagnes
3 in the bathroom. No help from his body,
the whale' s warm-hearted blubber,
foundering down leagues of ocean,
gasping whiteness. The barbed hooks fester.
The lines snap tight.
When he looks for neighbours,
their names blur in the window,
his distracted eyes see only glass sky
His despair has the galvanized color
of the mop and water in the galvanized bucket.
Once she was close to him as water to the dead metal.
He looks at her engagements inked on her calendar.
A list of indictments .At the numbers
in her thumbed black telephone book.
A quiver full of arrows.
Her absence hisses like steam, the pipes sing.
Even corroded metal somehow functions.
He snores in his iron lung, and hears the voice of Eve,
beseeching freedom from the Garden's perfect
and ponderous bubble. No voice outsings the serpent's flawed,
euphoric hiss. The cheese wilts in the rat-trap
,the milk turns to junket in the cornflakes bowl
car keys and razor blades shine in an ashtray.
Is he killing time? Out on the street,
two cops on horseback clop through the April rain
to check the parking meter violations
their oilskins yellow as forsythia.

2.9. Contemporary mix of poetic subcultures

Nowadays, we can say that in America there are more poets writing and publishing than ever before, but there is also a far more diverse mix of poetic subcultures dividing the available attention of readers. No other country has produced a comparable range of poetry by writers with a greater diversity of backgrounds. Each region of the country celebrates its own school of poets, as does each ethnic and racial group. Poetry anthologies are now devoted to African

American poetry, Latino poetry, Asian American poetry, and Native American poetry. Poets of other ethnic identities – including Italian American, Jewish American, and Arab American – are celebrated for their alternative visions of American life, and poetic groupings are made on the basis of such factors as sexual preference and life and work experience (Vietnam veterans, prisoners, children of Holocaust survivors) as well as stylistic and formal considerations (formalist poetry, experimental poetry, mainstream lyric poetry, spoken-word poetry, visual poetry).

3. AMERICAN DRAMA, ITS BIRTH, DEVELOPMENT, AND MATURITY

3.1. Early Colonial Drama

Theater in the United States is part of the old European theatrical tradition and has been heavily influenced by the British theater. Before the first English colony was established in 1607, there were Spanish dramas and Native American tribes that performed theatrical events. Representations continued to be held in Spanish-held territories in what later became the United States. For example, at the Presidio of Los Adaes in the New Philippines (now in Louisiana), several plays were presented on October 12, 1721.

Although a theater was built in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1716, and the original Dock Street Theatre opened in Charleston, South Carolina in 1736, the birth of professional theater in the English colonies may have begun when Lewis Hallam arrived with his theatrical company in Williamsburg in 1752. Lewis and his brother William, who arrived in 1754, were the first to organize a complete company of actors in Europe and bring them to the colonies. They brought a repertoire of plays popular in London at the time, including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *The Recruiting Officer*, and *Richard III*. *The Merchant of Venice* was their first performance, shown initially on September 15, 1752. Encountering opposition from religious organizations, Hallam and his company left for Jamaica in 1754 or 1755. Soon after, Lewis Hallam, J., founded the American Company, opened a theater in New York, and presented the first professionally mounted American play—*The Prince of Parthia*, by Thomas Godfrey—in 1767.

In the 18th century, laws forbidding the performance of plays were passed in Massachusetts in 1750, in Pennsylvania in 1759, and in Rhode Island in 1761, and plays were banned in most states during the American Revolutionary War at the urging of the Continental Congress. In 1794, president of Yale College, Timothy Dwight IV, in his "Essay on the Stage", declared that "to indulge a taste for play going means nothing more or less than the loss of that most valuable treasure: the immortal soul"

In spite of such laws, a few writers tried their hand at playwriting. Most likely, the first plays written in America were by European-born authors—we know of original plays being written by Spaniards, Frenchmen and Englishmen dating back as early as 1567—although no plays were printed in America until Robert Hunter's *Androboros* in 1714. Still, in the early years, most of the plays produced came from Europe; only with Godfrey's *The Prince of Parthia* in 1767 do we get a professionally produced play written by an American, although it was a last-minute substitute for Thomas Forrest's comic opera *The Disappointment; or, The Force of Credulity*, and although the first play to treat American themes seriously, *Ponteach; or, the Savages of America* by Robert Rogers, had been published in London a year earlier. 'Cato', a play about revolution, was performed for George Washington and his troops at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777–1778.

The Revolutionary period was a boost for dramatists, for whom the political debates were fertile ground for both satire, as seen in the works of Mercy Otis Warren and Colonel Robert Munford, and for plays about heroism, as in the works of Hugh Henry Brackenridge. The post-war period saw the birth of American social comedy in Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, which established a much-imitated version of the "Yankee" character, here named "Jonathan". But there were no professional dramatists until William Dunlap, whose work as playwright, translator, manager and theater historian has earned him the title of "Father of American Drama"; in addition to translating the plays of August von Kotzebue and French melodramas, Dunlap wrote plays in a variety of styles, of which *André* and *The Father; or, American Shandyism* are his best.

3.2. The origin of American national drama

Unfortunately, any account of American drama must begin by noting the casual disregard with which it has been treated by the critical establishment. There is no single history of its development, no truly comprehensive analysis of its achievement. In the standard histories of American literature it is accorded at best a

marginal position. What concerns this manual, we are going to speak about truly national dramatic product. That is why we must look for the origin of American national drama in the XX century. Before the XX century, such a thing as national American drama didn't exist. Of course, there were companies of actors, there were theatrical centers, but they did not perform the plays written on American soil, by American prominent playwrights, focused on American problems, and staged widely not only in American theatres but in many other countries all over the world. The repertoire of the performances staged in America was quite different. Colonial Americans enjoyed plays and even the Puritans attended dramas called "moral dialogues." In the American South both Charleston, South Carolina and Williamsburg, Virginia, had active theaters many years before the Revolutionary War. New York and Philadelphia had theatrical centers in the 18th century. During the period of westward expansion, traveling companies of actors went by stagecoach and canal or river boats to carry plays to the pioneering settlers. Some acting companies built theaters on river boats, called "showboats," which moved up and down such rivers as the Ohio and the Mississippi, giving theatrical presentations at larger towns and cities along the way. The advent of the railroads brought even closer ties between the geographical regions and soon nearly every town had its "opera house" where shows played during the "season." As years passed, the "opera houses" were converted into motion picture theaters as Hollywood began to produce film dramas which nearly everyone could afford to see, and which were easily accessible to the general public. Nearly at the same time, and to be more precise – in 1915 there appeared quite a great number of one-act plays which were written and produced in schools, colleges, civic and community theaters. They formed a new breed of one-act play dramatists. Historically, in 1915, the Washington Square Players (who eventually became the world-famous Theatre Guild) chose three one-act plays for their first public performance at the Bandbox Theater in New York City. In the first three years of their history, the Washington Square Players performed 62 one-act plays, many of which were written by famous playwrights of the time.

Another famous theatre was the Provincetown Players who staged their performances on a wharf in Provincetown. First it was called the Wharf Theatre. Eugene O'Neill's one-act play "Bound for Cardiff" was staged there. The play is about an old sailor dying in his bunk on a ship bound for Cardiff. As the theatre barn was standing on the wharf, during the performance the spectators could hear fog-bell in the harbour. The tide was in and it washed under the floor of the barn and around, spraying through the holes in the floor, giving the rhythm and the flavour of the sea. The effect of reality was terrific. The audience was as if in this bunk eye-witnessing the life story of the main character. In 1916 this theatrical group moved to New York. Their close cooperation with Eugene O'Neill brought them success. Perhaps the greatest positive influence on the development of the one-act play in American drama was that of Eugene O'Neill. In 1916 his first play to be produced was presented by the Provincetown Players. Probably no other dramatist in American theatre history has written so many excellent one-act plays, many of which are still being acted today. Since 1916 most of America's outstanding playwrights have first succeeded with plays in a one-act form. And today the short play is enjoying great success both on Broadway and in a number of cities outside of New York. Thus American drama was born.

3.3. Eugene O'Neill: Successes of a one-act play (1888-1953)

He is the first national playwright who introduced American drama into the world context, and was awarded the Nobel prize in 1936. Being a talented, multifaceted artist he created plays in different styles. His objective was to penetrate into internal world of human beings to study the profound motives of their behaviour. Eugene was a son of a popular actor of Irish origin who followed his father in his theatrical business, and even was involved in some performances. He wasn't a good student at Princeton University, and, as a result, had to change quite a number of professions: clerk, actor, reporter, sailor, and gold-miner. He got ill with tuberculosis, and while staying at sanatorium he decided to become a playwright. In 1914 he entered Harvard and studied drama technique there. In 1916 he joined a group of actors "Provincetown players", and started writing his one-act plays for

them.

The setting of these plays is docks, cheap hotels and pubs. His characters are sailors, quite ordinary people of different professions, alcoholics and even tramps. They are simple people, but their problems are far from being primitive. In 1920 his first full-length drama “Beyond the Horizon” was staged, and it brought him Pulitzer Prize. This drama centres round the life of two brothers, one pragmatically-minded and the other –romantically minded. Both of them fail to achieve their dream. This drama was followed by “The Emperor Jones” (1920), “Anna Christie” (1921), “The hairy ape” (1922), “Desire under the elms” (1924), “The Great God Brown” (1926), “Morning becomes Electra”. Eugene O’Neill was awarded another Pulitzer Prize for psychological drama “Strange Interlude” (1928). The characters of this drama express everything they think in long soliloquies and phrases aside. His best dramas are “The Iceman cometh” (1939), “Long day’s journey into night” (1941), “A moon for the misbegotten” (1942).

3.4. Thornton Wilder: stability of principles and modes of life (1897-1975)

He was a prolific writer, his first novel “The Cabala” being published in 1926. Among his other world-wide known novels are: “The Ides of March” (1948), “The eighth day” (1967), “Theophilus North” (1973). But his contribution to drama was also substantial.

After a number of experimental one-act plays Thornton Wilder executed two full-length plays “Our town” (1938) and “The skin of our teeth” (1942) for which he was awarded Pulitzer prizes.

In the first play he depicts everyday life of a provincial town, with its boredom, routine and tedium. But this monotony acquires the scope of romantic allegory, proclaiming stability of life as its motto.

3.5. Tennessee Williams: memory play (1911-1983)

He is another bright representative of American drama. His father, a traveling salesman, left the family and it was mother who had to take care of children and

their education. In 1933-1937 he studied at different Universities, writing and staging at the same time his one-act plays. Real success came to him much later – in 1944, when his play “The glass menagerie” was staged in New York, and he got the award of Drama Critics Circle. This work can be regarded as a memory play based on recollections of his mother Amanda and his sister Laura. The play is introduced to the audience by Tom, the narrator and protagonist, who works as a clerk at a shoe factory like Tennessee himself worked in the beginning of 30-ies. The finale is as if incomplete. We don’t know what has happened to Amanda and Laura as Tom soon after the party left them. But the feeling of sadness prevails for a long time after the play.

In 1947 he got a Pulitzer Prize for his other play “A street -car named desire”, which confirmed his status of one of the leading playwrights in the USA and brought him international acclaim. In these plays he managed to establish his specific style, dramatic and even tragic but, at the same time, lyric and poetic. Here the opposition is evident between indifferent, if not cruel, reality and fragile world of some characters, which despite being weak and inadequate cherish noble aspirations. In this play he unfolds the image of his mother. Here she bears the name Blansh. This character unites pathos,, grotesque, tragic features, sentimentality, humour and irony. Blansh is portrayed in opposing undertones of light and dark. In essence, these two early works reached the apex of his dramatic and aesthetic mastery, revealed subtlety and profound psychologism of the author.

In the fifties he tries to probe deep into pathologic aspects of human psyche, drug addicts, cannibals, castrates. To this period belong such plays as “Suddenly, last summer” (1958), “”Sweet bird of Youth” (1959), “The milk train doesn’t stop here anymore” (1964). The plays written on the threshold of fifties and sixties represent dramatic interpretation of antique and Christian mythologies. Such an approach helped the author to enhance the expressive aspect of his personages. Thus, in the play “Orpheus descending” (1957) Val, a wandering singer is a replica of Orpheus. He is ready to defend his dignity and spiritual

maturity, “The night of the Iguana” (1962).

In the end of sixties he abandons mythological technique and returns to portraying characters with pathological deviations of psyche. At the same time social conflicts attract his attention. They are: racial discrimination – “Kingdom of Earth” (1968); alienation and disintegration “Small craft warnings” (1972), violence and cruelty “Vieux Carre” (1977). His sensitive, poetic misfits who escape from reality into a world of illusion/art are likely to seem too remote, too soft. The very things that Williams values about them—their grace, their gentility—nowadays may appear dispensable adjuncts of life in an age when competition and aggressiveness are vaporized among both Sexes.

Many of his plays were filmed and it only confirmed his reputation as one of the most renowned American and world playwrights of the XX century.

Tennessee Williams also tried his hand at prosaic genres and became the author of some collections of short stories: “One arm and other stories” (1948), “Three players of a summer game” (1960), “Hard candy” (1954), “The knightly quest” (1967) and the novel “Moise and the world of reason” (1976). He is also known as a poet. Some of his poetic collections were published: “In the winter of cities” (1956) and “Androgene, mon amour” (1977).

3.6. Arthur Miller: “Death of a salesman” (1915-2005)

He was born in a wealthy family which in 1929 lost nearly everything. As a teenager he had to deliver bread to earn his living. A. Miller began his literary career when he studied at Michigan University (1934-1938). After graduation he had some odd jobs before accepting faculty post at New York University, where he was enrolled in a playwright seminar and was instructed how to achieve the intended effect while writing plays. Miller called it “the dynamics of play construction”. Miller retained strong ties to his Alma mater throughout the rest of his life, establishing the University’s Arthur Miller award in 1985 and Arthur Miller award for dramatic writing in 1999. The first play staged at Broadway was “The man who had all the

luck" (1944) which anticipated the main themes of his most famous play "Death of a salesman" (1949). This play brought him Pulitzer Prize and later – world acclaim. It is one of Miller's most frequently staged plays. Here he alloys real theatrical performance with the dreams and fantasies of the main characters. And by doing this he manages to achieve "the profound reality". William Loman is destroyed by false material values – money and prosperity. He is a common man and his tragedy is the tragedy of many other "common men" It is also worth mentioning his next play – "The Crucible" (1953). It was written in the atmosphere of McCarthyism. The playwright enlivens the historical events of early Massachusetts setting – a series of Salem persecutions of witches in 1692. The play centres round the characters of Elizabeth and John Proctors who symbolize positive though a bit dogmatic puritan values. One more play should be mentioned in this context: "After the fall" (1964). It may be regarded as autobiographic as it was written soon after the divorce with Marilyn Monroe in 1961. He studies spiritual turmoil of an intelligent, disappointed in private relations and radical ideas of his Youth. In the play he focuses on human nature as the only source of cruelty and aggression, threatening to ruin civilization. The play "American clock" (1980) focuses on the idea of American Dream in the time of economic crisis. The events take place in 1929, the period of great depression. This year became memorable personally for him and many other Americans who lost their jobs and property. In 1980 he wrote some small experimental plays where the themes of memory, time, ideals and illusions, inability to conceive oneself are mostly accentuated. These are such plays as: "Danger: memory", "Two plays", "I can't remember anything", "Clara" (1987). Among his last plays are: "The ride down Mt. Morgan" (1991), "The last Yankee" (1993), "Broken glass" (1994), "Mr Peter's connections" (1998), "Resurrection blues" (2002), "Finishing the picture" (2004).

3.7. Edward Albee III: "The American Dream"(1928-2016)

Edward Albee, American dramatist and theatrical producer, became a three-time

winner of Pulitzer Prize. In early childhood he was adopted by Reed Albee, a rich part-owner of a chain of theatres. Maybe this fact predetermined his future professional occupation. From the beginning he found himself at odds with his adoptive parents over their expectations for him and his own artistic ambitions. At the age of twenty, after he had been expelled from two private schools and Trinity College in Hartford, he broke with his family. His first short play "Schism" was published in the Choate Literary Magazine in 1946. The main conflict here was between love and faith. In the fifties he tries his hand at writing prose and poetry, having at the same time all sorts of odd jobs. His first mature play "The Zoo story" (1959) launched him on his professional career. It was staged in Berlin in 1959 before premiering in America in 1960. In this play he developed techniques of modernist theatre thus continuing the European tradition of the Absurd theatre established by Samuel Becket, Eugene Ionesco and Jean Genet. In a preface to his collection of one-act plays he declared "Extraordinary, Improbable, Unexpected" as the main objectives of his dramatic art. He rejected the tradition of pacifying consolation and entertainment and stated that only the theatre of the Absurd could reveal undisguised truth of life. At the same time he claimed that American theatre should have close affinity with the dramatic traditions of Ibsen and Chekhov. The main personage of "The Zoo story" is desperately looking for human contacts but can't break the wall of indifference and selfishness. This play is a cry for help, an attempt to find cure for alienation. At the same time it is imbued with the belief that human communication is possible only through sufferings and death.

In the play "The American Dream" he emphasizes the problem of substituting natural values by artificial ones and shows how this process affects the disintegration of bourgeois family. One of the main characters is a young man, handsome and charming, but absolute nobody in moral and spiritual terms. He is a freak, a moral pervert, a surrealistic symbol of depravity and dissipation.

One of Albee's most popular plays is "Who is afraid of Virginia Wolfe?" (1966). The main theme of the play centres round family relations. Here the dramatist

raises the problems of spiritual exhaustion, physical and spiritual fruitlessness, danger of illusions. His intention is to resort to shocking situations and techniques in order to exhibit “private hell” of his heroes, university professors. Albee’s most important works also include: “A delicate balance” (1966), “Seascape” (1975), “Three tall women” (1994), “Me myself and I” (2007). In these plays he focuses on exposing the darkest secrets of relatively well-to-do people, their capacity for sadism and violence. In one interview given to “The New York Times” in 2012 he said: “ All of my plays are about people missing the boat, closing down too young, coming to the end of their lives with regret at things not done”

4. INCIPIENCE OF GOTHIC TRADITION AND ITS IMPACT ON AMERICAM MODERN LITERATURE

4.1. The origin, concept and historic interpretation of the term “Gothic”.

The term “Gothic” was derived from Italian “Gotici” –“Goth” – the tribe of Goths who populated some parts of European continent, especially France, and built “Gothic cathedrals” which substituted “Romanesque” architecture. Gothic architecture originated in the XI-XII centuries and fruitfully developed up to XVI century. Gothic is sometimes compared with “barbarian” because Goths were barbarian tribes. The main idea is interest in feelings, such as suffering, understanding of one’s insignificance, and frailty of human being. Gothic architecture included such elements as pointed towers, arcs, different embellishments and sculptures, decorative designs, chimeras. John Ruskin (1819-1900), British 19th century connoisseur of architecture, in his book “The stones of Venice” published in 1854, devoted a chapter to Gothic architecture and there he stated “moral elements” of this style.

At first the term “Gothic” was mainly used in architecture, later – in painting and then – in literature. Gothic literary trend originated in Great Britain in the middle of 18th century, and lasted approximately up to the forties of the 19th century. Of course, long before this period of time in different world cultures there existed numerous tales, legends, myths about mysterious, supernatural phenomena, and journeys to the world of dead. We may find multiple examples of “gothic” elements in Egypt mythology (“The book of dead”), antique literature (the myths about Persephone, Hades, and Orpheus), Celtic epos, etc. In pre-historic times supernatural was a specific form to conceive the surrounding world, otherwise inconceivable and hostile.

4. 2. Incipience of Gothic literary tradition in Europe. According to a definition given by a Handbook of American Popular culture, Gothic Novel is “a work of literature with a specific mystical outlook, which is supported by a set of specific traditional devices”. Literary Gothic tradition originated in 1764 with a publication of a macabre novel “Castle of Otranto” by Sir Horace Walpole (1717 -1797). First it was published anonymously. But seeing the interest of reading public in this book Walpole revealed his authorship. The immense popularity of this novel which combined medievalism and horror created literary demand for continuation of the trend. The aesthetic of “The Castle of Otranto” has shaped contemporary gothic genre in fiction, films, music, art, and the goth subculture. After publication of this book there appeared a lot of authors who were ready to meet the tastes of reading audience.

In 1777 **Clara Reeve** (1729-1807) published “The champion of Virtue”, re-titled later as “The old English baron”.

In 1794 Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) wrote “The mysteries of Udolfo” which was followed by “The Italian”, “A Sicilian Romance”, and “The Romance of the Forest”. Her works continue to be widely read nowadays.

In 1796 Mathew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818) introduced terror-romance-realism in the novel “Monk”. What united all these novels was delineation of Innocence in Distress persecuted by some evil person. For nearly a century these novels together with other works of literature in the same vein were extremely popular. On the one hand, this type of literature exploited human emotion of fear of death. Such a fear could also give pleasurable pain and vicarious thrills. On the other hand, it was a sort of escape from the drab realities of life. So, the term escapist literature may be applied to Gothic literature. While dealing with supernatural, the authors of Gothic genre usually used one of the following methods: a) no explanation of supernatural element was given; b) some realistic explanation could be

proposed; c) some scientific explanation was used; d) realistic probation in abnormality of human psyche was introduced.

Other well-known English writers contributed to the development of Gothic prose in the 19th century. They were: Walter Scott (1771-1832) – “The Monastery” (1820), “The tapestried chamber”, “My aunt Margaret’s mirror” (1828); Mary Shelley (1797-1851) – “Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus” (1818); Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) – “Nightmare Abbey” (1818); Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) – “The picture of Dorian Gray” (1890), “The Canterville Ghost” (1891); Bram Stoker (1847-1912) – “Dracula” (1897).

4. 3. Gothic tradition in American 19th century literature. American prose and poetry were also susceptible to the popularity of Gothic genre. Philip Freneau (1752-1832) was the first to imitate gothic style in poetry. His philosophic poem “The House of Night” (1779) exploits gothic symbols to portray life in Manichaeic context – as constant fighting of Light and Darkness. Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) widely used elements of Gothic decorations as a background of his novels.

American Romantics: Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Poe developed the topic of Gothic horror. In the works of W. Irving and N. Hawthorne Gothic tradition undergoes some changes. It is not Beauty in Distress persecuted by some villain that makes the pivot of narration but ordinary human being who, because of internal sinfulness and depravity, becomes the pray of a Black man. Thus, Gothic tradition acquires the content of Puritan morality.

What concerns E.A. Poe, he exploits the trend of aesthetic pleasure rooted in the category of horrible.

In 1898 a renowned American writer Henry James (1843 -1916) published a horror novella “The turn of the screw” in which he continued some directions of Gothic genre. The main characters are two orphaned children at a remote estate and their governess. The book has got a reputation of the

most analysed ghost story in the English language. The text is ambiguous and involves both psychological and mystical elements

4. 4. Development of Gothic technique in American XX century literature.

4.4.1. Howard Philips Lovecraft (1890-1937) In American 20th century literature the new splash of Gothic genre revealed itself only in the thirties in the works of such gifted authors as H.P .Lovecraft and Conrad Aiken.

H. P. Lovecraft, short story writer, editor, novelist, poet, became famous as a writer of weird and horror fiction. Throughout his adult life, Lovecraft was never able to support himself from earnings as an author and editor. He was mainly writing for pulp magazines – “Dime mysteries”, “Weird tales” and some others. It wasn’t a profitable business and he died in poverty when he was only 47. According to the judgment of literary critics (P. Cannon) Lovecraft felt himself a literary outsider and he never tried to pretend that he belonged to “main stream literature”. Following the manner of E. A. Poe and A. Bierce he tried to create a new type of Gothic fiction introducing his own mythology – Cthulhu cult. He developed his own style of writing. I would call it cinematographic style, as he delineates everything so vividly and picturesquely as if he has seen all these things with his own eyes. Mysterious crimes, mysterious, enigmatic creatures, fantastic illusions, all these phenomena were intricately intertwined in his stories, producing specific atmosphere, specific world of fantasy and horror. During his lifetime his name wasn’t widely known. Real popularity came to him long after his death. Nowadays he is regarded as one of the most significant 20th century authors of supernatural horror fiction. Among his most celebrated tales are: “The call of Cthulhu”, “The rats in the walls”, “At the mountains of madness”, “The shadow out of time”, etc. In these stories he focused on his understanding of humanity’s place in the universe. He believed that human race was an insignificant part of a huge indifferent

cosmos. Human beings are too fragile and can be annihilated at any moment. Lovecraft's writing has influenced such gothic fiction authors as Stephen King, Ramsey Campbell, William S. Burroughs, Alan Moore and some others.

4.4.2. Conrad Potter Aiken (1889-1973).

He was a poet, playwright, short-story writer, novelist, essayist, critic, honoured with a Pulitzer Prize, a National Book Award, and was U.S. Poet Laureate from 1950 to 1952. He was strongly influenced by works of Sigmund Freud, Carl G. Jung, Otto Rank and other psychologists. In the end of the twenties- beginning of thirties he was attracted by Gothic architectonics and published four novels and several short stories incorporating some elements of Gothic genre. All these works – “Blue journey” (1927), “Great Circle” (1933), “King Coffin”, (1935), “Silent snow, Secret snow”, “Mr. Arcularis” were introspective, abundant in all types of deaths and crimes, including the murder on subconscious level. They centre round one dramatic or tragic episode, misery and suffering being their main leitmotif. And the main character of these novels and stories is usually a madman, a crazy person or the one in the process of becoming such. Aiken the poet was well known in America and world - wide. But his gothic fiction remained unnoticed. And as in case with Lovecraft, the interest in these works was revealed only in the fifties and sixties.

4.5 Gothic stories by Ray Douglas Bradbury (1920-2012).

He was one of the most celebrated American writers of the 20th century, and worked in such literary genres as fantasy, horror fantasy, science fiction and realistic prose. In his adolescence he read a lot, and his favourite authors were Charles B. Brown, E. A. Poe, H. Lovecraft, E. R. Burroughs, H. Wells and many others. Influence of their technique and style of writing

is evident in his first short stories published in pulp magazines – “Weird tales”, “Famous Fantastic mysteries”, “Dime mysteries”. His first gothic story “Wind” was published in 1943. The image of Wind, pivotal in this work, is borrowed from European folklore, which drew attention of American Romanticists. In Celtic epos there existed legends about natural elements having mythological roots. In the beginning of the 19th century American lawyer William Austin made use of some of these motives in his stories “Peter Rugg: The missing man”. Peter was carried away by a hurricane. Austin’s goal, according to Brian Atterbery, science fiction writer and literary critic, “was to oppose thick-headed rationalism to vagueness of a fairy tale”. Ray Bradbury’s image of Wind is reminiscent of Austin’s but implications are quite different. It personifies existential world, inconceivable and uncontrollable, alien and hostile. But what imparts special expressiveness to this story is juxtaposition of supernatural and habitual. Here, like in many other short stories written in the same vein, Bradbury introduces Gothic elements in opposition to real images and motivations. Such a mixture of real and fantastic helps to create a special psychological mood in reader’s perception – the moment of complete illusion. This moment is extremely short. The reader at the same time believes the events delineated in the story and understands that they belong to the sphere of fiction. This phenomenon which was formulated by F. Stendhal in his book “Racine and Shakespeare” helps to arouse reader’s specific atmosphere of horror. Bradbury is well-versed in different techniques of introducing Gothic architectonics. He knows how to use repetition for enhancing readers’ expectations, how to depict a landscape for achieving special “Gothic” mood, how to use metaphors and symbols for creating poetic density of his language, how to portray his characters to convince the readers in their psychological authenticity. Being extremely prolific writer, Bradbury published a lot of collections of short stories incorporating Gothic elements. Among them are: “The Martian

Chronicles”, “Something wicked this way comes”, “October country” “The illustrated man”, “The Halloween tree”, “Long after midnight”, “The day it rained forever” , “The April Witch”, “Death is a lonely business”. The New York Times called Bradbury “the writer most responsible for bringing modern science fiction into the literary mainstream”.

4.6 Gothic fiction by Stephen King (1947).

He is the author of more than sixty books, all of them being world-wide bestsellers. Though King is a winner of different awards, prizes and medals he doesn't belong to mainstream literature. At the same time his attention to vivid dialogue, sincere style of narration, exposure of human stupidity and cruelty makes him really serious writer who contributed greatly to American contemporary literature. That is why we may claim that he crossed the limits of mass culture and approached rather closely the mainstream literature. Nowadays he is called “the king of horror fiction”. Among his best works based on Gothic tradition are “It”, “The dark tower”, “Pet Sematary”, “Doctor Sleep”. For him horror is always a competition between abnormal and normal, the latter having dominant feature.

4.7 Neo-Gothic and Mainstream literature.

The forties became for America, and not only for America, the crucial period of re-evaluation of many ethical and moral norms. The war revealed vulnerability and fragility of human life. Human existence no more seemed logic and reasonable. The individual quite of a sudden faced the absurd, unpredictable world. In this period of despair and disillusionment literature developed in two main directions. The first was an escape from reality in the world of fantasy and imagination. This period is often called the golden age of fantasy. And it was true, because the interest of wide reading public in all sorts of imaginary and fantastic was immense. The second direction was probing deep into the psyche of the person with an attempt of finding there the sources of alienation and estrangement, aloofness and loneliness.

The mergence, the over-lapping of these two trends gave rise to the appearance of a new wave of Gothic, which may be regarded as Neo-Gothic. The main accent in Neo-Gothic prose was shifting from supernatural and mysterious to real sufferings of ordinary individuals, their weakness and loneliness. If in Gothic fiction the fantastic attributes were the main reasons of psychological depression and anguish of personages, the realistic details performing only secondary function, in the Gothic prose of the fifties and sixties the correlation of fantastic and realistic elements is substantially different. The real plan now plays the dominant role, and Gothic architectonics turns into an attribute of a background or some decorations. This new literature was called Neo-Gothic. Arthur Voss, an American critic, noted that “the splash of Gothic in this period was aroused not only by war which undermined human faith in logic, rational order of social and historic developments, the loneliness of an individual and his inability to resist the impact of outer forces. And these outer forces in the works of many writers started to acquire the mystic, fatal, philosophically allegoric character. The Gothic was also called on to reflect the inner world of an alienated, frightened individual”. The gap between human being and nature, mind and spirituality became so wide that it led to self-estrangement and disintegration of personality. That is why it was not for nothing that another American critic Irwing Malin defined “New Gothic as faith in the fact that the psyche of a personality is more important than society.” If in the first half of the 20th century a growing interest in Realism and Naturalism worked against Gothic writing, in the latter half, it started gradually reasserting itself. What Irwing Malin calls “New American Gothic” is evident in many mainstream novels where “the subterraneous regions” lie in the darkness of individual psyche, and where the fear roots itself in individual guilt, lack of ability to love or withdrawal from society”.

4.8 Gothic elements in Postmodern literature

In the eighties we again observe the rise of interest in Gothic tradition as this period coincided with Renaissance of religion, the so-called “return to the sources”. Purely social motives couldn’t explain disorder of human existence, disintegration, absence of communication and mutual understanding, individual alienation. The problems of Evil and Good again acquire the primary importance. Evil is treated in Puritan context. It is omnipresent and ubiquitous. Besides, in this period global contradictions, economic, military and ecological, are getting deeper. In all spheres of social life the level of spiritual tension is getting higher. In the eighties, for example, the neurotic syndrome saw twenty times increase. Thus, Gothic prose plays the role of a shock therapy, not in a real world but in a world of illusion. It serves as the best remedy for neurotic diseases. The authors who belong to mainstream literature and exploit Gothic technique are the following: Norman Mailer (1923-2007) “Tough guys don’t dance”, John Updike (1932-2009) “The witches of Eastwick”, John Gardner (1933-1982) “Mickelsson’s Ghosts”, Joyce Carol Oates (1938) “A Bloodsmoor Romance”. In their works they claim that there is no division into good and evil, protagonists and villains. One can find everything in the soul of a person, his psyche and mentality. There is no border between the supernatural and individual. They are intertwined.

5. WORLD WAR II IN ANTI-MILITARIST NOVEL

Anti-militarist novel as a new trend originated in the period of 1944-1950. Quite a great number of young American writers decided to share their war experience and their attitude to this phenomenon. The first author and the book to be mentioned here – by chronology if not by significance, is William Saroyan's novel "The adventures of Wesley Jackson" (1944).

5.1. William Saroyan (1908-1981) is an American of Armenian descent who rather early lost his parents and was brought up at the orphanage. Since early childhood he had to sell newspapers, deliver telegrams. He didn't get systematic education and later he declared that "to be a writer means to be always outside, as people in the streets are real books". The motives of homelessness and lost motherland are the leitmotifs of his short stories. During WWII he participated in landing of Allied troops in Normandy and wrote two novels: "The human comedy"(1943) and "The adventures of Wesley Jackson" (1944). Both books are marked with anti-military ideas. Saroyan didn't understand the anti-fascist character of war, stating that any war can't have any moral justification. He hated the Army and the war that have forced him into military service. He resented his time in the service as an intolerable imposition on his freedom. The Army officials regarded his novel as treason and he was severely criticised after the publication of "The adventures of Wesley Jackson". But humanistic pathos and poetic depiction of soldier's fraternity in this book opposes violence and death. Saroyan is focused on the common man. He saw people for the most part as a pretty decent lot; he had sympathy for the down-trodden and life's failures. This novel holds elements of humour, and is written in a good style.

5.2 James Jones (1921-1977).

Another anti-militarist novel is **“From here to eternity”** (1951) .After graduating from high school in 1938 James Jones was enlisted. In 1942 he was appointed corporal, but in 1943 was reduced to private. In March 1944 he was appointed sergeant, and then again was reduced to private in May, 1944. He served on the territory of Hawaii during the Japanese attack on the Island of Oahu, December 7, 1941. In 1943 he received Purple Heart. He was discharged in 1944 after being wounded in action. This laconic biography is rather illustrative of the fact what sort of person he was - a real man, fighter and rebel. The main figure of his novel **“From here to eternity”** is a literary replica of James Jones himself. Private Robert Prewitt is transferred to an infantry battalion on his own will because he believes that a man has a right to go his own way. For him the Regular Army is the heart and blood of life. Prewitt is constantly conflicting with the officers, and he is transferred from one unit to another. At last he gets into garrison prison because he values his human dignity above all. He dies in a stupid conflict with the patrol.

The events in the novel occur in Hawaii in 1941 during the months before Pearl Harbour, when 68 American soldiers and officers were killed in the result of a Japanese attack on American military base. The title of the book was borrowed from **“Gentlemen rankers”**, in **“Barrack-room Ballads”** by Rudyard Kipling: **“Gentlemen-rankers out on a spree, damned from here to eternity...”** The graphic realistic detail may outrage some readers, the book may arouse controversy. But it will be read and remembered.

5.3. Norman Mailer (1923-2007) also made a substantial contribution to anti-war prose with his novel **“The naked and the dead”**, which was published in 1948 and immediately brought him a world acclaim. It was hailed by many as one of the best American wartime novels. This book has never gone out of print and is still considered to be one of the finest depictions of Americans in combat during WWII.

This novel is kindred to pre-war realistic literature. It narrates how the Americans fought back Pacific Island Anopopei (fictional name) from the Japans. The novel focuses on the experiences of one platoon. Creating the image of America in miniature on the example of the platoon under command of sergeant Croft, the writer embodied the main conflict of the book – between liberally minded lieutenant Hearn and power-hungry general Cummings, who is semi fascist. One of the main characters is Sam Croft, who is seen as one of the best soldiers, who is both feared and respected. He loves war and is Mailer’s version of a psychopath within the novel. He is merciless, immoral and finds a thrill in killing. The main themes are dehumanization of soldiers, loneliness and death, homosexuality, brotherhood.

5.4.Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007).

During his life he published 14 novels, 5 plays, 3 short story collections, and 5 nonfiction works, with further collections being published after his death. Vonnegut attended Cornell University but withdrew in January 1943 and was enlisted in the U.S. Army. He was deployed to Europe to fight in World War II, and was captured by the German soldiers during the battle of the Bulge. He was convoyed to a prison camp in Dresden, where he became an eye-witness of Allied bombing of the city. Quite by chance he survived and made these events the basis of his novel “Slaughterhouse five” (1969). After its publication the book went to the top of the New York Times Best Seller list, bringing him world-wide fame.

One of the reasons of such popularity was the anti-war message of “Slaughterhouse-five”, which resonated with a generation marked by the Vietnam War. Kurt Vonnegut’s blend of anti-war sentiments and satire made him one of the most famous writers of the 1970s. Slaughterhouse-Five, though being a war novel, has its peculiarities. Its hero, Billy Pilgrim, an optometrist from New York working as a chaplain’s assistant during the

Second World War, is captured by the Germans and witnesses at first hand a real historical atrocity: the largest massacre in European history, the fire-bombing by the Allied forces of the city of Dresden— a cultural centre and beautiful city, with no military significance, and up until this point untouched by the war. The attacks resulted in the deaths of 135,000 people (though historians now place the figure much higher). The dead included huge numbers of refugees, as well as women and children, and they were killed by the simultaneous launch of a massive tonnage of bombs, causing the temperature in the city to reach 1600 degrees centigrade. Billy is taken with other American prisoners of war to be incarcerated in an abattoir in Dresden (this explains the title of the novel) where he only manages to survive by chance, happening to be down in the meat locker when the bombs fall. The fire-bombing of Dresden was a horrific event, one to compare with the Holocaust itself, though one that is not often told. Indeed *Slaughterhouse-Five* became significant, despite its innovative, non-realist form— as a piece of rare eye-witness testimony. From the very outset the book makes it clear that Pilgrim's experience is based on Vonnegut's own. But while much of the book is clearly drawn from Vonnegut's real memories of his time in Germany, only lightly fictionalized and given to Billy Pilgrim, the tale is not presented in a linear, realist manner. It consists of fragmented paragraphs which place beside the Dresden episodes scenes from a range of different periods after the war. The form of the novel is more than just a way of packaging all the various narratives which have been triggered in the author's mind after his experience in Dresden: autobiography, science fiction or war novels, etc. Rather, *Slaughterhouse-Five* is about the impossibility of narrating such a traumatic event at all. Vonnegut explains that he has been trying for twenty-three years to write about Dresden, but has always been unable to. Now, finally, he has hit upon a way of doing it, by producing the fragmented text we have before us. As he explains to his editor: It is so

short and jumbled and jangled, Sam, because there is nothing intelligent to say about a massacre. Everybody is supposed to be dead, to never say anything or want anything ever again. Everything is supposed to be very quiet after a massacre, and it always is, except for the birds. And what do the birds say? All there is to say about a massacre, things like ‘Poo-tee-weet?’ (Vonnegut, 2000, 14). Reading *Slaughterhouse-Five* should not be a systematic rational approach of explaining how episodes relate to one another however tempting that may be but a matter of trying to look at its different episodes, its various time periods, and ‘all at once’. If we try this we do indeed, as promised, find something surprising, shocking and perhaps even beautiful. It should be clear by now that the ‘telegraphic schizophrenic’ method is another variation to prove that ‘all moments, past, present, and future, always have existed, always will exist’ (Vonnegut, 2000, 19). So the fact that *Slaughterhouse-Five*’s narrative is not linear but a collection of events means that the events are all simultaneously present. One poignant consequence of this is that the constant presence of past events is typical of a traumatized state of mind. There is no sense in the mind of Billy (and Vonnegut, it seems) that the events of Dresden can ever be properly ‘past’, they are always painfully present. This results, movingly, in our realization that the novel is an example of what psychoanalysis would call a ‘displacement exercise’. An example is the refrain ‘So it goes’ which crops up continually in the narrator’s discourse. On one level he is simply following Tralfamadorian custom, which requires the phrase to be uttered every time a dead person is mentioned (and reflects the overall indifference of the Tralfamadorians towards death). But in the light of the Author’s Note it seems more like a neurotic ritual designed to ward off the pain associated with death. The indirectness of *Slaughterhouse-Five*’s convoluted metafictional form thus packs a profound emotional punch

6. NEW TRENDS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX CENTURY

6.1. Political, social, and cultural atmosphere.

It is generally agreed that writing in the United States went through an extraordinary period of regeneration in the 1960s because of a combination of political and social factors. The decade began with the election to president of John F. Kennedy, ushering in a very short-lived period of hope. Kennedy was of course assassinated in 1963, one year after the Cuban Missile Crisis almost plunged the world into nuclear war. During the presidencies of his successors, Lyndon

B. Johnson and Richard Nixon, there was the war in Vietnam and widespread protests against it, the advent of the civil rights movement, the rise of black power, and an alarming increase in violent murder and gun crime throughout the decade. All this contributed in various ways to a growing 'counter-culture', which had begun with the Beat generation in the 1950s, but now expanded to take in the 'hippy' movement, drug culture, bop and jazz events, 'happenings', and Left-wing political rallies, and expressed a general suspicion about authority and official power, and a faith in the values of youth and spontaneity. The spirit of the counter-culture is reflected in popular culture of the time such as music (e.g. *The Beatles*, *Woodstock*) and film (e.g. *Easy Rider*), but also pulses through 'serious' art, including literature. However, here we come to one of the odd things about this moment in US culture. US fiction of the 1960s and 1970s was more concerned than ever with history and politics, yet tended to express this concern – unlike British fiction of the time which reaffirmed its faith in 'social realism' – through non-realist modes. Whereas British writers, for the most part, thought social reality could only be accurately represented through the rational clarity of realism, American novelists tended to conceive of the realist novel as the literary equivalent of official

structures of power and oppressive social convention. Although a new documentary kind of realism did underpin some notable departures in the novel, such as the works of ‘faction’ produced by Truman Capote and Norman Mailer in the 1960s, the task of commenting on the social world – though quite indirectly – was chiefly taken on by experimental writing. United States’ Literature of the 1960s and 1970s conveys the sense that everyday existence in America was a matter of being confronted by events that were so bizarre, incredible, or absurd that they eclipsed anything even the most imaginative writer of fiction could produce. In his 1961 essay ‘Writing American Fiction’, the novelist Philip Roth surveys the ‘fixes, the scandals, the insanity, the idiocy, the piety, the lies’ (Roth, 1990, 30) which make up the daily diet offered up by the newspapers, and the fact that real public figures such as Richard Nixon seemed more like ‘satiric literary creations’ than real people. He concludes that ‘the American writer in the middle of the twentieth century has his hands full in trying to understand, describe, and then make *credible* much of American reality. It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one’s own meagre imagination’ (Roth, 1990, 29). Similarly, the pervasiveness of corruption, violence, scandal, and cover-up in American politics, exemplified by the assassinations of John Kennedy, and his brother Robert and the civil rights campaigner Martin Luther King, and the Watergate scandal which brought down the by-then President Nixon in 1973, convinced cultural figures in America that reality, even history, was not transparent, but a kind of ‘front’ for the *real* story which was unfolding behind the scenes.

6.2. Black humour. “Catch 22” by Joseph Heller

This atmosphere, no doubt, predetermined the incipience of an important direction in American post war literature – “**Black humour**”. The Black humour in American literature originated in the middle

sixties as a result of a specific atmosphere of cruelty and violence. One of the most striking features of the post-war period was the growing violence in the United States. Apart from rising protest movements and movements against social injustices, a number of shocking events – the assassination of president Kennedy in 1963, of Malcolm in 1965, of Martin Luther King in 1967, and of Robert Kennedy in 1968, and the Watergate scandal, which led to the resignation of President Nixon in 1974 revived suspicions of the absurdities and darker undercurrents of American life. Vietnam War also was the cause of violence and distraction in the United States.

The Black humour gets its name from the American writer Friedman's collection of "black humour", and became a popular kind of literature genre and affected the development of American literature. The "Black" humour in the English language symbolizes darkness, depression, and death. And black humour, however, means that this is not the humour in the traditional sense. It doesn't have a relaxed and happy mood, while it is very desperate, and it is the humour in a difficult situation. In their works the writers of black humour tend to describe some "Anti-heroes" with abnormal behaviours and reflect social reality through their bizarre actions. To some extent, it shows the author's thinking and main ideas about social problems. As for the particular description technique they will break the tradition and ignore the logic of the story. The narration is broken, fragmentary. They connect the reality, dreams and memories together, and mix serious philosophical ideas with playful banter.

For example, Joseph Heller's "Catch 22" uses the black humour to expose the American social life. The writer attacks the absurd reality and chaos of society. The representatives of Black humour trend could oppose this absurdity of life only with self-mockery and pathological form of narration.

Joseph Heller (1923 – 1999): “Catch-22”.

The novel, which brought him popularity, is “Catch -22”. He began writing it in 1953, though it was first published in 1961. In this book Heller continued the trend of anti-militarist novel. “Catch -22” is often defined as one of the most significant novels of the XX century.

The narration is set during WWII and is about the life of John Yossarian, a U.S. Army AIR forces bombardier.

The novel depicts a wide panorama of total disintegration, corruption, treason, absurdity, cruelty. But Heller is not a pessimist, as he doesn't deny human possibilities and essence of life in general. He denies ugly and pathological forms of life.

Besides J. Heller, Thomas Pynchon and Kurt Vonnegut belong to this trend. Written about World War II but during the escalation of the war in Vietnam, Heller's black comedy was so influential that its title has become a part of common, everyday language. The novel focuses on a bomber pilot Yossarian and his attempts to get out of the war alive. He can be relieved of his duties if he is declared insane, but if he declares himself to be insane to save his life, he must be sane and therefore must keep flying. The novel satirizes the utter stupidity and the absolute power of the military bureaucracy—and by extension the absurdity of modern life in a world ruled by bureaucracy in which the individual is merely a cog—a desperate, cognizant cog, in the machine. Heller's great novel is still read and referred to because it is the ultimate portrait of the absurdity of war; it applies equally to World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and some other war conflicts.

6.3. Beat generation

In early 50-ies there appeared quite a new trend – „Beat generation“.

This term had two meanings. The first meaning of „beaten” is “tired”, “humiliated”, “and exhausted”. The second could be regarded as a secret artistic rhythm, like in W. Whitman’s poem: „Beat, beat drums, blow, bugles, blow“. The beat generation was initially associated with New York, but it first attracted the interest of a larger public when, in 1956, Ginsberg, Kerouac and Gregory Corso joined Ferlinghetti, Snyder, Whalen and others in public reading appearances in the coffeehouses and colleges of San Francisco. And national fame was almost guaranteed with the confiscation of copies of Ginsberg’s *Howl* by the San Francisco police in the same year, on the grounds that, as the Collector of Customs put it, ‘The words and the sense of the writing are obscene’. *Howl*, Ginsberg’s first published book of poems (although by no means his first stab at poetry), then sold over 50,000 copies within a relatively brief period of time. Along with Kerouac’s *On the Road*, it became what Kenneth Rexroth, something of a father-figure for some of the beats, called ‘the confession of faith of the generation that is going to be running the world in 1965 and 1975 – if it is still there to run’. For a while, the figure of the beat or the beatnik even attracted national media attention, although he (and it was usually a ‘he’ rather than a ‘she’) tended to be considered only to be mocked and dismissed. *Time* magazine, for instance, referred to the beat as ‘a rebel without a cause who shirks responsibility on the grounds that he has the H-bomb jitters’. The liberal establishment was hostile, too.

A representative of beat generation is a member of Bohemian subculture that flourished in the 50-ies. It is the person, who disregards conventional behaviour and dress and is preoccupied with avant-garde, philosophizing and self-expression. It’s a person who prefers free love, who spends time among the jazz and drugs. Beat generation was born on the cross-roads of three wars: cold, hot (in Korea 1950-1953), and police regime (McCarthyism as the policy of persecuting people who

think differently).

Beatnik is a person who turns inside himself, to the depth of his consciousness and tries to find the source of truth and freedom there. It is not a challenge, but a device of „self-liquidation“, „falling out“ of the system of social norms and obligations. In philosophical sense beatniks orient themselves to the philosophy of existentialism – the idea of choice being the most important. At the same time they prefer to rely on their own experience, like H. Thoreau. And the idea of R. Emerson’s „Self- reliance“ is not an empty sound for them. Their priorities are freedom, self-expression and pleasure. They don’t want to be a tiny part of a system, despite the fact that the system gives stability and well-being, but it rejects the idea of a free choice.

The protest against the system may acquire different forms – like Montag in R Bradbury’s novel „451 by Fahrenheit“, like Holden Caulfield in Salinger’s „The catcher in the rye“– both may be regarded as representatives of non-conformist consciousness which grew into the movement of hippies. For beatniks the main thing is to be on the road, as it is a symbol of life. To be on the road means to be alive.

6.4. Jack Kerouac (1922-1969): „On the road“.

Jack Kerouac may be regarded as a profit of this trend in literature. His book entitled „On the road“ was published in 1957. The novel is based on the travels of Kerouac and his friends across the United States. It is considered a defining work of the post war Beat and Counterculture generations, with its protagonists living life against a backdrop of jazz, poetry, and drug use. The novel is a *roman à clef*, with many key figures of the Beat movement represented by characters in the book, including Kerouac himself as the narrator, Sal Paradise. The idea for the book formed during the late 1940s in a series of notebooks and was then typed out on a continuous

reel of paper during three weeks in April 1951. The two main characters of the book are the narrator, Sal Paradise, and his friend Dean Moriarty, much admired for his carefree attitude and sense of adventure, a free-spirited maverick eager to explore all kicks and an inspiration and catalyst for Sal's travels. The novel contains five parts, three of them describing road trips with Dean. The narrative takes place in the years 1947 to 1950, is full of Americana, and marks a specific era in jazz history, "somewhere between its Charlie Parker *Ornithology* period and another period that began with Miles Davis" (Pt. 1, Ch. 3). The novel is largely autobiographical, Sal being the alter ego of the author and Dean standing for Neal Cassady. Like Kerouac, Sal Paradise is a writer who published two books over the course of the plot, even though the names are not told. All the characters are fictional, but each of them has a real prototype. For example, Sal Paradise, the narrator, is Jack Kerouac himself, Old Bull Lee is W. S. Burroughs, Carlo Marx is Allen Ginsberg, and Neal Cassady is Dean Moriarty. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked "On the road" fifty fifth on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

7.CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE (SINCE 1970)

7.1. Historical and Social Context

In the wake of the counter-culture movement of the 1960s many Americans became increasingly distrustful of the federal government. Investigative reporting in print and on television, along with photojournalism, contributed to the public's lack of confidence in official reports and rhetoric about government actions at home and abroad. An economic downturn and rising inflation in the 1970s ended a period of growth and prosperity that had begun after World War II, further threatening the confidence and sense of well-being of many Americans. The increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam led to protest marches and sit-ins, many on college campuses, across the nation. President Richard M. Nixon had promised to end U.S. involvement in Vietnam when running for office in 1968, but his decision to invade Cambodia, announced on 30 April 1970, led to the public perception that the war was escalating. On 4 May 1970 Ohio National Guard troops fired on a group of unarmed students at Kent State University in Ohio; four died, and nine others were wounded. Nixon issued a statement describing the deaths at Kent State as "tragic and unfortunate" but also placed blame on the anti-war demonstrators. Through his press secretary the president announced that "This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence, it invites tragedy." Ten days after the Kent State shootings, police fired on students demonstrating at Jackson State University in Mississippi, killing two and wounding twelve. Photographs of dead and wounded students galvanized public sentiment against the war, and more than nine hundred colleges and universities were shut down by student strikes. The last American ground troops departed on 29 March 1973, and the war ended with the fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese troops on 30 April 1975. Nixon had become a symbol of

political corruption in 1973 when details of his involvement in covering up the break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in the Watergate hotel and office complex in Washington D.C., came to light. To avoid impeachment, Nixon resigned in 1974—the first U.S. president to do so. Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward described the events that led to the Watergate cover-up and Nixon’s resignation in *All the President’s Men* (1974). Vice President Gerald R. Ford assumed the presidency and later pardoned Nixon of all charges related to the Watergate case. James Earl “Jimmy” Carter, the relatively unknown governor of Georgia, was elected in the 1976 over Ford largely because he seemed untainted by Washington, D.C., politics. During his single term the nation suffered shortages and rising prices for fuel; inflation; high interest rates; a growing national deficit; and the Iran hostage crisis. These events further eroded many Americans’ faith in government and eclipsed Carter’s accomplishments: his promotion of international human rights; his key role in the Camp David Accords, which led to a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel; and his efforts to secure the release of the fifty-two American hostages held by Iranian militants at the American embassy in Tehran, who returned home the day Carter’s successor, Ronald Reagan, took office. In response to problems at home and abroad, many Americans turned inward and became preoccupied with self-awareness, a trend that inspired Tom Wolfe’s description of the 1970s as the “me decade.” In contrast to the activism of the 1960s, Americans focused on improving themselves as individuals rather than as a society. But while therapy, self-help, fitness, and diet books and programs become extremely popular in the 1970s, Americans did not abandon their efforts to secure environmental, social, and political justice. The first Earth Day was celebrated, and the Clean Air Act was passed, in 1970; the Endangered Species Act became law in 1973. Civil-rights groups continued to fight for racial equality, supporting affirmative-action programs to help minorities gain greater access to education, jobs, and

professions. In 1973 members of the American Indian Movement (AIM) occupied the town of Wounded Knee, South Dakota, for seventy one days to protest poverty on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The gay-liberation movement gained momentum in the 1970s, as well, challenging stereotypes of gays and lesbians while calling for equity. In 1970 about five thousand gay men and lesbians marched in New York City on the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, when the patrons of a Greenwich Village gay bar had fought back against a police raid. Women also continued to push for equal rights. In 1972 Title IX was added to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, forbidding discrimination on the basis of sex by institutions receiving federal funds; the principal effect was to ensure equal funding and opportunity for female athletes at colleges and universities. The following year the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision made it legal nationwide for women to choose abortion for any reason in the first trimester of pregnancy, although states could impose restrictions in later stages. In 1972 the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed twenty-seventh amendment to the Constitution that would guarantee that equal rights under federal, state, and local law could not be denied on account of sex. ERA opponents claimed that the amendment would send women into combat, deny them the right to be financially supported by their husbands, eliminate separate public restrooms for men and women, grant more power to the federal government at the expense of states and individuals, and legalize homosexual marriages. By the 30 June 1982 deadline it remained three States short of the thirty-eight needed for ratification. Nevertheless, Americans in the 1980s witnessed several "firsts" for women: the appointment of Sandra Day O'Connor to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1981, astronaut Sally Ride's 1983 trip into space, and Democrat Geraldine Ferraro's vice presidential nomination on a major party national ticket in 1984. All these events could not be neglected by writers, poets and

playwrights who regarded them as a challenge to their artistic experiments.

7.2. Dominant genres and literary forms

The contemporary period offers such diversity in genres and forms that is difficult to identify any as “dominant.” The novel continues to be popular, with writers such as John Barth, Joyce Carol Oates, Philip Roth, and John Updike, who were working in previous decades, still making important contributions after 1970. Postmodernist novelists experiment with narrative form, challenging traditional fiction genres; Richard Brautigan’s *The Hawkline Monster: A Gothic Western* (1974), for example, combines elements of Southern Gothic with tropes of the Western. Other novelists play with the boundaries between fiction and nonfiction. In *My Life As a Man* (1974) Roth creates the autobiographical Jewish writer Peter Tarnopol, who recounts his life in the second part of the novel, “My True Story.” Tarnopol’s short stories, two of which make up the first part of the novel, “Useful Fictions,” feature Nathan Zuckerman, a name Roth uses for a character in later novels, and parody Roth’s novel *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1969). E. L. Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel* (1971), *Ragtime* (1975), *Billy Bathgate* (1989), and *Homer & Langley* (2009) combine facts from twentieth-century history with fictional details. On the basis of a brief account of Margaret Garner’s failed 1856 attempt to escape from slavery, Morrison imagines Garner’s life in *Beloved* (1987). Other writers, shaped by different cultures and experiences, have transformed the contemporary novel in other ways. Maxine Hong Kingston’s *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* (1989), Oscar Hijuelos’s *Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989), and Changrae Lee’s *A Gesture Life* (1999) draw on the immigrant experience to depict the ways in which individuals lose, maintain, or transform their cultural identities. Some novelists address the ways identity is complicated by sexuality. As homosexuality becomes more visible in mainstream society, writers such as Michael Cunningham find more

recognition and readers; his *The Hours* (1998) won the Pulitzer Prize. Other important writers on gay and lesbian themes include Rita Mae Brown, Paula Gunn Allen, Sarah Schulman, Armistead Maupin, and Edmund White.

The short story has enjoyed resurgence in this period. Following a slide in status that accompanied the rising popularity of television and a decline in magazines featuring short fiction that had begun in the 1950s, short-story collections began again to appear on best-seller lists. Academic literary journals such as the *Sewanee Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and *Southern Review*, along with mass-market magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, and *Harper's*, helped to bring about the change. Fostered by Gordon Lish, fiction editor at *Esquire* and then at Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Raymond Carver paved the way for writers of stories about working-class lives; many of these writers were labelled "Dirty Realists" or "minimalists." Important collections include Andre Dubus's *Adultery and Other Choices* (1977), Russell Banks's *Trailerpark* (1981), Ann Beattie's *The Burning House* (1982), Richard Ford's *Rock Springs* (1987), and Bobbie Ann Mason's *Shiloh and Other Stories* (1982). Other writers known for their short stories include Oates, Dorothy Allison, Annie Proulx, and Pam Houston. A recent development is the emergence of the extremely short story. Generally consisting of no more than a thousand words, they are called "sudden" or "flash" fiction; the latter term is the title of a 1992 anthology of such works edited by James Thomas, Denise Thomas, and Tom Hazuka. The abbreviated nature of these stories makes them particularly well suited for the Internet.

8. CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL NOVEL

In the 50-ies and 60-ies some writers of fiction applied psychological approach not only to human issues in a realistic perspective, but to ideas

and attitudes drawn from philosophy and theology. These writers were allegorically offering a meaning beyond the apparent significance of the story itself. Allegory was the most important form of fiction in the middle ages. It is now becoming important again with writers like John Updike, John Gardner and Saul Bellow who draw upon philosophy as an important tool for their methods of characterization and plots. These writers are sensitive to the problems of family relationship and use them to strengthen its meaning.

8.1. John Updike (1932 – 2009)

John Hoyer Updike (March 18, 1932 – January 27, 2009) was an American novelist, poet, short-story writer, art critic, and literary critic. One of only four writers to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction more than once (the others being Booth Tarkington, William Faulkner, and Colson Whitehead), Updike published more than twenty novels, more than a dozen short-story collections, as well as poetry, art and literary criticism and children's books during his career.

Hundreds of his stories, reviews, and poems appeared in *The New Yorker* starting in 1954. He also wrote regularly for *The New York Review of Books*. His most famous work is his "Rabbit" series (the novels *Rabbit, Run*; *Rabbit Redux*; *Rabbit Is Rich*; *Rabbit at Rest*; and the novella *Rabbit Remembered*), which chronicles the life of the middle-class everyman Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom over the course of several decades, from young adulthood to death. Both *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981) and *Rabbit at Rest* (1990) were awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Describing his subject as "the American small town, Protestant middle class", critics recognized his careful craftsmanship, his unique prose style, and his prolific output – a book a year on average. Updike populated his fiction with characters that "frequently experience personal turmoil and must respond to crises relating to religion, family

obligations, and marital infidelity".

His fiction is distinguished by its attention to the concerns, passions, and suffering of average Americans, its emphasis on Christian theology, and its preoccupation with sexuality and sensual detail. His work has attracted significant critical attention and praise, and he is widely considered one of the great American writers of his time. Updike's highly distinctive prose style features a rich, unusual, sometimes arcane vocabulary as conveyed through the eyes of "a wry, intelligent authorial voice that describes the physical world extravagantly while remaining squarely in the realist tradition". He described his style as an attempt "to give the mundane its beautiful due". J. Updike is a unique artist. His wit, intelligence, theological learning, humour, characterizes his fiction. Updike's insight into human personality, his power of observation, and his unique style *are* remarkable. His greatest achievement lies in his ability to depict the minute details in reflecting physical world and at the same time rendering the hidden tragedy of everyday life of his heroes, quite ordinary people. His works are however marked by much ambiguity. His characters are always in quest of something, and their lives seem insignificant. Updike is a "quest" novelist, focussing on personages whose search is for value. He does not give up his belief that there is something in life of people he tries to portray what can help them to find essential or even transcendent value. Sex, in the quest, becomes the substitute for God and Law; sin becomes the failure to love strongly enough to accept responsibility. Updike is also skilful in depicting the social life of post-war Americans.

8.2. John Gardner(1933-1982)

John Gardner, a gifted literary critic and writer, was an advocate of moral values in fiction. He claimed that the main purpose of literature is to introduce spiritual order and harmony, to resist chaos and

disintegration. The themes of traditional family customs, friendship, individual responsibility, predominate in his pose, though he is open to literary experiment, the search of new genres, and stylistic forms of expression. In 1978, the novelist John Gardner published a treatise called *On Moral Fiction* in which he claimed that true art must be moral, that little art being produced then was moral and, therefore, that most of his contemporaries were either bad artists or not artists at all.' It is difficult to recall a book about literature and/or ethics-at least one written by a novelist or poet rather than, say, by William Bennett-that has been received with so much hostility, especially among other writers and artists. Was the hostile response deserved, or is there beneath the polemics and diatribes, anything worth listening to Gardner's call for renewed attention to the ethical obligations and effects of fiction or of literature more generally? The reactions to Gardner's book largely divided along ideological lines. Some conservatives and neo-conservatives appreciated his basic argument that art must be moral and that most contemporary literature and criticism were misguided, even if they found the book otherwise flawed. Many others criticised this work severely. But what is really important, it is the fact that John Gardner himself tried to follow this moral trend.

In an interview in 1977 Gardner said: "Art leads, it doesn't follow," "Art doesn't imitate life, art makes people do things," he added, "if we celebrate bad values in our arts, we're going to have a bad society; if we celebrate values which make you healthier, which make life better, we're going to have a better world." Consistent with this, he produced in his 1976 novel, *October Light*, two interwoven stories concerned with the nihilism and alienation of contemporary life. One circles around popular culture: television, with its "endless simpering advertising" and "its monstrously obscene games of greed." The other focuses on high culture: the literature of absurdism and entropy with its

assumption that “life ... was a boring novel.” What the protagonist in both stories has to learn is a deeply traditional lesson: the difference between false art and real life. He has to return from the false worlds of mass culture and amoral literature to the true world of relationship; and, finally, he does.

Gardner’s finest novel, *Grendel* (1971), however, does not entirely conform to his own expressed views about art. The book tells the story of the Old English epic poem “Beowulf” from the point of view of the monster. Gardner himself was a medievalist scholar; and here he plays with medieval notions of psychology and numerological symbolism as he sets the materialism, nihilism, and sheer brutishness of Grendel against heroic Christianity. What emerges from this extraordinary tale is the revelation that Grendel is indispensable to the civilizing forces of science and the arts. He is the brute existence on which humans depend for their definition of themselves. “You stimulate them! You make them think and scheme. You drive them to poetry, science, religion, all that makes them what they are,” a sympathetic dragon tells Grendel. “You are mankind, or man’s condition: inseparable as the mountain-climber and the mountain.” A source of power for humanity, apparently, Grendel is also the source of power for the book. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, he may lose but the author seems to be secretly on his side. Edgy, unnatural, unreliable, Grendel is a typically postmodern narrator. Constantly dramatizing or changing himself, his strong, seductive voice leaves the reader without sure ground. Gardner may have been suspicious of postmodernism and keen to give his work a moral dimension. Ironically, his finest character and narrator is irredeemably, necessarily amoral. And his best work is his best precisely because it has a postmodern edge.

Yet, in the majority of his works: *The Sunlight Dialogues*, *Nickel Mountain*, *October Light*, *The Resurrection*, *The Wreckage of Agathon*

he tries to follow the principles of morality. At the same time, these works in the eyes of many critics and reviewers represented a new and exhilarating phase in the enterprise of modern writing, a consolidation of the resources of the contemporary novel and a leap forward—or backward—into a reestablished humanism. One finds in his books elements of the three major strains of current fiction: the elegant narrative gamesmanship of Barth or Pynchon, the hyperrealistic Gothicism of Joyce Carol Oates and Stanley Elkin, and the cultural, intellectual history of Saul Bellow. Like so many characters in current fiction, Gardner's characters are men on the fringe, men shocked into the consciousness that they are living lives that seem to be determined, not by their own will, but by massive myths, cosmic fictions over which they have no control.

8.3.Saul Bellow (1915-2005)

Saul Bellow won every award going, including the Nobel Prize for Literature, the Pulitzer Prize, three National Book Awards and the titles Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres and Commandeur des Arts et des Lettres, bestowed by the French Republic. He may be classified as a representative of intellectual novel. His works: *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Victim* (1947), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Seize the Day* (1956), *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), *Herzog* (1964), *Mr Sammler's Planet* (1970), *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), *The Dean's December* (1982), *More Die of Heartbreak* (1987), *A Theft* (1989), *The Bellarosa Connection* (1989), *The Actual* (1997), *Ravelstein* (2000). earned him the reputation as a major novelist of the 20th century, and by his death he was widely regarded as one of the greatest living novelists. Bellow's themes include the disorientation of contemporary society, and the ability of people to overcome their frailty and achieve

greatness or awareness. Bellow saw many flaws in modern civilization, and its ability to foster madness, materialism and misleading knowledge. Principal characters in Bellow's fiction have heroic potential, and many times they stand in contrast to the negative forces of society. Often these characters are Jewish and have a sense of alienation or otherness. Jewish life and identity is a major theme in Bellow's work, although he bristled at being called a "Jewish writer". Bellow's work also shows a great appreciation of America, and a fascination with the uniqueness and vibrancy of the American experience.

His prose centres round the problem of human alienation in society of mass consumption. The state of uncertainty is expressed on the stylistic level in fragmentary discourse, implicit with self-contemplation and self-irony. Majority of his personages are representatives of Jewish cultural tradition, and bear characteristic features of Jewish folk looser. It imparts special lyric undertones to his novels.

8.4. Jerome David Salinger (1919-2010)

Salinger's prose develops national cultural tradition of non-conformism. *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) was an immediate popular success; Salinger's depiction of adolescent alienation and loss of innocence was influential, especially among adolescent readers. The novel was widely read and controversial, and its success led to public attention and scrutiny. Salinger became reclusive, publishing less frequently. He followed *Catcher* with a short story collection, *Nine Stories* (1953); *Franny and Zooey* (1961), a volume containing a novella and a short story; and a volume containing two novellas, *Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction* (1963). Salinger's last published work, the novella *Hapworth 16, 1924*,

appeared in *The New Yorker* on June 19, 1965.

Afterward, Salinger struggled with unwanted attention, including a legal battle in the 1980s with biographer Ian Hamilton and the release in the late 1990s of memoirs written by two people close to him: Joyce Maynard, an ex-lover; and his daughter, Margaret Salinger.

The narration of writer's most famous novel "The catcher in the rye" is incongruous, with abundance of youth jargon, sometimes illogical and even irritating. But through this incongruity one perceives sincere and poignant suffering of a person doomed to live in a "phony" world of grown-ups. These emotions are so strong that they struck a chord in the hearts of several generations of young people who recognized in Holden's naïve but passionate riot their own disillusionment and despair.

8.5. Edgar Lawrence Doctorow (1831-2015)

E. L. Doctorow, an American novelist, editor, and professor, best known for his works of historical fiction, was born in New York City on January 6, 1931. He wrote twelve novels, three volumes of short fiction and a stage drama, including the award-winning novels *Ragtime* (1975), *Billy Bathgate* (1989), and *The March* (2005). Among his other works are: *Homer & Langley*, *The March*, *The Book of Daniel*, *City of God*, *Welcome to Hard Times*, *Loon Lake*, *World's Fair*, *The Waterworks*, and *All the Time in the World*. These, like many of his other works, placed fictional characters in recognizable historical contexts, with known historical figures, and often used different narrative styles. In his novels Edgar Doctorow created a signature style of blending public history—and historical figures—with a playful or penetrating fiction. In the process he explored the charged grey area where history bleeds into fiction and fiction calls into question the very essence of what may be understood as historical. Few authors have ever been able to embrace

experiment and innovation so fully while never obscuring the narrative and moral power so deeply embedded, so shaping and transformative in his stories.

He has also published two short-story collections: *Lives of the Poets* and *Sweet Land Stories*, and a collection of essays: *Selected Essays: Jack London, Hemingway, and the Constitution*.

Doctorow is a recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Book Award, two National Book Critics Circle Awards, two PEN/Faulkner Awards, the Commonwealth Award, the William Dean Howells Medal from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a presidentially conferred National Humanities Medal. His latest book, *The March*, won the 2006 PEN/Faulkner Award and the National Book Award.

His stories were recognized for their originality and versatility, and Doctorow was praised for his audacity and imagination. A number of Doctorow's novels and short stories were also adapted for the screen, including *Welcome to Hard Times* (1967) starring Henry Fonda, *Daniel* (1983) starring Timothy Hutton, *Billy Bathgate* (1991) starring Dustin Hoffman, and *Wakefield* (2016) starring Bryan Cranston. His most notable adaptations were for the film *Ragtime* (1981) and the Broadway musical of the same name (1998), which won four Tony Awards.

8. 6. Religious revival in post-war American literature.

One of the most notable features of this period was a kind of religious revival. Rapid advances in scientific research and technological application in industry, communication and transportation had undermined man's faith in science and reason as the sole guides of conduct and knowledge. In these terms the religious revival was an emotional reaction against the world suddenly grown too terrible for the solitary man to bear. By the nineteen fifties American society had

become homogenized and suburbanized. They searched for community and they wished to belong to a religious group-Protestant, Catholic or Jew. Religious interest became high among the intellectuals. Intellectuals represented the "New-Orthodox" Movement in the United States. According to Neo- Orthodox theologians, the great errors of modern man were in placing too much faith in human goodness and the inevitable progress of history. Modern experience has refuted the conceptions of human nature held by the nineteenth century even more catastrophically than the conceptions of history. Evil seems to be inextricably mixed with good. During the mid-fifties Eisenhower solemnly proclaimed Recognition of the Supreme Being as the first, the most basic expression of Americanism. Without God, there could be no American form of Government, nor an American way of life.

By the sixties a different movement, 'God is dead' started, rooted in the intellectual rigour and speculative freedom of Neo-Orthodoxy. It was caused by particular American tendencies, such as militant role of Churches, black and white, in the Civil Rights Movement in the South, the emergence of Martin Luther King as a major spokesman for the sense of social justice in Protestantism, the election of Roman Catholic to the presidency in 1960, and the out-cry of moral concern with the war of Vietnam, in which Church leaders played conspicuous role. The movement was a direct challenge to dogmas and accustomed Church practices. Change within the liturgy and the new emphasis upon the creativity of ritual and liturgical forms also accompanied the 'God is dead' movement. The movement brought a general cultural awareness during the sixties. In Europe this cultural awareness gave birth to existentialism. A variant of existentialism articulated by Albert Camus became popular in the United States. In his novels and essays Camus tried to show why the traditional answer of the Church was inadequate. At this time the book "The Death of God; The culture of our past

Christian Era” (1961), by Gabriel Vehanian was published. It aroused interest of American intellectuals.

We find references to this theology in the works of John Updike, Alice Walker, Flannery O'Conner and other novelists who have concerned themselves with religious matters.

8.7. Mirror image of sex freedom in American prose.

A greater freedom toward sex was a major factor of post-war society. Changes in the relation between the sexes that are associated with the contemporary America seem to have been prepared during the twenties with the teaching of Sigmund Freud, and the practice of Psychoanalysis. It was discovered that mental and emotional health required an end to sexual repressions. In the popular theory Freud liberated sex from Victorian shrouds and insisted that it should be discussed openly as the most frequent source of troubled feelings and compulsive behaviour.

Another significant event in this century is the removal of legal restrictions on pornography which made sexual matters taken for granted by the 1970's magazines, films, theatres and imaginative literature.

The subject of marital infidelity had great popular currency in the sixties. And it was adequately reflected in literature – in novels of John Updike, Saul Bellow (1915-2005), Edgar Doctorow (1931-2015), Irvin Shaw (1913-1984), James Donleavy (1926-2017). Their fiction reflected new realities, new attitudes to life, new mentality.

New prosperity during the fifties caused women's independence. Late in the sixties they became to be freed from their traditional submission. More and more American women became educated and restless under the discriminatory powers of a patriarchal social structure. Women organized 'women's liberation Movement’. They refuted the old idea that child bearing was women's only duty, by showing that women could enjoy the same accomplishments as men.

8.8. African-American literature

Among the most visible changes in the United States during this period of time was the social position of the Negroes undergoing profound changes. In 1964 Civil Rights Legislation enabled Negroes to acquire a better economic position, more education and constitutional rights. In the sixties, William L.O' Neill writes, "racial segregation was overthrown in Law and to a considerable extent in practice. All manner of opportunities that never existed before were opened up". These two factors created a fertile soil for incipience of a number of African-American women writers.

8.8.1 Tony Morrison (1932-2019)

Toni Morrison - Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison (born Chloe Ardelia Wofford; February 18, 1931 – August 5, 2019), known as Toni Morrison, was an American novelist and editor. She is the leading representative of African-American Literature. Born and raised in Lorain, Ohio, Morrison graduated from Howard University in 1953 with a B.A. in English. Morrison earned a master's degree in American Literature from Cornell University in 1955. In 1957 she returned to Howard University, was married, and had two children before divorcing in 1964. Morrison became the first Black female editor for fiction at Random House in New York City in the late 1960s. She developed her own reputation as an author in the 1970s and '80s. Her novel *Beloved* was made into a film in 1998. Morrison's works are praised for addressing the harsh consequences of racism in the United States and the Black American experience.

Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. The critically acclaimed *Song of Solomon* (1977) brought her national attention and

won the National Book Critics Circle Award. In 1988, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* (1987). Later she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. Besides the Noble prize, she was bestowed with several other honourable awards. The future writer got University education and beginning with middle 50-ies she lectured in some educational establishments. The years of her budding writing coincided with the apex of African-American protests against racial discrimination.

On the crest of this wave she entered mainstream literature. Her only short story “Recitatif” was published in 1983. Morrison’s main interest is in ethnic roots of American Negroes, the sources of folklore, myth and legends. In her novels usually two narrative layers predominate. One of them probes deep into social reality, and the other introduces mythological consciousness. And the juxtaposition of these two layers helps her ponder on the destinies of African-American people.

Special attention should be paid to the novel *Beloved*. Cultural memory is central to this novel which also uses its complex non-linear narrative structure to rewrite history. *Beloved* was conceived deliberately as a way of addressing what its author termed a 300-year-long ‘national amnesia’ about the subject of slavery. Its narrative structure effectively turns us in to witnesses rather than just observers, urged to share the novel’s judgments on history. The novel is based on a real event which occurred in Kentucky in 1856, when an escaped slave called Margaret Garner chose to kill her own daughter rather than have her endure the suffering and degradation of being taken back into slavery. *Beloved*’s central character Sethe cuts her two-year-old daughter ‘*Beloved*’s’ throat with a saw at the point of recapture for the same reason. She also tries to kill her two boys, and contemplates slaughtering her youngest daughter, Denver. It is difficult to imagine a more horrific act. Yet placing it at the heart of her novel enables Morrison powerfully to

inform readers distanced by time about the horrors of the forgotten Holocaust. The idea of a mother killing her own baby daughter seems incomprehensible, beyond sympathy, yet the novel forces us to consider the brutal context that made such an act possible. *Beloved* explodes the myth of the 'paternalist' system of slavery in the American South, which imagines black slaves as part of the extended family of a stern yet ultimately benign slave master. The reality was that the slaves were forced to work until breaking point in the plantations, were denied personal and family relationships that free white people took for granted, and were frequently subjected to violent abuse and humiliation. Sethe's murder of *Beloved* is counterbalanced by numerous acts of violence against her and her fellow slaves by their white masters on a farm ironically named 'Sweet Home' in Kentucky. A month before the murder Sethe's mother was hanged, probably for trying to flee the house where she was a slave, and one of the male slaves, Sixo, is roasted alive by the slave master. With such horrific details of the everyday realities of life on the plantation, Morrison fills in the void in the established historical narrative. But she also intended *Beloved* to fill the gaps in a particular form of literary narrative. Her interest in the topic of slavery was triggered by reading slave narratives, a genre of African-American writing which has become of particular interest to scholars of American literature in recent years. A huge number of autobiographical accounts of the experience of being a slave were produced by black African-Americans in 1840–60. They are valuable because they are personal testimonies from a community rendered voiceless by their experience and useful to historians for the details they provide about life as a slave. *Beloved*, then, is a fictionalized slave narrative which, ironically, has greater truth claims than authentic slave narratives which were fictionalized for ideological reasons.

8.8.2 Alice Walker (1944)

Alice Walker is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. She was born in rural Georgia, in a poor African-American family, attended school for African-American children, situated in a former prison. She managed to overcome challenges such as childhood injury and segregation to become high school valedictorian and graduate from Sarah Lawrence College. Her literary debut, a collection of poems "Once" (1968), also coincided with the upheaval of African-American mentality acquiring new ideas. In two years her novel "The third life of Grange Copeland" (1970) was published to be followed by "Meridian" (1976) and "The colour of purple" (1983) – Pulitzer Prize. She is also an author of several collections of short stories, poetic collections, essays, memoirs. The motto of her writing is "I can't hide what the life reveals for me". The topics of fighting for self-dignity, of unity of interests of white and black in their fighting for their rights predominate in her prose. She is writing about black extremism and white chauvinism, understanding that both are detrimental for the country.

In 1982, she became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which she was awarded for her novel *The Color Purple*. Over the span of her career, Walker has published seventeen novels and short story collections, twelve non-fiction works, and collections of essays and poetry. As an activist, Walker participated in the Civil Rights Movement, advocated for women of colour through the term "womanism," and has been involved in animal advocacy and pacifism. Additionally, she has taken a strong stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, supporting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel. A. Walker has faced multiple accusations of anti-Semitism due to her praise for British conspiracy

theorist David Icke and his works.

Walker has written several other novels, including *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992) (which featured several characters and descendants of characters from *The Color Purple*). She has published a number of collections of short stories, poetry, and other writings. Her work is focused on the struggles of Black people, particularly women, and their lives in a racist, sexist, and violent society.

8. 9.The development of Science Fiction

Rapid advances in scientific research and technological application in industry, communication and transportation are characteristic of early twentieth century. By 1955 the United States had entered the world of computer. The new electronic boom and the air facilities rocked the American life. Most spectacular of all were the orbital space flights and moon landing in 1968. On the other hand, technological fear was growing. In the shadow of the Bomb and the face of such far-reaching discoveries and changes in technology, the question of "science and human values" took a special urgency in the post-war years.

“Sci-fi” lit-re had to answer these concerns. Sci-fi and Horror (Gothic prose or fantasy) are closely connected. They developed for a long time simultaneously, contributing to each other. Both belonged to escapist lit-re, as they demonstrate a retreat from dull drab reality. Both were published in the same periodicals, like pulp magazines (mid 20-ies) “Super Science stories”, “Famous Fantastic mysteries”, “dime mysteries, both were considered “mass culture” products, even their sources are the same – mythology, where the first artificial beings appear, such as bronze Robot of Hephaestus as well as fantastic creatures like Cyclopes. But at this point their affinity comes to an end. The destination of their escape is different. In Gothic literature it is

horror, fear. In Sci-fi this escape is in the future, based on scientific progress. This escape has a form of “extrapolation” or “Quantum jumps”.

Extrapolation is a transfer of some situation from the present into the future by expanding this situation.

Quantum jumps is a transfer of some episode from the past into the Future. Or it may be expansion of some hypothesis or phenomenon to the scope of a full-fledged construction or the plot. We may regard Herbert Wells the founder of European Science fiction. In America the first author to introduce widely the science fiction topics was Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875-1950). *The Princess of Mars* and *The Gods of Mars* are his best known novels.

The most renowned American Sci-Fi writers are Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Robert Sheckly, Clifford Simak, Andre Norton, and Ursula Le Guin.

8. 9.1. Isaac Asimov (1920 – 1992)

Isaac Asimov was an American writer and professor of biochemistry at Boston University. During his lifetime, Asimov was considered one of the "Big Three" science fiction writers, along with Robert A. Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke. A prolific writer, he wrote or edited more than 500 books. Best known for his hard science fiction, Asimov also wrote mysteries and fantasy, as well as popular science and other non-fiction.

Asimov's most famous work is the *Foundation* series, the first three books of which won the one-time Hugo Award for "Best All-Time Series" in 1966. In this series he explored the nature of human history: *Foundation* (1951), *Foundation and Empire* (1952), *Second Foundation* (1953), *Foundation's Edge* (1982), and *Foundation and Earth* (1986). Asimov was also prodigiously productive. He published his first science

fiction tale in *Amazing Stories* in 1938; by the time of his death, he had published 470 titles in science fiction and a number of other forms and genres. His other major series are the *Galactic Empire* series and the *Robot* series. The *Galactic Empire* novels are set in the much earlier history of the same fictional universe as the *Foundation* series. Later, with *Foundation and Earth* (1986), he linked this distant future to the *Robot* series, creating a unified "future history" for his works. He also wrote more than 380 short stories, including the social science fiction novelette "Nightfall", which in 1964 was voted the best short science fiction story of all time by the Science Fiction Writers of America. Asimov wrote the *Lucky Starr* series of juvenile science-fiction novels using the pen name Paul French.

Most of his popular science books explain concepts in a historical way, going as far back as possible to a time when the science in question was at its simplest stage. Examples include *Guide to Science*, the three-volume *Understanding Physics*, and *Asimov's Chronology of Science and Discovery*. He wrote on numerous scientific and non-scientific topics, such as chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, history, biblical exegesis, and literary criticism. He was the president of the American Humanist Association. Several entities have been named in his honour, including the asteroid Asimov, a crater on Mars, Brooklyn elementary school, Honda's humanoid robot ASIMO, and four literary awards.

It is obvious, that I. Asimov's most enduring contributions are his "Three Laws of Robotics" and the *Foundation* series. The *Oxford English Dictionary* credits his science fiction for introducing into the English language the words "robotics", "positronic" (an entirely fictional technology), and "psychohistory" (which is also used for a different study on historical motivations).

8.9.2. Clifford Donald Simak (1904 – 1988).

He was an American science fiction writer and won three Hugo Awards and one Nebula Award. The Science Fiction Writers of America made him its third SFWA Grand Master, and the Horror Writers Association made him one of three inaugural winners of the Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement. He is associated with the pastoral science fiction subgenre. Simak became interested in science fiction after reading the works of H. G. Wells as a child. His first contribution to the literature was "The World of the Red Sun", published by Hugo Gernsback in the December 1931 issue of *Wonder Stories* with one opening illustration by Frank R. Paul. Within a year, he placed three more stories in Gernsback's pulp magazines and one in *Astounding Stories*, then edited by Harry Bates. Yet his only science fiction publication between 1932 and 1938 was "The Creator, a story with religious implications, which was then rare in the genre.

Simak continued to produce award-nominated novels throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Aided by a friend, he continued writing and publishing science fiction and, later, fantasy, into his 80s. He believed that science fiction not rooted in scientific fact was responsible for the failure of the genre to be taken seriously, and stated his aim was to make the genre a part of what he called "realistic fiction."

Simak's stories often have a rural setting, which led to his style being described as "pastoral" or "pastoral science fiction". Crusty individualistic backwoodsman characters often appear - for example, Hiram Taine, the protagonist of "The Big Front Yard". Hiram's dog "Towser" (sometimes "Bowser") is common to many of Simak's works. The rural setting is not always idyllic; for instance, in *Ring Around the Sun*, it is largely dominated by intolerance and isolationism.

Many of his aliens have a dry, otherworldly sense of humour, and others are unintentionally amusing, in their speech, behaviour or appearance. His robots are full of personality, as are his dogs. By

contrast, his "heroes" are ciphers. His protagonists are often boring men, never described and never reappearing. One of Simak's editors objected to his stories because his heroes were "losers". Simak replied, "I like losers."

Many of Simak's story lines involve a quest, or a mission. Characters set out, alone, and acquire companions, often unlikely matches, along the way. On the journey, some fall by the wayside, and of these, some are reunited with the group, whilst others never heard from again.

Simak's stories often say that there is no past time for a time traveller to go to. The world moves along in a stream of time, and to move to a different place in time is to move to another world. Thus in *City* the Earth is overrun by ants, but the intelligent dogs and the remaining humans escape to other worlds in the time stream. In *Ring Around the Sun*, the persecuted paranormals escape to other Earths which, if they could all be seen at once, would be at different stages of their orbit around the Sun, hence the title. In *Time Is the Simplest Thing* a paranormal escapes a mob by moving back in time, only to find that the past is a place where there are no living things and inanimate objects are barely substantial.

Time travel also plays an important role in *Time and Again*. A long-lost space traveller returns with a message which is science fiction-slanted, yet religious in tone. Having crashed on a planet, he is then nurtured by ethereal duplicates that seem to accompany every sentient being throughout life. His befuddled observations are seized upon by religious factions, and a schism then threatens to erupt into war on Earth.

Intelligence, loyalty and friendship, the existence of God and souls, the unexpected benefits and harm of invention, tools as extensions of humanity, and more questions are often explored by Simak's robots, which he uses as "surrogate humans". They begin as likable mechanical persons, but change in surprising ways. Having achieved intelligence,

robots move on to common themes such as, "Why are we here?" and "Do robots have souls"? Examples are the faithful butler Jenkins in *City*, the religious robot Hezekiel in *A Choice of Gods*, the frontier robots in *Special Deliverance* and *A Heritage of Stars*, and the monk-like robots in *Project Pope* who seek heaven.

8.9.3. Ursula Le Guin (1929 – 2018).

She was an American author best known for her works of speculative fiction, including science fiction works set in her Hainish universe, and the *Earthsea* fantasy series. Her work was first published in 1959, and her literary career spanned nearly sixty years, producing more than twenty novels and more than a hundred short stories, in addition to poetry, literary criticism, translations, and children's books. Frequently described as an author of science fiction, Le Guin has also been called a "major voice in American Letters". Le Guin said that she would prefer to be known as an "American novelist".

Cultural anthropology, Taoism, feminism, and the writings of Carl Jung all had a strong influence on Le Guin's work. Many of her stories used anthropologists or cultural observers as protagonists, and Taoist ideas about balance and equilibrium have been identified in several writings. Social and political themes, including race, gender, sexuality, and coming of age were prominent in her writing. She explored alternative political structures in many stories, such as the philosophical short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" (1973) and the anarchist utopian novel *The Dispossessed* (1974).

In her introduction to her novel *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), Le Guin insisted that "science fiction is not predictive; it is descriptive." True to that formula, this novel describes and critically defines sexual prejudice. It is set on an imaginary planet populated by "androgynes," people who can at different times be male, female, and neuter. An

ordinary human who falls in love with a member of this trisexual society is forced to examine the meaning of sexual roles. And the reader, in turn, is invited to imagine what it may mean to be simply human, living outside the social determinants of sexual identity. Other books are critical of contemporary American political and social values. *The Word for World Forest* (1972) is about Vietnam; *The Dispossessed* (1974) is a fantasy set on an anarchist moon colony and its capitalist mother planet; *The New Atlantis* (1975) presents a futuristic vision of a totalitarian United States. Her most ambitious and acclaimed work, though, the Earthsea trilogy, is more preoccupied with fundamental values: addressing, in terms of scientific fantasy, the need to face the evil in oneself (*A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968)), the need for trust and truth (*The Tombs of Atuan* (1971)), and the need to accept the ineluctable fact of death (*The Farthest Shore* (1972)).

Le Guin's writing was enormously influential in the field of speculative fiction and has been the subject of intense critical attention. She received numerous accolades, including eight Hugo Awards, six Nebula Awards, and twenty-five Locus Awards; in 2003, she became the second woman honoured as a Grand Master of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. The U.S. Library of Congress named her a Living Legend in 2000, and in 2014, she won the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Le Guin influenced many other authors, including the Booker Prize winner Salman Rushdie, David Mitchell, Neil Gaiman, and Iain Banks. After her death in 2018, critic John Clute wrote that Le Guin had "presided over American science fiction for nearly half a century", while author Michael Chabon referred to her as the "greatest American writer of her generation".

8.9.4. Robert Anson Heinlein (1907-1988)

He was an American science fiction author, aeronautical engineer, and naval officer. He is sometimes called the "dean of science fiction writers", as he was among the first to emphasize scientific accuracy in his fiction, and was thus a pioneer of the subgenre of hard science fiction. His published works, both fiction and non-fiction, express admiration for competence and emphasize the value of critical thinking. His plots often posed provocative situations which challenged conventional social mores. His work continues to have an influence on the science-fiction genre and on modern culture more generally.

The work of Robert Heinlein demonstrates a sophisticated approach negotiating a path between scientific literalism and fantasy. Heinlein is capable of humour and social comment. *Double Star* (1956), for instance, is about a failed actor who claims to be a galactic politician. And he can use the genre to make intelligent guesses about the future – from which vantage point he can then cast a critical eye over the present. So, the novel for which he is best known, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), concerns Mike Smith, a human who has been brought up on Mars. Initiated into an unearthly way of regarding reality, Smith has also acquired suprahuman powers. On returning to Earth, he founds a new religion on more Martian habits, a good deal more pacifist and hedonist than most earthly creeds. At the end of the novel, though, he is torn to pieces by outraged humans, crucified for his beliefs and practices. Among those practices, and at the core of this new religion, is what is called “grokking.” “ ‘Grok’ means ‘identity equal,’ ” a Martian character explains. “ ‘Grok’ means to understand so thoroughly that the observer becomes a part of the observed – to merge, blend, intermarry, lose identity in a group experience.” In effect, *Stranger in a Strange Land* takes themes ingrained in American experience and writing – the lonely hero, the clash with conventional society, exile, longing, and the impulse to merge with older,

since 1945 deeper forms of community – and gives them a new twist. This is a new siting of a series of classic tropes.

Heinlein became one of the first American science-fiction writers to break into mainstream magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post* in the late 1940s. He was one of the best-selling science-fiction novelists for many decades, and he, Isaac Asimov, and Arthur C. Clarke are often considered the "Big Three" of English-language science fiction authors. Notable Heinlein works include *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Starship Troopers* and *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*. His work sometimes had controversial aspects, such as plural marriage in *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, militarism in *Starship Troopers* and technologically competent women characters who were formidable, yet often stereotypically feminine—such as *Friday*.

Heinlein used his science fiction as a way to explore provocative social and political ideas and to speculate how progress in science and engineering might shape the future of politics, race, religion, and sex. Within the framework of his science-fiction stories, Heinlein repeatedly addressed certain social themes: the importance of individual liberty and self-reliance, the nature of sexual relationships, the obligation individuals owe to their societies, the influence of organized religion on culture and government, and the tendency of society to repress nonconformist thought. He also speculated on the influence of space travel on human cultural practices.

Heinlein was heavily influenced by the visionary writers and philosophers of his day.

8.9.5. Samuel R. Delany (1942-)

The scope of science fiction, its capacity to explore, not only social and moral issues, but matters of being and knowledge is evident in the stories of Samuel R. Delany whose work reflects his own belief that, as he has put it, “the science fictional enterprise is richer than the

enterprise of mundane fiction.” An African-American, Delany began by writing relatively traditional science fiction. His first book, *The Jewels of Iptor* (1962), explores themes of quest, the capabilities of technology, and the status of the artist, to all of which Delany would later return. *The Einstein Intersection* (1967) is an ambitious attempt to satirize forms of human life using a science fiction frame. *Nova* (1968) is a dense translation of the myths of Prometheus and the Holy Grail into futuristic terms. These novels reveal an increasing complexity. In *Nova*, for instance, cryptic narrative information alternates with passages of lyrical rhetoric and the characterization is consistently freakish and bizarre. In the early 1970s, however, Delany moved altogether away from conventional narrative logic. *Dhalgren*, published in 1975, marks the change. “A book about many things,” as Delany has described it, it presents a city that has suffered a disaster so catastrophic that the space-time continuum has been distorted. In a powerful image of society in chaos, buildings burn endlessly without being consumed; and the only possibility of redemption seems to shine in youth and art. Time, logic, and narrative viewpoints are all cut loose from their traditional literary moorings, in this and the later *Atlantis: Model 1924* (1995). They function relativistically. An additional, disconcerting factor in *Dhalgren* is that Kid, the narrator, is dyslexic and epileptic. These later books, and others such as the *Return to Neveryon* series (*Tales of Neveryon* (1979), *Neveryona* (1983), *Flight from Neveryon* (1985), *The Bridge of Lost Desire* (1987) revised as *Return to Neveryon* (1994)), take science fiction and fantasy into the postmodern; as they do so, they carry the habit of these genres to speculate and subvert to a new extreme.

9. POSTMODERN LITERATURE

9.1.Characteristic features, precursors, common themes and techniques of Postmodern literature

The term was first used around the 1870s in various areas. For example, John W. Chapman introduced the phrase “a postmodern style of painting” to get beyond French Impressionism. A bit later, in 1914 J.M. Thompson in his article in *The Hilbert Journal* used the term Postmodernism to describe changes in attitudes and beliefs in the critique of religion. After this the term was applied to a whole range of movements, many in arts, music and literature that reacted against some tendencies of modernism. We should bear in mind that at that time the content of this term was quite different.

There is no one definition of the term. It is easier to classify it as a philosophy/ literary criticism rather than a true movement. Nevertheless we can characterize this phenomenon as style and concept in the arts, architecture, and criticism that represents a countermovement from modernism and has a distrust of grand theories and ideologies as well as problematic relationships between the ideas. Postmodernists use the elements of different historic styles to create satire, illusion, decoration, and complexity.

We'll try to give rather wide definition to this term: Postmodernism belongs to that paradigm where the authority of author is questioned; where the work of literature approaches text; where the rigid structure is substituted by mixture of different styles, forms, narratives; where different genres may blur; where irony permeates the whole narration; where play of words becomes a major device.

Postmodern literature is a form of literature that is characterized by the

use of metafiction, unreliable narration, self-reflexivity, intertextuality, and which often unites both historical and political issues. This style of experimental literature emerged strongly in the United States in the 1960s through the writings of such authors as Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, and John Barth. Postmodernists often challenge authorities and it may be explained by the fact that this style of literature first emerged in the context of political tendencies in the 1960s. Precursors to postmodern literature include Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605-1616), Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1760-1767), and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), but postmodern literature was particularly prominent in the 1960s and 1970s.

Though postmodern literature does not include everything written in the postmodern period, several post-war developments in literature (such as the Theatre of the Absurd, the Beat Generation, and Magic realism) should be included into it.

The "Beat Generation" was the youth of America during the materialistic 1950s; Jack Kerouac, who coined the term, developed ideas of automatism into what he called "spontaneous prose" to create a maximalist, multi-novel epic in the mould of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. One writer associated with the Beat Generation who appears most often on lists of postmodern writers is William S. Burroughs. Burroughs published *Naked Lunch* in Paris in 1959 and in America in 1961. This is considered by some the first truly postmodern novel because it is fragmentary, with no central narrative arc. The book employs pastiche to fold in elements from popular genres such as detective fiction and science fiction. It is full of parody, paradox, and playfulness.

Some of the earliest examples of postmodern literature are from the 1950s: William Gaddis' *The Recognitions* (1955), Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), and William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch* (1959).

Postmodern fiction rose to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s with the publication of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* in 1961, John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse* in 1968, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* in 1969, and many other works. Thomas Pynchon's 1973 novel *Gravity's Rainbow* is "often considered as *the* postmodern novel, redefining both postmodernism and the novel in general."

The 1980s, however, also saw several key works of postmodern literature. Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*. In the same period of time literary critics wrote some of the classic works of literary history, charting American postmodern literature. These are works by Brian McHale, Linda Hutcheon, and Paul Maltby who argues that it was not until the 1980s that the term "postmodern" caught on as the label for this style of writing.

Several themes and techniques are indicative of writing in the postmodern era. These themes and techniques are often used together. For example, metafiction and pastiche are often used for irony. These techniques are not used by all postmodernists, and this is not an exclusive list of features

9.2.The main devices: irony, playfulness, black humour

In our experience we have mainly acquainted with linguistic idea of irony, which may be also called **verbal** irony: it is a device which uses words suggesting the opposite of what is meant. Besides, there may be **dramatic** irony – a contradiction between what a character thinks and what the reader or the audience knows to be true. And may be **situational** irony which introduces the event or situation which directly contradicts the expectations of the characters, readers, or audience.

Postmodern fiction as a whole could be characterized by irony. Modernists also applied irony, they were often playful, but not in such a wide scope. Postmodern irony becomes radical, self-sufficient play,

which permeates the whole texture of a work of literature. This irony, along with black humour and the general concept of "play" (related to Derrida's concept or the ideas advocated by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*) are among the most recognizable aspects of postmodernism. Though the idea of employing these devices in literature did not start with the postmodernists, they became central features in many postmodern works. In fact, several novelists later to be labelled postmodern were first collectively labelled black humourists: John Barth, Joseph Heller, William Gaddis, Kurt Vonnegut, Bruce Jay Friedman, etc. It is common for postmodernists to treat serious subjects in a playful and humorous way: for example, the way Heller and Vonnegut address the events of World War II. The central concept of Heller's *Catch-22* is the irony of the now-idiomatic "catch-22", and the narrative is structured around a long series of similar ironies. Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* in particular provides prime examples of playfulness, often including silly wordplay within a serious context. For example, it contains characters named Mike Fallopian and Stanley Koteks and a radio station called KCUF.

In this novel we may also regard as biting irony the device of juxtaposing absurd reality and gothic drama. American reality of 70-80 is grotesque and horrifying, where only schizophrenics can communicate, and where suicide is an ordinary thing. In comparison with this reality gothic background of Shakespearean play the main heroin watches is a childish play. Using Shakespeare's winged phrase we may say, that reality "outheroded Herod"

9. 3. The role of Intertextuality in Postmodern text

Since Postmodernism represents a decentred concept of the universe in which individual works are not isolated creations, much of the focus in the study of postmodern literature is on intertextuality: the relationship between one text (a novel for example) and another text

within the interwoven fabric of literary history.

Nowadays, it is next to impossible to create completely new texts. Each text will refer to other plots, characters, motives, background, styles. The names of the characters are often precedent. They carry ample information about the plot, psychological context, some implicit meanings, etc. Precedent names are like documents or messages with viruses. Whenever modern author uses a precedent name, it immediately introduces into this new text a whole range of former meanings, implications and allusions.

Intertextuality in postmodern literature can be a reference or parallel to another literary work, an extended discussion of a work, or the adoption of a style. In postmodern literature this commonly manifests as references to fairy tales—as in works by Margaret Atwood, Donald Barthelme, and many others—or in references to popular genres such as science-fiction and detective fiction

. An early 20th century example of intertextuality which influenced later postmodernists is "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote" by Jorge Luis Borges, a story with significant references to *Don Quixote* which is also a good example of intertextuality with its references to Medieval romances. *Don Quixote* is a common reference with postmodernists, for example Kathy Acker's novel *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream*. Another example of intertextuality in postmodernism is John Gardner's "Grendel" which deals with early English poem "Beowulf". Gardner ironically re-evaluates the characters, making Beowulf a brutal monster, deprived of human feelings, and Grendel, on the contrary is a philosopher pondering on the essence of being.

Another bright example of intertextuality is J. Updike's "Gertrude and Claudius", where despite deep respect to Shakespeare's tragedy the novelist makes an attempt to widen the scope of Gertrude's and

Claudius' personalities and endows these allegedly negative characters, at least from the point of view of Hamlet, with such traits and characteristic features, which turn them from villains into full-fledged persons. For example, Gertrude in his novel is quite a different woman. Updike widens the scope of her personality. She is kind and clever, self-critical and creative, thoughtful and playful, independent and tolerant.

9.4. Pastiche

A pastiche is a work of art, literature, film, music or architecture that closely imitates the work of a previous artist. It can't be confused with parody, as it to a greater extent celebrates than mocks the work it imitates. Although it is jocular, it is respectful. Alternately, a pastiche may be a bricolage of parts derived from the original works of others.

Related to postmodern intertextuality, pastiche tries to combine, or "paste" together, multiple elements. In Postmodernist literature this can be homage to or a parody of past styles. It can be seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of postmodern society.

It can be a combination of multiple genres to create a unique narrative or to comment on situations in postmodernity. For example, William S. Burroughs uses science fiction, detective fiction, westerns; Toni Morrison in "Beloved" uses history and fantasy, juxtaposing historic events and their contemporary interpretation, from the vintage point in 1980-ies. Just in the same vein Kurt Vonnegut in "Slaughter house five" uses history and Science fiction, and Norman Mailer in the novel "Tough guys don't dance blends detective novel genre with elements of Gothic novel and flashes back into history.

Maxine Hong Kingston, a Chinese-American woman writer, published a book “The woman Warrior – memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts” (1976). The novel is woven together from many examples of “talk-story” – a sort of conversation that is also a mixture of reminiscences and storytelling. The text is a hybrid of gossip, fable, and autobiographic memoirs. It unites texts from the Old World of China and the New World of California. One type of narration may be abruptly broken from fiction (the account of a mythological woman warrior) to the fact (life as a Chinese-American girl). The technique of rapid –crossing and juxtaposition of opposing layers creates a collage of voices, the mythological and fictional, Chinese and American.

9.5. Metafiction and fabulation

Metafiction is essentially writing about writing or making the artificiality of art or the fictionality of fiction apparent to the reader. Metafiction purposefully and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to accentuate the question about the relation between fiction and reality. And by doing so they not only underline the fictional structure of the narrative, but also expose the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. It generally disregards the necessity for "willing suspension of disbelief." For example, postmodern sensibility and metafiction dictate that works of parody should parody the idea of parody itself. Metafiction is often employed to undermine the authority of the author, to introduce unexpected narrative shifts, to advance a story in a unique way, for emotional distance, or to comment on the act of storytelling. For example, Italo Calvino's 1979 novel *If on a winter's night a traveller* is about a reader attempting to read a novel of the same name. Kurt Vonnegut also commonly used this technique: the first chapter of his 1969 novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* is about the

process of writing the novel, and the author calls attention to his own presence throughout the novel. Though much of the novel has to do with Vonnegut's own experiences during the firebombing of Dresden, the writer continually points out the artificiality of the central narrative arc, which contains obviously fictional elements such as aliens and time travel.

In 1921 H. P. Lovecraft writes a story “The nameless city”, which is often considered the first story set in the Cthulhu mythos world. The unnamed protagonist goes into the middle of the Arabian peninsula to seek out and enter a lost city. He finds a temple with painted murals and a small staircase going down. On one of the murals he sees his replica torn into pieces by big lizard-like creatures. He descends and travels along dark passages. Suddenly he sees the reptiles from the picture moving to him. The door behind him closes and he remains in the darkness. And that’s all. The readers understand that the finale of the story is depicted on the picture. Thus, this story may be regarded as an early manifestation of this postmodern device.

Fabulation is a term sometimes used interchangeably with metafiction and relates to pastiche and Magic Realism. It is a rejection of realism which embraces the notion that literature is a created work and not bound by notions of mimesis and verisimilitude. Thus, fabulation challenges some traditional notions of literature—the traditional structure of a novel or role of the narrator, for example—and integrates other traditional notions of storytelling, including fantastical elements, such as magic and myth, or elements from popular genres such as science fiction. By some accounts, the term was coined by Robert Scholes in his book *The Fabulators*. Strong examples of fabulation in contemporary literature may be found in Salman Rushdie's “The moor’s last sigh”, and in J.

9.6. Historiographic metafiction and temporal distortions

Linda Hutcheon coined the term "historiographic metafiction" to refer to works that fictionalize actual historical events or figures. The notable examples of such fiction include *The General in His Labyrinth* by Gabriel García Márquez (about Simón Bolívar), *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes (about Gustave Flaubert), *Ragtime* by E. L. Doctorow (which features such historical figures as Harry Houdini, Henry Ford, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, Booker T. Washington, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung). Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon* also employs this concept; for example, a scene featuring George Washington smoking marijuana is included. John Fowls deals similarly with the Victorian period in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* has been said to feature a metafictional, "Janus-headed" outlook in the way the novel seeks to represent both *actual historical events* from World War II while, at the same time, *problematizes* the very notion of doing exactly that.

This is a common technique in modernist fiction: fragmentation and nonlinear narratives are central features in both modern and postmodern literature. Temporal distortion in postmodern fiction is used in a variety of ways, often for the sake of irony. Historiographic metafiction (see above) is an example of this. Distortions in time are central features in many of Kurt Vonnegut's nonlinear novels, the most famous of which is perhaps Billy Pilgrim in *Slaughterhouse-Five* becoming "unstuck in time". In *Flight to Canada*, Ishmael Reed deals playfully with anachronisms, Abraham Lincoln using a telephone for example. Time may also overlap, repeat, or bifurcate into multiple possibilities. Tom Stoppard in the film "Rosencrantz

and Guildenstern are dead” also resorts to this technique: his personages eat tomatoes and hamburgers. They occur on the road as if from nowhere and then as if from nowhere appear in Elsinore and then again as if from nowhere appear on board a ship.

9.7. Technoculture, hyperreality and paranoia

According to Frederic Jameson society in the second half of the 20s century moved into information age, in which we are constantly influenced by advertisements, videos, all sort of different information. Many postmodern authors reflect this in their work. They often put thir characters in situations in which they cannot escape technology.

Hyperreality is basically a simulation or representation of reality. But this reality is distorted partially or radically. Such false realities help to create an illusion. And the content of this illusion totally depends on the author’s intention.

French postmodern critic Jean Baudrillard claimed postmodernity was defined by a shift into hyper reality in which simulations have replaced the real. In postmodernity people are inundated with information, technology has become a central focus in many lives, and our understanding of the real is mediated by simulations of the real. Many works of fiction have dealt with this aspect of postmodernity with characteristic irony and pastiche. For example, Ray Bradbury in early 50-ies writes about three-dimension TV sets, which suck in the viewers, gaining full control over them. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* presents characters which are bombarded with a "white noise" of television, product brand names, and clichés. The cyberpunk fiction of William Gibson, Neal Stephenson, and many others use science fiction techniques to address this postmodern, hyper-real information bombardment.

Paranoia is demonstrated most famously and effectively in Heller's *Catch-22*. The sense of paranoia, the belief that there's an ordering system behind the chaos of the world is another recurring postmodern theme. For the postmodernist, no ordering is extremely dependent upon the subject, so paranoia often straddles the line between delusion and brilliant insight.

Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, long-considered a prototype of postmodern literature, presents a situation which may be "coincidence or conspiracy – or a cruel joke". It also may be regarded as adventures in paranoia.

Paranoia often coincides with the theme of techno culture and hyper reality. For example, in *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut, the character Dwayne Hoover becomes violent when he's convinced that everyone else in the world is a robot. He thinks that he is the only human in the Universe. And it creates the source of his paranoia.

10.THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE LAST DECADES OF THE XX CENTURY AND THE FIRST DECADES OF THE XXI CENTURY

10.1.The “return to the sources” in the end of the 20 century:

10.1.1. Frontier experience of American Romanticists in the novels of Thomas Eidson.

The last decades of the XX century saw the return to thematic diversity of American classical literature, mainly to its moral problems studied by famous American Romanticists – J.F. Cooper, N. Hawthorne, H. Melville and others. In this connection we may mention Thomas Eidson (born in 1944) whose books may be regarded as continuation of James Cooper’s pentalogy about Natty Bumppo. His novel “St Agnes’s Stand” was published in 1994 and named not only as that year first Western novel by the Western writers of America but also as the best

Western novel in general. It probes deep into the life of people living on the margin of civilization, or on so called frontier lands. In his novel “All God’s children” (1998) he follows the tradition of American writer Willa Cather (1873-1947) who was highly acclaimed for her novel “My Antonia”, “Oh, pioneers”, “The song of the lark” delineating the life on American frontier lands.

10.1.2 The themes of lonely childhood in Donna Tartt’s novels “The little friend” and “The Goldfinch”.

Donna Tartt (born 1963) is an American novelist and essayist. In her second novel “The little friend” (2002) and her third novel “The Goldfinch” (2013) she studies complex religious, social, psychological problems following the style of Truman Capote (“The Grass harp”) and Harper Lee (“To kill a mocking bird”).In “The little

friend” the main topic is the clash of two worlds: that of children (Harriet and her friend) and that of adults. On the surface the genre of the novel may be characterized as detective but in reality the murderer of heroine’s elder brother Robin is never found. The person, whom Harriet suspects in killing her brother, turns out to be quite innocent at least in this crime. The complicated plot intensifies the conflict between reality and illusion. One of the critics in the article to the journal “The new Republic” described the book as a “tragic fever dream reality”. Though we may add that this reality borders with the world of our illusive thoughts and ideas which do not reflect adequately many happenings of life. Harriet’s perception of what is good and bad is fully wrong and, as a result, it leads first to her nervous breakdown, and, ultimately, to her maturity. The problems of loneliness and friendship, betrayal and salvation are to be found in D. Tartt’s novel “The Goldfinch”.

10.2. New trends in American literature in the first decades of the 21 century:

In the 21st century, American literature still features a strong current of postmodern writing, like the post ironic Dave Eggers’ *A Heart-breaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) and Jennifer Egan’s *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2011). These works, however, also further develop the postmodern form. At the same time it should be accentuated that postmodern form is losing its domineering position. It is difficult to outline the main directions in American 21 century literature. Together with postmodern trend, which reveals itself mainly in science fiction, horror narratives, magical realism, other directions attract the attention of the audience. They are autobiographic genre and memoir literature, literature for children. There also develop quite new tendencies and appear quite new

names.

10.2.1 Junot Díaz

The winner in BBC Culture critics' poll is Junot Díaz's first novel "The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao" (2007). It also was named as the number-one book by the most critics. This book is a mixture of science fiction, fantasy, and psychological thriller. Though this novel incorporates the postmodern techniques -elements of deft mash-up of Dominican history, comics, sci-fi, magic realism, the tone here is quite different, serious. The author reaffirmed the strong connections Latinos maintain with their ancestral homeland's culture, language and history. The leitmotif of the narrative is the questions: Who is American? What is the American experience?" What makes it different from postmodern literature is the search for moral values.

10.2.2. Marilynne Robinson

The return to old moral values may be also found in Marilynne Robinson's trilogy. Marilynne Robinson would seem to embody the peaceful co-existence of contemporary scholarly thought about religion and commitment to religious life. Robinson's narrative strategies in her three novels (Housekeeping, Gilead, and Home) reveal how literary form is related to religious understanding. The basic assumption behind those narrative strategies is that ordinary people have rich and complicated interior lives, that they embody a silent discourse of thought that, if we knew its voice, would astonish us. That assumption enacts a Protestant understanding of inner life, the kind of understanding that, all too recently, defined what scholars thought religion had to look like. Robinson's novels introduce the mental discourse of religious persons while also spinning stories that situate those persons within religious life. Religious discourse and

religious life converge though a formal and thematic feature prominent in Robinson's second and third novels. Both *Gilead* and *Home* are essentially domestic novels. *Gilead* (2004) is the long letter of John Ames, a Congregational minister in the small Iowa town of Gilead, to his young son; *Home* is the story of what happens in Gilead told from a different perspective. The overlapping story is set in 1956. Ames, a long-time widower, has remarried late in life and has a seven-year-old son. In his seventies, with an ailing heart and a bleak prognosis, he writes down all that he would want to have said to his son if he had lived to see the boy grow up. He reflects upon his life and the lives of his father and grandfather, also ministers—through the lens of his theology and his faith, which are tested by the unfolding difficulty on which his meditations converge: the arrival in Gilead of his namesake, John Ames (Jack) Boughton, at once the most beloved son of his friend Robert Boughton and the black sheep of the Boughton family. Robinson's third novel, *Home* (2008), tells this same story from within the Boughton household, from the perspective of Boughton's grown daughter, Glory (narrated in third person, free indirect discourse). While it thus lacks the second-person direct address of *Gilead*, *Home* is overwhelmingly characterized, at the level of the sentence, by verbal address, spoken dialogue prose form largely missing from both *Gilead* and Robinson's first novel, *Housekeeping*. The discourse of relationship that defines both the formal structures of *Home* and *Gilead* and the content of their shared domestic stories, like the commitment to internal voice, is imbued with religious significance; it revolves around what Robinson represents as the problem and the opportunity of religious belief within the life of the family.

Robinson writes seriously and profoundly about religious faith, which has become an almost taboo topic in contemporary literature.

“Robinson is both an ‘ideas’ writer and an exquisite prose stylist, investigating the big questions within the intimate space of family and community. She is also a supremely good storyteller. The human experience delineated here is universal and this book will be read in 100 years.

10.2.3. John Irving

The interest in serious psychological analysis may be found in John Irving’s novel *The Avenue of Mysteries*. (2015). He is an American Canadian novelist, screen writer and short story writer. John Irving was born in 1942 in New Hampshire. He is a prolific writer, and this particular novel is one of his last works. The narrative traces the life of Juan Diego, an aging writer, who travels to the Philippines while struggling with his memories of growing up as a boy. This novel’s plot „evolves from two distinct but mingled storylines. In the present tense, we follow the beloved teacher and novelist Juan Diego Guerrero as he travels from Iowa to the Philippines to fulfill a promise made years ago. But Juan Diego’s heart and the heart of this novel lie far in the past. Prone to frequent spells of dreaming... Juan Diego’s memories of adolescence around 1970 in Oaxaca, Mexico form the other storyline. From the first page to the last, there is a goodness to this novel, a tenacious belief in love and the redemptive power of human connection, unfettered by institutions and conventions. This belief, combined with good old-fashioned storytelling, is surely why Irving is so often described as Dickensian. But John Irving is his own thing, and so is his new novel which is thoroughly modern, accessibly brainy, hilariously eccentric and beautifully human.

10.2.4. Edward P. Jones

Another writer attracted the attention of both critics and readers. He is Edward P Jones *The Known World* (2003). The first novel is set in 1855 on the plantation of Henry Townsend. He was born a slave, but at the period of narration he is a slave-owner. *The Known World* is a triumph of empathy, immersing readers in a complex moral time without making simple judgments. Facing an early death, Townsend ponders the future of his 50-acre Virginia plantation and the slaves he treats the way his former owner, now his mentor, taught him. *The Known World* may be classified as one of the best American novels published in the 21st century – a stunning work about humans experiencing and surviving American slavery”. Jones’s novel has an epic, complex sweep and takes an unflinching and engrossing view of America’s messy history.

10.2.5. Colson Whitehead

Colson Whitehead is the *New York Times* bestselling author. He has produced 11 book-length works—nine novels and two nonfiction works, including a meditation on life in Manhattan in the style of E. B. White's famous 1949 essay *Here Is New York*. Whitehead's books are *The Intuitionist* (1999); *John Henry Days* (2001); *The Colossus of New York* (2003); *Apex Hides the Hurt* (2006); *Sag Harbor* (2009); 2011's *Zone One*, a *New York Times* bestseller; 2016's *The Underground Railroad*, which earned a National Book Award for Fiction; *The Nickel Boys* (2019); *Harlem Shuffle* (2021); and *Crook Manifesto* (2023).

He is a two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, for *The Nickel Boys* and *The Underground Railroad*. Judges of the prize called the novel *The Nickel Boys* “a spare and devastating exploration of abuse at a reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida that is ultimately a powerful

tale of human perseverance, dignity and redemption". *The Underground Railroad*, which also won the National Book Award, was characterized by the Judges of the Pulitzer Prize as "a smart melding of realism and allegory that combines the violence of slavery and the drama of escape in a myth that speaks to contemporary America". In this book he claims that "America is a delusion, the grandest one of all. The white race believes—believes with all its heart--that it is their right to take the land. To kill Indians. Make war. Enslave their brothers. This nation shouldn't exist, if there is any justice in the world, for its foundations are murder, theft, and cruelty. Yet here we are." Whitehead's nonfiction, essays, and reviews have appeared in numerous publications, including *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, and *Harper's*.

10.2.6. Delia Owens

Special attention should be paid to the recently published novel by Delia Owens „Where the crawdads sing“(2018). It's a debut book which immediately became a bestseller. The author is a woman scientist holding a BS in Zoology and a PhD in Animal behaviour. She was a co-author of 3 international bestsellers of nonfiction books about her life as a wildlife scientist in Africa. Besides she is a constant contributor to such worldwide known journals as *Nature*, *International wildlife* and she got a reward for *Nature* writing. In this novel she surveys the desolate marshlands of the North Carolina coast through the eyes of an abandoned child, Kya, doomed to life of solitude and isolation. The girl is a social outcast and that makes her cling to Nature in order to survive. Here we find echoes of different literary sources – Truman Capote's "Grass harp" because of poetic and lyrical style of the novel; Harper Lee's "To kill a mocking bird"

because of delineation of a court trial; Ursula Le Guin's story «She Unnames Them» (1985) because the similarities between the rights of women and animals are implied here. It may be called Ecofeminism as a critical approach that examines the relationship between feminism and ecology, so both works - «She Unnames Them» and “Where the crawdads sing” permit such ecofeminist reading. Both heroines are endowed with the power of intuitive ability – to feel the pulse of Nature. And this testifies to their affinity. We may draw parallels between Delia Owens' work and Theodore Dreiser's “Sister Carry” because of thematic kinship of both novels – the survival of a woman and a defeat of alpha male. We began our Lecture on Modern American literature with Naturalism, a new trend which came to the fore in the beginning of the 20s century. And we were discussing specific traits of American Naturalism revealing the detrimental impact of society on human being. Sister Carry, initially a sympathetic, kind-hearted woman turns into successful though egoistic, selfish person indifferent to sufferings of her former lover. In the same vein Kia, a successful woman follows the laws of Nature in an attempt to preserve her self-identity. In this sense, this novel is more naturalistic than Dreiser's one. Thus the analysis of a centennial development of American literary process brought us to the same phenomena but on a different turn of its onward movement. After decades of postmodern aesthetics domination we observe slow but evident turn to traditional values, morality and humanity. Though on this turn the position of a human being in history, civilization, ecosphere is questioned and re-evaluated.

CONCLUSION

In the beginning of the 20th century American literature continued traditions of realism. At the same time, other methods were widely exploited by national writers: naturalism, psychologism, modernism. American prose enriched the themes of national literature and contributed new genres, imagery and styles of writing to world literature.

A centenarian evolution of poetry proved that there are no boundaries and restrictions for poetic imagination. Nowadays, we can say that in America there are more poets writing and publishing than ever before, but there is also a far more diverse mix of poetic subcultures dividing the available attention of readers. No other country has produced a comparable range of poetry by writers with a greater diversity of backgrounds. Each region of the country celebrates its own school of poets, as does each ethnic and racial group. Poetry anthologies are now devoted to African American poetry, Latino poetry, Asian American poetry, and Native American poetry. Poets of other ethnic identities – including Italian American, Jewish American, and Arab American – are celebrated for their alternative visions of American life, and poetic groupings are made on the basis of such factors as sexual preference and life and work experience (Vietnam veterans, prisoners, children of Holocaust survivors) as well as stylistic and formal considerations (formalist poetry, experimental poetry, mainstream lyric poetry, spoken-word poetry, visual poetry). The same is true about American drama which hardly existed before the beginning of the 20th century. It was only in the second decade of the 20th century that the first new theatres staging one-act plays by national authors appeared. American drama rather

quickly achieved the status of maturity. American playwrights combined the principles of traditional drama technique with those of experimental art. They reflected the major psychological, moral and social problems and contributed greatly to the development of world theatre.

An important role in contemporary American literature is allotted to Gothic genre. Gothic architectonics as well as gothic consciousness though originated in England influenced American literature rather strongly. The term “Gothic” was primarily used in architecture and it introduced the idea of feelings and sufferings. In its initial form the first narrations about supernatural originated as a mechanism to individualize mythology, to deepen its existential content, and to express it in specific imagery. In the second half of the 18th century Gothic Architectonics was a form of opposition to growing rationalism and pragmatism in society. At the same time Gothic novel was a sort of “escapist” literature. Despite its influence on American romantic literature Gothic tradition was substantially transformed here, acquired puritan setting. Neo-Gothic fiction exploited supernatural elements only as specific details, predominantly emphasizing their philosophic and allegoric character. New Gothic prose was an artistic attempt to reflect the inner world of an alienated, frightened individual.

Post-war American literature introduced new trends, genres and movements: anti-militarist prose, “Black humour” fiction, “Beat generation” literature, psychological and intellectual novels. All these trends reflected the most important changes in historical, political, social, religious, and cultural life of the USA. Among the most visible changes in the United States during this span of time was incipience of African-American women prose which contributed greatly to national and world culture.

In the middle of the 60-ies there appears a new trend –Postmodernist literature. It reflects a controversial character of contemporary mentality and culture. On the one hand it rejects all sorts of stereotypes, unification, monism, and revises old notions, concepts, and definitions. On the other hand, it parodies them, shifting their content. The theoretical foundations of Postmodern literature are modern cultural and literary studies as well as studies in linguistic philosophy, post structuralism, semiotics, deconstruction and hermeneutics. Postmodern fiction preaches aesthetic plurality and ambivalence on all the levels – of plot, composition, images, poetics, and micro-structure. It makes use of the whole aesthetic heritage, interpreting it in its own style, for its own purposes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Aldridge J. W. An American novel and the way we live now. – New York. 1983 –VII, 166 p.
2. Anderson G.P Into the Modern. 1896-1945, vol.III /Encyclopaedia of American Literature 1607 to the Present //Revised edition.-2015
3. Atterbery, Brian The fantasy tradition in American Literature. From Irving to Le Guin. – USA, 1980, 212 p.
4. Bigsby, C.W.E. Modern American drama 1945 -2000/ Cambridge University Press, 2004
5. Bode, Carl Highlights of American literature: United States information Agency Washington, Dc.. 20547. - 1988.
6. Boswell, M., Rollyson, C. The contemporary world 1946 to the Present., vol. IV /Encyclopaedia of American Literature 1607 to the Present //Revised edition.-2015
7. Bran Nicol The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction . Cambridge University Press. 2009
8. Handbook of American popular culture. Greenwood press. 1978, Vol. II, 788 p.
Hassan, I. Contemporary American literature. 1945-1972, New York. 1974, 194 p.
9. Hillegas, M. The future as nightmare – New York. -1976, 178 p.
10. Hungerford, A. American Literature and Religion since 1960 .Princeton University Press.2010. 219 p.
11. Gray, R. A history of American Literature. Blackwell publishing. 2004
12. Kennard J. N. Number and Nightmare./ Forms of fantasy in Contemporary science fiction. 1975, 244p.
13. Lorenzo, M.M.G., Zamorano A.I. Modern and contemporary American literature/ Universidad de Educacion a Distancia, Madrid, 20013 -366 p.
- 14.. Malin, Irving New American Gothic. Illinois press, 1962, - 190 p.
15. Pierce H. Ray Bradbury and the Gothic tradition//Writers of the 21st century. – New York -1980, pp. 165-185
16. Puritan tradition in American literature / edited by T. Denisova.- T. Shevchenko

Institute of Literature: Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Kyiv -2004

17. Roth, P. 'Writing American Fiction'.1992

18. Ruskin, John. The nature of Gothic/The stones of Venice// vol. III, London.
2009

19. Voss, Arthur The American short story. Oklahoma, 1975, 400 p.

20. Горенко Олена Антропонімичний вимір постмодерної літератури. ЗУІ ім.
Ференца Ракоці II , Берегове-Ужгород, 2020. – 92с.

Горенко Олена Павлівна, Баняс Наталія Юліанівна, 2026: «Modern American Literature» навчальний посібник з дисципліни «Зарубіжна література XX-XXI ст. (Література США)» (для студентів II курсу МА ОПП 035 Філологія (мова і література англійська). Берегове: Закарпатський угорський університет імені Ференца Ракоці II. – 121 с. (англійською мовою)

«Modern American Literature» навчальний посібник з дисципліни «Зарубіжна література XX-XXI ст. (Література США)» для студентів II курсу МА ОПП 035 Філологія (мова і література англійська). Метою викладання навчальної дисципліни «Зарубіжна література XX-XXI ст. (Література США)» є розкриття закономірностей літературного процесу США у XX-XXI століттях, з'ясування своєрідності розвитку літературного процесу цих країн, поглиблення знань з теорії літератури та вміння аналізувати й інтерпретувати художні твори в контексті сучасних літературознавчих і культурологічних тенденцій.

Шрифт «Times New Roman».

Розмір сторінок: А4 (210х297мм).

Обсяг в авторських аркушах: 5.55 (221 944 знаків із пробілами).