

Deanship of Graduate Studies

Al-Quds University

*The Impact of Politics on Selected
Classical American Novels*

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M. A. Thesis

2009

*The Impact of Politics on Selected
Classical American Novels*

By

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B.E: Mechanical Engineering, the University of Karachi

B.A: English Language

*Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree
of Master of Arts in Regional studies / American Studies Program.*

Al Quds University

2009



American Studies Program
Regional Studies
Deanship of Graduate Students

The Impact of Politics on selected classical American Novels

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Master thesis submitted and accepted, Date: 10th November 2009

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2009

Declaration

I hereby declare that the suggested thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts from the American Studies Program at Al Quds University will be the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that this particular topic, as far as I know, has not been submitted to any other university or any academic institution.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Majdi Hamayel for his assistance and guidance in suggesting this controversial topic for me to write about. He has advised me to do my own investigation and research for the sake of submitting a thesis that may contribute effectively in the study of THE IMPACT OF POLITICS ON SELECTED CLASSICAL AMERICAN NOVELS.

In addition, my sincere thanks to Professor Mohammad S. Dajani who taught me how to invest in any report or short paper that I might have done for the purpose of benefiting from them in the future researches. I also, would like to thank Dr. Barakat Fawzi who has guided me in submitting this research proposal. Nevertheless, the opinions that are going to be expressed in this thesis will be my own and would not reflect the view of my supervisor or Al Quds University.

Abstract

This research studies the impact of politics on selected classical novels. The study also complies with the boundaries and limitations to cover the selected literary genre from the beginning of the Twentieth Century to the beginning of the Twenty-first century with America as the specific geographic area and the venue of the consecutive events the selected novels describe. Thus, the study can claim to have maintained both the unities of time and place as two major components required for research success.

Moreover, the study has systematically set out the limited research objectives including:

1. Familiarizing the reader with the major writer and thinkers in the American literature in the Twentieth Century and the effect of politics on that literature.
2. Discussing and analyzing the development and evolution of the American literature through ages.
3. Appreciating the literary texts that represent this respective literary area.
4. To as far as possible correlate social changes and evolution of the form, techniques, styles, subject-matter, and visions of the American literature.
5. Making conclusion on the nature of the development of American literature such as analogies, comparisons, contrast, or just outlining of affinities between the literary studies and readers' own ideas.

The research problem is clearly stated to suit the Middle Eastern student readers who might benefit from being exposed to the major American novels that have been chosen for this study. Besides, the chronological style the researcher has adopted in introducing the selected novels starting from the beginning of the Twentieth century and the World War I literature to the important literary works of the sixties provided the research with vivid examples and representations of various historical events that have been reflected in the selected literary works.

The study is a quantitative descriptive research that comprises research hypothesis and research questions whose answers constitute the essence of the research itself. Hence, the primary concern of this study is to discuss the impact of politics of the perspective eras on the selected classical novels in addition to an exploration of the importance of economics in the life of the American people in the post-war period.

The importance of the study lies in the role of politics, as reflected in the selected novels, on the life of Americans during the period in which the selected novels were written. So, students who might read the research would benefit from the descriptive historical facts included in those literary works.

Data have been collected from various sources including literary references such as books, magazines, films, and critical analyses of the selected novels and biographical notes of their authors. Besides, a host of social, political, and economical references have been surveyed. The data have been analyzed following a pattern of categorizing, synthesizing, and thereafter finding answers to the research questions.

The researcher has extensively surveyed the relevant literature and utilized relevant knowledge from different sources to provide supports, exemplifications, and vivid descriptions of historical, social, and political impacts on the American society that have representations in the selected novels.

Finally, the study concludes with a special chapter on the research finding that confirm the mutual effect and impacts on each other. The chapter also comprises a section on recommendations for further studies to be conducted in the same area of relevant areas of literary research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Flanked by two World Wars the period between 1915 and 1945 was one of the most eventful phases in the American experience. The 1920s, or the roaring twenties as they were called was a decade of quick wealth glamour and "a flaming youth" which ended in a stock market crash in (1929) then the depression set in and (1930s) brought poverty, social unrest and ultimately despair.¹

This period was followed by WWII in which many American Soldiers had witnessed bombing and the destruction of cities, concentration camps and the atomic bomb. This gave rise to a change of values and the new cultural, social and political development. WWII ended the period of depression and the post war between East and West – present possibility of nuclear warfare, tend down the euphoric mood which pervaded the period.²

The fear of communist influence in American politics and culture was a constant concern and contributed to fresh anxiety. The involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War led to much concern and had a divisive effect on American society with many protest marches against American policy and the detention of protesting citizens by the government. Were American troops were finally withdrawn from Southeast Asian in (1973).³

Post-World War poets rebelled against the conventional poetry of the Victorian age and turned for inspiration to the early literary revolutionaries like Walt Whitman and Stephen crane, the forerunners of modernism. Poetry movement gained momentum in the (1920s), or the jazz age, as the period was also referred to a period of drastic social change. The change in the traditional role of women, the development of science and technology and a new interest in values caused by war, fueled hops of the possibility of new horizons in poetry. T.S Eliot for instance, portrayed the spiritual loss and emptiness of an industrialized civilization. Poets also became interested in their native culture. Many turned to the folk culture of the American Indians for inspiration.⁴

Another important movement of the 20s was the Harlem Renaissance (the Negro Movement) was awakening of a new racial consciousness among black writers and artists. Their quest for fresh literary techniques and forms was but continuation of their long struggle against racism and oppression and for the affirmation of their African heritage among these writers were Langston Hughes, Claude Mckay and Jean Toomer.⁵

Changes were also introduced into fiction. As early in (1919), Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) tried to get into his characters mind by concentrating on emotionally crucial moments rather than on event. The stream of consciousness narration became more widely spread and the technique was used by several American writers among whom was Katherine Annporter (1890-1980) in her short story "*The Jilting of Granny Weather All*" (1930).⁶

¹ Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 2, 4th ed, p. 1015

² Ibid, pp. 1016 – 17

³ Ibid, p. 1020

⁴ Hayden, Robert. "*Poetry in the Modern Temper*" *United States in Literature*, ed. by James E. Miller, pp. 442 – 43

⁵ Ibid, p. 445

⁶ "*Panorama and Summary*". Norton, p. 1037

A writer who was concerned with the effect of modernity on the culture and identity of the southerners both black and white was, William Faulkner (1897-1962). His style is more poetical and complex than Hemingway's: he delved into the stream of consciousness of his character and traced the flow of their thoughts: the novel *"The Sound and The Fury"* (1929) is an example. Other southern writers Eudora Welty, Richard Wright (1908-1960). Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was interested in the spiritually and physical wounded "Lost Generation" of the war who wandered aimlessly around Europe seeking pleasure in the moment and searching for some meaning to their lives Hemingway portrayed the lost generation in his; *"The Sun Also Rises"* (1926) his style is telegraphic and direct with short sentence and simple words, other works, A *"Farewell to Arms"* (1929), *"The Green Hills of Africa"* (1935). *"For whom the Bell Tolls"* (1940) and *"The Old Man and the Sea"* (1952). Hemingway was also notable for his short stories which depict a world of war and violence, and brutality, big – game hunting, prize fighters and drinking. Among these are *"The Snow of Kilimanjaro"*, *"The Capital of the World"* and *"The Grapes of Wrath"*⁷ (1939) by John Steinbeck (1902-1968) was the most powerful protest novel of the 1930s, the Depression. It traced the exodus a family of Oklahoma farmers from their ancestral home driven by drought to migrate to California where they suffer mistreatment and exploitation. The novel is an incident of deteriorating social mores.⁸

After WWII many writers became preoccupied with the recent war. There was a succession of war novels including Norman Mailer *"The Naked and The Dead"* and Irwin Shaw *"The Young Lions"*.

Southern writers continued to show the effect of changing social pattern on the South. These included Carson McCullers, Flanner Oconnor, Robert Penn Warren, William Styron, Truman Capote and Alic Wallker. And Ralph Ellison *"Invisible Man"* (1952) which foreshadows the ghetto riots of the 1960s. Other novelist turned to the satire of the middle-class. As tension mounted among the blacks, the civil right movement gained momentum in the mid-fifties spurred by leaders like Martin Luther King *"Letter from Birmingham Jail"* (1963)⁹ and product a literature of protest.

The period also witnessed the growth of the Beatles, middle class youth who 'dropped out' of the system and who gave rise to a new wave of literature. They foreshadowed the hippies of the 60s.

Jack Kerouac's *"On the Road"* (1957) records the wandering of young drop-out in search of the meaning for their lives beyond the rat-race of their class. They cultivated the attitude of 'cool' and ironic detachment from the social mores governing the middle-class. The American involvement in Vietnam beginning in 1965 shattered the optimism in faith in peaceful reform of the Kennedy era.

⁷ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 668

⁸ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 6, pp. 1888 – 89

⁹ Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 – 1968) is probably the most prominent black civil right leader.

His famous speech in which King said: "I have a dream that this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed, 'we hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.'" The quotation within quotation is the opening sentence of the American Declaration of Independence.

James Goldwin's "*The First Next Time*" (1963) is a militant commentary on culture while Joseph Heller's "*Catch-22*" (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut's "*Slaughter House Five*" (1969) showed up in the insanity of war.

Later novelists who experimented with new techniques included John Barth and Thomas Pynchon. The sixties also saw significance new development in the genre of science fiction.¹⁰

1.2 Research Boundary

The time boundary of the research is from the beginning of twentieth century (1900) to the beginning of the Twenty-First century. With America as a specific geographic boundary for this research.

I will use several different parts of the world as supporting examples for the hypothesis. However, the focus in this study is mainly on the USA.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To familiarize the reader with major writers and thinkers in the American Literature in the 20th century, and the effect of politics on that literature.
2. To discuss and analyze the development, and evolution of the American literature through ages.
3. To appreciate the literary texts that represent this respective literary era.
4. To as far as possible interrelations between social changes and evolution of the form, techniques, styles, subject matter and visions of America literature.
5. Make conclusion on the nature of the development of American literature: make analogies, comparisons, contrasts, or just outlining of affinities between the literary studied and readers' own ideas.

1.4 Research Problem

For Middle Eastern students with very limited exposure to this literature, it should be mainly the major writers aforementioned.

Confined to, this research offers selected pieces of literary works from major and minor writers roughly in a chronological order starting from pre-WWI (World War I) literature to the important literary works of the sixties.

¹⁰ Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. D, 7th ed., p. 1022

1.5 Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the impact of politics on selected classical American novels?
Why did it become more needed in that period of time?
2. How was politics employed in different genres of literature?
3. What are the short comings of this approach?
4. Would these American novels be considered as a useful tool in enriched other nation literatures?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The primary concern of this study is to discuss the impact of politics on selected classical novels, and the importance of politics and economics in the life of the American people start from the begging.

Many writer's and several studies have shown the importance of politics on the American literature in the 20th century especially on novels.¹¹

The crucial elements of the development of the politics are:

1. The writers themselves.
2. The conditions of the country particularly during an emergency or crisis.

The appropriate use of literature at the appropriate time in responding to surfacing challenges and crisis, provide the novelists with the necessary materials needed to practice their talents.

Therefore, the concentration in this paper will be placed on explaining the relationship between the politics of the U.S. and the varying methods of solving crisis encountered by each novelist.

The second hypothesis is politics can be more effective when it is coupled with other literature genres arbitration.¹²

Because Politics when is used as the sole approach, literature would often be doomed to failure when employed, and when considering the other factors effect on politics itself. The

¹¹ Ross, Mitchell S. *The Literary Politician*, p. 3

¹² Louis, Vernon. *Main Currents in American Thoughts*, Vol. 11, p. 129

chance of solving dispute in such a case, will be more possible if the study shifts at a large scale of politics to "politics, economics and social life".

In other words politics can be more effective if coupled with economies, social life and so. It becomes more binding to disputing other ways of life.¹³

Politics only, was used in this research so the study is limited, the only possible way to solve this complicated case is through adopting politics and other measure, the only obstacle, however, is that it can't function successfully unless we present (portrays) the other daily life activates into this research.

The third hypothesis is that politics by itself is not enough to make a full useful study and to achieve the goals wanted from this study if we dropped other genres of literature such as (poetry, drama, short stories, etc).

Politics will not be able always to enforce it demands on the literature as a whole if we didn't take (dropped) other genres in consideration.

Therefore, the result will not be satisfactory and this means that politics would hardly be the main element of the effect of novel.

So, five basic genres of literature shall be treated the short story, poetry, non-fiction prose, drama, and novel. In making selections, the level of difficulty, as well as significance was kept in mind so that non-native speakers will be able enjoy their encounter with American literature and to take it seriously.

1.7 Research Significance

The importance of this research lies in investigating the role of politics in selected classical American novels. The role of politics on peoples life socially and economically, the value of studying this approach is that the researchers would be able to investigate the effectiveness and the appropriateness of such an approach in their own backyard. Also, this study should be very beneficial for students' interest.¹⁴

1.8 Research Description

American Literature in the 20th century. The novel is not new to you since you have the conception with the short story, the sister of the novel in the family of fiction. In addition to this similarity, they have the same aspect of elements in common: point of view, setting, characterization, plot, etc. Yet the novel is considered the most important genre by critics and scholars, both in America and worldwide. The novel in America started in imitation of British novel. Then it established itself independently at the hands of Hawthorne and

¹³ Thayer, William Roscoe. *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, Vol. II, p. 4

¹⁴ "20th Century American Literature", ed. by Dr. Taisser Zaid Al-Kailani, p. ii

Melville in the New England renaissance. In the post - WWI era it developed not only independently but also it began to influence novel writing on the international level.¹⁵

Now many American novels are translated into all kind of languages all over the world. Moreover, a good number have been made into films seen in every corner of the globe. Now television is doubling the number of eager viewers avidly waiting for each episode. Actually it's the novel, more than any genre that helped to give American literature, and culture, the international reputation and status it enjoys today.¹⁶

The literary politician has emerged as a notable type in our times because politics in America has assumed a heightened importance since the Second World War.

Circumstance - most nobly, wars – have born heavily on peoples' minds. Intellectuals are subject to the same alarms in everyone else. The respond to them with more refined sensitivities than ordinary politicians, however, and their refinement is what captivates their audiences.

The work of literary politicians joins personal experience to political occurrence, it is likely to be full of a surprises. His task is that act of public education so often wrongly listed among the duties of the professional politician.

The purpose of the professional politician is to gain and maintain office; the purpose of the literary politician is to explain the people to the people. This makes him one of the most powerful un-anointed officials of the Republic.¹⁷

1.9 Research Tools & Requirements

The study will depend mainly on valuable reference and all other research resources. It will, however, collect most of the information from books, magazines, and films. It will also deal with politics and of its effect on the 20th century American literature selected novels.

1.10 Research Limitation

Although this study focuses precisely on the impact of politics on selected classical American novels, it was not easy to overlook the role of the personality of the novelists' play, in addition there are different factors that affect the novelists, such as their background and the circumstances which they lived in.

The study does not explore in depth the influence of events that the novelist assumes as a result of being a writer.

Moreover, studying the impact of politics on the American novel allows for the involvement of different variables, and the correlation between them affect the amount of power exercised by the writer.

¹⁵ Spiller, E. Robert. *The Cycle of American Literature*, p. VII

¹⁶ The Last Time I Saw Paris. Dir. Richard Brooks. Based on novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Julius J. Epstein.

¹⁷ Ross, Mitchell S. *The Literary Politicians*, pp. 4 – 5

The limitations also include the lack of references. It was difficult to obtain original references from the libraries available in the country, particularly recently written books in the field of the literature.

1.11 Research Methodology / Typed Research

The study will use the historical method by collecting all information possible and the descriptive analytical method in describing the events and the effect of politics on the events which occurred.

1.12 Background

1.12.1 Beginnings

The development of any literary genre is organically related to the development at all other genres, because development is the study of the growth of the same under the impact of circumstances. Since our research is the impact of politics on selected classical American novels. The circumstances are the same: the same wars, the same stock market crash, the same literary and critical schools, etc.

1.12.2 The Novel between the Two Wars

The fiction of the period between the end of the nineteenth century and 1920 was basically a reflection of the long - established Victorian values of American life. World War I exploded such ideas. The optimism, stability, humanitarianism and progress, which were the values of the Victorian period proved to be fake. No wonder the literature of the twenties, and actually the literature after WWI, is described as the literature of disenchantment.¹⁸ The protagonist of Fitzgerald's "*This Side of Paradise*" (1920) lamented that he had "grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all the faith in man shaken".

Naturally, the novel, like other literary genres, portrayed this disenchantment in the subject matter and sought innovations in its techniques.

In spite of the disillusion the war caused, was one of the richest decades in American literature in this century. It is the decade which gave birth to Fitzgerald's "*The Great Gatsby*" (1925) in which Jay Gatsby's illusion too. The same decade produced, in addition, Hemingway's "*The Sun Also Rises*" (1926) and "*Farewell to Arms*" (1929),¹⁹ which look at another sector of life in the twenties, the sector of war and its aftermath.

This matter of war distinguishes these works from Fitzgerald's flappers and philosophers (1920) and "*Tales of the Jazz Age*" which earned their author the title of the spokes man of the Jazz Age, its reckless youth and wild parties. In the same decade Faulkner published his masterpiece the "*Sound and the Fury*" (1929) and "*Light in August*" (1932).

¹⁸ "*The Human Will*" (Editor Title). From *Writers in Crisis: The American Novel Between Two Wars* by Maxwell Geismar, pp. 46 – 47

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 49

The richness of this decade is seen in the range of diversity between Hemingway and Faulkner in term of subject matter and style.²⁰

Hemingway's style is simple, direct, avoids adjectives and abstract words, in short, it is a simple style. Faulkner's style is the opposite. Where as Hemingway took his subject matter from the war, hunting, bullfighting in Spain, Italy and Africa, Faulkner concentrated on the impact of modern life and economic changes on the south, its values, traditions and identity.²¹

In term of technique, the novel of this decade deliberately disrupted and twisted the time and honored the chronological time sequence. They emphasized the buried life, especially moments which are highly charged with emotions. You can see good example of this in Arthur Miller's "*Death of a Salesman*".

In the buried life, the events of the past, (memories) chronological time sequence is disrupted.

The decade 1919 to 1929 with its phenomenal outburst of literate achievement, was also a period of great promise of economic growth unknown so far. Unfortunately this promise came to a sudden disastrous end in 1929 with the shocking crash of the stock market and the great depression which followed in the thirties.²²

The great expectation in economic prosperity of the twenties resulted in massive unemployment, poverty, hunger, broken homes and hopes; this heightened the social awareness and sense of public responsibility among the writers of the period.²³

No wonder that leftist ideas, Marxism with its promise spread among writers and that the thirties were labeled "*The Red Decade*" John Steinbeck did his best in this decade, "*The Grapes of Wrath*" (1939), tells the tragic story of Oklahoma farmers in their epic search for jobs, land to cultivate and dignity.²⁴

Farrell's stud Lonigam (1935) and J.Dos pesso's USA (1937) are bitter and angry books which fit their angry decade.

In the first part of the decade William Faulkner wrote a large part of his best work, which dramatize the tragedy of the south "*A Rose for Emily*", its violence and its sharp conflict between old and new values.

Faulkner prose could be crystal clear, but at his most ambitions he constructed, a highly involved syntax to represent the complexities that man must disentangle. Read as metaphors (encyclopedia Americana, Vol. I).²⁵

²⁰ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 2, pp. 671 – 74

²¹ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 3, p. 902

²² McQuade, Donald. *The Harper American Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 1868

²³ Ibid, pp. 1869 – 72

²⁴ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 6, pp. 1893 – 94

²⁵ Encyclopedia of Americana, Vol. 1

The communistic / leftist trend did not last long in the canon of the American literature it became weaker and weaker as the totalitarian practices of the soviet regime became known, and with the signing on the Russo - German pact in (1939). In addition, the breaking of the WWII put an end to the radicalism of the thirties.²⁶

1.12.3 The Novel since WWII

The response of literature to WWII was slow in contrast with the spectacular literary reaction following WWI. The work of young writer of fiction who appeared during war didn't show their inspiration and depth of WWI generation. During this war the world saw the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; such things affected the fiction of WWII period.²⁷

Two of the most interesting war novels are Norman Mailers (a war veteran) "*The Naked and the Dead*" (1948) and James Johns "*From Here to Eternity*" (1951) both of which show naturalistic strains.

I have to mention more novelists for their importance, such as:

Robert Pen Warren's "*All the Kings Men*" (1946), J.D Salinger's "*The Catcher in the Rye*" (1951), Ralph Ellison's "*Invisible Man*" (1952).

1.13 Definition of Terms

Note:

Items in this glossary of the research are taken from Holman et al., a Handbook of literature, New York Macmillan, 1986 and M.H. Abrams, a Glossary of Literary, Terms, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971.

Antagonist:

The character in fiction or drama who stands directly opposed to the protagonist.
A rival or opponent of the protagonist.²⁸

Protagonist:

The Protagonist is the chief character in a play, novel, short story or film. He is leading figure both in terms of importance and in terms of the ability to enlist interest and sympathy.²⁹

Genre:

A kind of literary or artistic work.

²⁶ Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. D, 7th ed., p. 1023

²⁷ Ibid, p. 1025

²⁸ Holman, Hugh et al. *A Handbook of Literature*, 1986

²⁹ M.H., Abrams. *A Glossary of Literary*, 1971

Impressionism:

A theory or style of painting originating and developed in France during the 1870s, characterized by concentration on the immediate visual impression produced by a scene and by the use of unmixed primary colors and small strokes to simulate actual reflected light.

A Literary Style Characterized by the use of details and mental associations to evoke subjective and sensory impressions rather than the re-creation of objective reality.

Term generally Applied to a movement in art in France in the late 19th century. The movement gave rise to such ancillaries as American Impressionism. The primary use of the term Impressionist is for a group of French painters who worked between around 1860 and 1900, especially to describe their works of the later 1860s to mid-1880s. These artists include Edgar Degas, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Camille Pissarro, Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley, as well as Mary Cassatt, Gustave Caillebotte (who was also an important early collector), Eva Gonzales, Armand Guillaumin and Stanislas Lepine. The movement was anti-academic in its formal aspects and involved the establishment of venues other than the official Salon for showing and selling paintings.³⁰

Naturalism:

1. Factual or realistic representation, especially:
 - a. The practice of describing precisely the actual circumstances of human life in literature.
 - b. The practice of reproducing subjects as precisely as possible in the visual arts.
2.
 - a. A movement or school advocating such precise representation.
 - b. The principles and methods of such a movement or of its adherents.
3. *Philosophy*: The system of thought holding that all phenomena can be explained in terms of natural causes and laws.
4. *Theology*: The doctrine that all religious truths are derived from nature and natural causes and not from revelation.
5. Conduct or thought prompted by natural desires or instincts.

Naturalism A theatrical style sometimes called "realism," it began as a rebellion against the romantic artificialities of much 19th century theatre. Initially such early exponents as Emile Zola conceived it as simply offering an unadulterated "slice of life" with all theatrical glossing over of hard facts removed and with only limited concern, if any, about the necessity of presenting such views in "well - made" plays. However, it soon came to be perceived, at least popularly, as unswerving portrayals of the seamiest side of existence. "Gorky's *The Lower Depths*" is often cited as the classic example. Those who separate realism from naturalism often suggest that the former is more selective and therefore has to be more carefully contrived, and they offer the best plays of Ibsen as instances. Naturalism is often seen as a heightened form of realism with all five senses involved. David Belasco's productions with dirt on the floor and live chickens on stage were the most obvious examples. O'Neill's sea plays or his "*The Iceman Cometh*" and some of the "living

³⁰ <http://www.answers.com/topic/impressionism>

newspapers" of the 1930s were later examples. Some more recent New York productions that involved naturalism might include "*American Buffalo*" (1977), "*Talley's Folly*" (1980), and several of August Wilson's dramas.

Literature:

Aesthetic movement of the late 19th to early 20th century. The movement was inspired by the principles and methods of natural science, especially Darwinism, which were adapted to literature and art. In literature, naturalism extended the tradition of realism, aiming at an even more faithful, pseudoscientific representation of reality, presented without moral judgment. Characters in naturalistic literature typically illustrate the deterministic role of heredity and environment on human life. The movement originated in France, where its leading exponent was Émile Zola. In America it is associated with the work of writers such as Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser. Visual artists associated with naturalism chose themes from life, capturing subjects unposed and not idealized, thus giving their works an unstudied air. Following the lead of the Realist painter Gustave Courbet, painters chose themes from contemporary life, and many deserted the studio for the open air, finding subjects among peasants and tradespeople, capturing them as they found them. As a result, finished canvases had the freshness and immediacy of sketches. Zola, the spokesman for literary naturalism, was also the first to champion Édouard Manet and the Impressionists (*see* Impressionism). While naturalism was short-lived as a historical movement, it contributed to art an enrichment of realism, new areas of subject matter, and a largeness and formlessness that was closer to life than to art. Its multiplicity of impressions conveyed the sense of a world in constant flux.³¹

Point of View:

This term signifies the way a story gets told the perspective established by an author through which the reader is presented with the characters, actions, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. Here is a simple classification of points of view:

1. Third-person point of view
2. The omniscient point of view
3. The narrator knows everything he needs to know, he is entirely free to move in time and place, and he knows a character's thoughts and feeling in addition to his appearance and actions
4. The limited point of view: The narrator confines himself to what is experienced, thought, felt or done by a single character or at most by a very limited number of characters within the story
5. First-person point of view: This mode limits the point of view to what the first-person narrator himself knows, experiences, infers or can find out by talking to other characters³²

Realism:

In the broadest sense, realism is simply fidelity to actuality in its representation in literature. In this sense it has been a significant element in almost every school of writing in human

³¹ <http://www.answers.com/topic/naturalism>

³² <http://www.answers.com/topic/points-of-view>

history. In more limited terms, it is the movement which arose in the nineteenth century, at least partially in reaction against romanticism, which was centered in the novel and dominant in France, England, and America from roughly mid century to the closing decade, when it was replaced by naturalism. Realism can be thought of as the ultimate of middle-class art, and it finds its subjects in bourgeois life and manners. The surface details, the common actions, and the minor catastrophes of a middle class society constituted the chief subject matter of the movement.³³

Stream of Consciousness:

In literature, technique that records the multifarious thoughts and feelings of a character without regard to logical argument or narrative sequence. The writer attempts by the stream of consciousness to reflect all the forces external and internal, influencing the psychology of a character at a single moment. The technique was first employed by Edouard Dujardin (1861-1949) in his novel "*Les Lauriers Sont Coupés*" (1888) and was subsequently used by such notable writers as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner. The phrase "*Stream of Consciousness*" to indicate the flow of inner experience was first used by William James in "*Principles of Psychology*" (1890).

1. A literary technique that presents the thoughts and feelings of a character as they occur
2. *Psychology*: The conscious experience of an individual regarded as a continuous, flowing series of images and ideas running through the mind³⁴

Existentialism:

The term existentialism was coined after WWI to designate a philosophical literary and psychological movement which embraces a variety of styles and convictions.

However, its one constant characteristic is, as indicated by the origin of the word, is concern for human existence, especially for the affirmation of freedom and refusal to subordinate personal self-awareness to abstract concepts or dehumanizing social structures. It represents rebellion against established ideas and institutions that inhibit personal freedom and negate responsibility. These are some of the basic ideas of existentialism as they appear in Sartre's formulation. Firstly, man is not the product of external forces or circumstances as many philosophers had assumed. Theories and abstractions cannot cope with this basic fact. Man's fate and character are not determined in advance by God or society. Thirdly, Man is a being who, though enmeshed in the external world, is capable of working out his own destiny and shaping human history and is totally responsible for all his choices and values.

There are various trends in existentialism and various philosophers Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Albert Camus, and others. I emphasized Sartre and his ideas because his literary works helped the spread of this philosophy and your main interest is literary.³⁵

³³ <http://www.answers.com/topic/realism>

³⁴ <http://www.answers.com/topic/stream-of-consciousness>

³⁵ <http://www.answers.com/topic/existentialism>

Satire:

Satire is a literary manner that blends a critical attitude with humor and wit for the purpose of improving human institutions or humanity. True satirists are conscious of the fragility of human institutions and attempt through laughter not so much to tear them down as to inspire a remodeling. Satire is of two major types: formal or direct satire in which the satire voice speaks, usually in the first person, either directly to the reader or to a character in the satiric piece of writing; and indirect satire, in which the satire is expressed through a narrative and the characters or groups who are the butt are ridiculed not by what is said about them but by what they themselves say and do.

Formal satire is fundamentally of two types, named for its distinguished classical practitioners: Horatian Satire is gentle, urbane, smiling; it aims to correct by gentle and broadly sympathetic laughter, Juvenalian is biting, bitter, angry; it points with contempt and moral indignation to the corruption and evil of human being and institutions.³⁶

³⁶ M. H., Abrams. *A Glossary of Literature*, 1971

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Colonial Period (1607 – 1765)

There seems now to be little doubt in the minds that the United States has produced, during the twentieth century, a distinctive literature worthy to take its place with the great literatures of other times and other people.

There is no similar agreement on the reasons for this, or for the apparently sudden cultural maturity of a people which, throughout nearly two centuries of political independence, has thought of itself as heterogeneous and derivative in its racial and cultural make-up.

American writings of the past quarter-century give evidence of a literary renaissance which could come only from a long tradition and a unified culture.

This literary renaissance, the second to occur in the United States, must have both a history and a pattern of relationship within itself. As yet it has not been clearly defined or understood, because literary historians have failed to comprehend it as an organic whole.

The theory of literary history which was most generally held during the 19th century proposed that, because almost all of the literature produced by citizens of the United States was written in English, and because literature is expression and can presumably be best described by the language in which it is expressed, American literature is, and always will be, a branch of English literature. The consequences of this theory was that undue emphasis was placed on the colonial period, on that part of the United States which most successfully preserved in British characteristics, New England, and on those authors, like Irving and Howells, who discovered ways of using American "materials" without greatly violating British properties.³⁷

The history of America started with Settlement of Jamestown in 1607. Since the literature of a country is intimately connected with its history, we have to go right back to the earliest times for an understanding of American literature. True be belles-lettres or literature of a purely aesthetic sense came to be written in America only by about the close of the 18th century.

It is urged that the early writers were all Englishmen and hence what they wrote cannot be included in American writings. But as M. G. Tyler says, "Notwithstanding their English birth these first writers in America were Americans. We may not exclude them from our history of American Literature. They founded that literature, they are its Fathers, they stamped their spiritual lineaments upon it, and we shall never deeply enter into the meanings of American Literature in its later forms without tracing it back affectionately to its begging with them."³⁸

³⁷ Spiller, E. Robert. *The Cycle of American Literature*, p. VII

³⁸ Weinstein, Allen and Rubell, David. *"The Story of America" Freedom and Crisis from Settlement to Supper Power*, p. 346

It must also be remembered that though Captain John Smith, William Bradford and Mrs. Bradstreet, Edward Taylor all came from England. They wrote in an altogether new setting, and what they wrote naturally was influenced by their environment. America has lent its colour and stamp upon their works and hence they belong legitimately to American literature though England can claim it as her own by right of nationality.

Engrossed as they were in the mighty task of building a commonwealth free from tyrannical rule of kings, these hardy pioneers did not care much for writing belles-letters. But the accounts of travel, the descriptions of the land, and faithful reports of colonial life, throb with their pride in what they were doing. They reflect their aspirations and hopes, the trails and the set-backs of those who were fighting against the wilderness. It is in these writings of the first stage in American literary history that we find how, as James Russell Lowell puts it, the nation grew:

*Strong thro' shifts, an' wants an' pains,
Nursed by stern men with empires in their brains.*

Colonial American literature depicts the dangerous adventure, the hard work and difficult decisions that went into the process of building a nation.³⁹

Moreover in the pages of the early books we discover something important the basic ingredients that make up the American character. The American spirit is made up largely of courage, industry and optimism, characteristics that in spite of men and omen with confidence in attacking any problem that may arise. The hardships of living conditions, Indian attacks, sickness and starvation are from the beginning reflected in the pages of Smith, Bradford and Winthrop. That despite innumerable dangers, the colonists flourished is a tribute to their courage and tenacity. Their writings, therefore, form an important saga in American history. The effect of puritanism lingered long after the puritan movement expired in the 18th century. It impregnated the new enthusiastic religions which arose in that century and continued as a living force in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Northern abolitionists showed all the characteristics of puritanism, which have still been in evidence in the crusades for temperance, reform and world peace in our own time. "Hence it is only sensible that a student of American literary thought should trace it from the very beginning." Our colonial literature became a great reservoir of material and inspiration for that of the 19th century, for readers today it still provides an understanding of those bedrock American experiences which developed the national character and our peculiarly American institutions.⁴⁰

Moreover American thought and conduct today reflect points of view and patterns of reasoning which antedate the Revolution. No living American whatever his descent has wholly escaped the literature of the May Flower compact, Poor Richard Almanac and the Declaration of Independence. To trace the roots of American literary tradition, we have to go right back to the colonial period.

³⁹ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, p. 13

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 14

What is termed colonial period in American history extends from 1607 to 1765. During these years the literary output in America was scanty. That a group of people who had their cultural lien in Europe should have given so little thought to literary composition seems rather strange till we look into the factors that conditioned life in these early American Settlements.

To the pioneer settlers, survival was the first and most vital problem. To fight against the wilderness, to convert a rugged forest into cultivable land, to hold out against adverse forces, elemental and otherwise were some of their gripping problems which shut out from their minds thoughts of literary composition. Lack of leisure, therefore, chiefly accounts for the lack of a literature of a high order.

Moreover as sharers of the cultural tradition of England, the colonists did not feel the urge to create a literature of their own that could view with that of England and of Europe. They felt that they still belonged culturally to the old world and could still receive sustenance from their parent country. It was only much later, after the winning of political independence that America felt the need for weaning herself culturally from England.

Great literature is often the result of a sense of oneness; of a spirit of nationality which the heterogeneous settlers of America were yet to feel, Mrs. Stowe has said, "The literature of a people must spring from the sense of its Nationality." This sense of nationality was not felt by the colonists who still thought of themselves as part of England or of Europe. The fusion in the "melting pot" that Crèvecoeur describes took place later and this is seen unmistakably in the very fibre of American literature of the Revolutionary period.⁴¹

If the bustle and activity of the colonial period gave little time for the writer to write, it is equally true that it gave the public little leisure to read. No writer can thrive in an indifferent medium. Literary compositions of merit are made possible by the response and encouragement from the reading public. In colonial America, the reading of the people was confined to the Bible and the prayer book and the few books that were brought from England. Facilities for printing were negligible and there was scant inducement for the early American to write. Whenever he wrote he did so for the sake of the Englishmen and his writings were to be published in England. Only three things prompted the colonial writer to take up his pen. One was the desire to record important events and to provide their families and friends with an account of personal experiences. Much of the writings of Bradford and John Smith are the result of this. Second was the motive of propaganda. Glowing accounts of the land were written so that the English people might be lured in larger numbers to America, this land of milk and honey.

"Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation" wrote John Smith, founder of Virginia. William Penn wrote "the air is sweet and clear, the heavens serene." The spaciousness and the grandeur of this new continent, the richness of its natural resources, the promise it held for the future are all mirrored in the writings of this period.

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 110

John Smith's writings give evidence to another important thing. It is the Voyager's obsession, a Renaissance obsession to make the new world a part of the old.⁴²

The third factor behind the colonial urge to write was the puritan's inordinate appetite for religious writings. Sharing Milton's desire to 'justify the ways of Cod to man', these writers produced a voluminous literature composed of sermons, diaries and biographies and poems of a religious nature. But the puritan's subordination of form to matter hindered the production of a literature of purely aesthetic nature.

Thus in the heap of colonial writings, we look in vain for a scrap of writing that may be called belles-letter. It was by the end of the colonial period the broader religious outlook, the sway of rationalism, and the dawn of nationalism soon created in America an atmosphere conducive with that of England.

The researcher predicts that:

The first quarter of the 19th century witnessed a number of changes in the American Literary. The Literature of the 17th century was religious and that of the 18th century dedicated to politics. It was the 19th century saw the emergence of type of writing called the belles-letters.

He says:

The colonial period literature became a great reservoir of material and inspiration for that of the 19th century.

For readers today it still provides an understanding of these American experiences which developed the national character and the American institutions.

The main factors for the flowering of American Renaissance were:

1. Cultural contact with Europe.
2. European Romanticism.
3. Traditional puritan respect for the life of the mind.
4. Growth of Nationalism in America.
5. Growth of Democracy.
6. Growth of Science.
7. Free thinking of social & economical freedom for the whites in America.
8. Emergence of great American Literary figures such as Emerson, Whitman, and Melville etc.
9. Industrialization.
10. A society of adventures for risk takers.

⁴² Office of International Information Programs United States of America "*An Outline of American History*", p. 34

2.2 The American Literature During The 18th Century

American literature underwent great changes for the better by the 18th century. The social and political conditions had by now assumed a transformation and were highly conducive to the making of an aesthetic literature, free from the shackles of theology, religion and utilitarian motives.

In the first place, the strain of colonizing was over, and most of the colonies had reached a provincial status. The various colonies now kept good contact with one another. Travel and communication had improved. The postal system appeared as a great boon to the people. There appeared in America at this stage the first sign of journalism. American's first Newspaper *The Boston News* was issued in 1704 and so a number of periodicals sprang up. No doubt these journals were subjected to great censorship; but the trial for libel of the New York Printer Peter Zenger was a great triumph for journalism. The many magazines and weeklies of this period, though poor and imitative in nature gave ample proof of the fact that the people were taking an interest in cultural and literary affairs instead of being engrossed in material needs. An important factor responsible for the change was the number of literate people. The early settlers had with great wisdom and foresight made provisions for education. Public schools and Church Schools, private academies and home instruction saw to it that the people had a certain level of education. For young men who wanted higher education, facilities were abundant in Harvard or Yale. Between 1740 and 1770 six new colleges arose in the Northern Provinces.⁴³

Economically also things were brightening up. Most colonial families were now prosperous and self-supporting. They raised their own food and made their own clothing and even shoes. The provinces in general became richer in spite of restrictions on trade. Fisheries and whaling and ship-building were the major industries that brought plentiful wealth to America. Agriculture kept pace with industrial development. Land was acquired with ease and the soil was so fertile that any man who wanted could reap a rich harvest. Farming in America offered prospects which the European could not have dreamt of. Altogether life on the colonies seemed to be one of bliss as is evident from Crèvecoeur's 'Letters of an American Farmer'.⁴⁴ All these things had their impact on literature. Leisure and improved standards of living were highly conducive to the production of a better literature than the 17th century America had yielded.

American character had also assumed changes by now. The settler and planter who was living a feudal life on his great plantations was affected by the spreading revolutionary waves which brought into prominence, qualities like personal honor, chivalrous respect for womanhood, fondness for general entertainment.

New classes like the gentlemen, statesmen and soldiers were now created. The south with its pleasure-loving nature experimented with a literary form so far undreamt of in America, namely the drama. Very slight and feeble attempts at drama were made at Charleston as

⁴³ Ibid, p. 70

⁴⁴ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, pp. 20 – 22

early as 1703 and about 1716 at Williamsburg, Virginia. In this place a dramatic troupe from London under the name of the American Company stayed alive till 1800. In 1767 it presented the first native tragedy to be publicly performed "*The Prince of Parthia*" by Thomas Godfrey.

In the 18th century America, religion was becoming broader. Religious toleration was great and material comforts made the thoughts of the people turn to politics and business. The brooding pre-occupation with religion was gone and the laxness in religious matters seemed to alarm such writers as Cotton Mather and Edwards. William Byrd in one of his writings even dared to have a few jokes at the expense of the Chaplain who accompanied his expedition. The very conceptions of God, man and universe were undergoing changes. The liberal tendencies gradually gaining momentum culminated in the bold assertions of Jefferson. Thomas Paine and Philip Freneau. Like Europe, America was under the sway of Reason.

America was now becoming conscious of the new literary trends in England and trying to keep pace with them. Though there was what man be called 'a culture lag' of about 30 years between the first appearance of a literary form in England and its adoption in America, it was most encouraging that people, were open to receive literary impulses from abroad. The prose of Swift and Defoe and the eighteenth century essayists had its effects on American writing. Benjamin Franklin, Byrd and Jone show their indebtedness to English prose writers. The essays of Addison and Steele inspired the rise of periodical essays like the "*Tell Tale*" series written by a group of students at Harvard.

In the field of verse Dryden and Pope had their sway. American poetry of the 17th century which was practically formal gained from the discipline of the couplet that Dryden and Pope popularized. All the neo-classical trends were faithfully copied.

This was in many ways a good thing and it went a long way to secularize literature. "Literature in America had first to be made secular and it was the historic mission of that aspect of the classical world-order called the Enlightenment to liberate American thought and expression from theology."⁴⁵ As a results the literature produced in the decades just before the Revolution achieved a surprising maturity as is evident in the works of Edwards, Crèvecoeur, Benjamin Franklin, Freneau, Paine and others.

The period 1765 to 1829 is remarkable in American history as the settlers of the different colonies, who had immigrated from different parts of Europe were now beginning to think of themselves as one people. The fusion in the 'Melting Pot' took place during this period leading onto that sentiment which found expression in the significant phrase "We the people of the United States". The united political power of the Americans was first made manifest with the Stamp Act Congress of 1769, and went on right up to the year 1829 in which the Common man of America was vindicated with Andrew Jackson's becoming the President of the United States. For while the colonies were resisting together the tyrannical imposition of taxes by the British Government, an internal revolution was going on against the aristocracy. Both these trends had great bearing on American Literature.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 16 – 17

This was an age of great complexities and problems and rapid changes. The entire western civilization was bearing the weight of certain clashes, Mercantilism versus Free Trade, Imperialism versus Home Rule, Tory versus Whig and Federalist versus Republican. Since an integral part of American character is the belief in the rights of the individual for his fullest possible development within a free society, providing justice and equality for all, the literature of this period is of great interest importance. For in the books written and speeches made during this period we come across repeated assertions of this.⁴⁶

This newly awakened 'National consciousness was of a fierce nature. Americans were becoming extremely sensitive to criticism. The idea of inferiority to England was unthinkable. It was this spirit that made them aspire to the creation of a distinctive literature of their own, that had aesthetic and not merely utilitarian interest.

An excellent literature of politics or an equally praiseworthy literature of religion was not enough. The nationalists felt the intense desire to establish a tradition of belles-lettre.⁴⁷ If poetry, fiction and the drama were the marks of a great culture, America did not want to lag behind any other country in the possession of these. This was the spirit behind the literary attempts of such writers as Philip Freneau, the Connecticut Wits, William Cullen Bryant and others. This was the attitude that prompted Washington Irving and Cooper to look diligently for material for romance and legends in the annals of American history. It is in the romantic period that we get the finest expression of this spirit.

The political issue produced a spate of writing mostly controversial and polemical. The Whigs and the Tories displayed Zeal in arguing out their points of view. Franklin's satirical works "Rules by which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small one" and 'An Edict of the King of Prussia', Thomas Pain's brilliant pamphlets 'Common sense' and 'The American Crisis' were among the most enduring specimens of prose literature of the period. 'The Declaration of Independence' composed by Jefferson remains a classic. Along with the struggle for independence, American literature flowered into an unprecedented grandeur. After the winning of independence the next step was to win cultural independence for America and a complete weaning of American letters from English tradition. This took place with Emerson's declaration of cultural independence.

2.3 The Revolutionary Period

The tide of national sentiment that swept over America produced in its wake a genuine interest in belles-lettre in literature that was not merely informational or utilitarian. The writers were more self-conscious and the spread of education created an enlightened public who were ready for finer literature. Accounts of voyages, promotion tracts, sermons, histories and biographies that dominated the literary scene so far were retiring into the background though they continued to be written. Even when propaganda was a motive as in Crèvecoeur's letters, the 'Gout' anticipate the personal essay as well as the short story. Practical and idealistic, and scientist and a humanitarian, Franklin was a typical product of

⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 26 – 27

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 28

the age. Puritan influences were still dominant in him as is evident from the string of qualities that he has tabulated for self-improvement. But he was susceptible to the literary influences of Defoe, Bunyan, Swift, Addison and Locke. It is his style that displays Franklin's indebtedness to these writers.

The most sensational non-political work of the eighteenth century was "*The Age of Reason*"⁴⁸ by Thomas Paine. The first part of this was published in 1794 and the second in 1795. Paine wrote this work as his "last offering" to mankind. His avowed aim was to endow mankind with a new religion that was compatible with the tremendous changes that had come over the political, social and intellectual horizons. His political pamphlets 'Commonsense' 'the American Crisis' had already given evidence of an incredible power of persuasion and eloquence. With the same clarity of thought and force of expression he presented arguments meant to strike at the root of the established church. The work gave rise to such a furore that many felt Paine should be burned for blasphemy. Indeed many things that he said against Christianity were sure to sound as blasphemy, to the believers. But Paine was not an atheist as was believed in a benovolent God. In unequivocal terms, he declared: "I believe in one God and no more". His religion was Deism about which he has this to say: "The only religion that has not been invented and that has in it every evidence of divine originality, is pure and simple Deism. It must have been the first and will probably be the last that man believes." He then goes on to explain what Deism implies. "We man impressed as fully and strongly as he ought to be with the belief, of a God, his moral life would be regulated by the force of that belief, he would stand in awe of God and of himself, a would not do the thing that could not be cancelled from either. To give this belief the full opportunity of force it is necessary that it act alone. "This is Deism." Resolutely Paine turns away from all Churches declaring "My own mind is my own church." his exaltation of reason Paine was a typical child of his age, the eighteenth century which believed in order and consistency and was thoroughly committed to the mathematical world-view of Sir Isaac Newton according to whom this universe is a smooth religious purposes brought upon him bitter denouncement. But about his merits as a writer, there can be no dispute. No man of his time was better able to express, simply and clearly, views which effected vast changes in political, social and religious constitution of western civilization.

The force, directness and variety of his appeals to reason and emotion made him the foremost propagandist-agitator of his time. A master of persuasion rather than a profound or original thinker, he will be studied as long as there are men who seek to understand the social functions of language and literature."^{*}

The researcher depicts that the literature was the hand maid of theology in the colonial period; it was the handmaid of politics during the Revolutionary period.

John Dickinson (1732-1808) was a pamphleteer and statesman of this time. Though he advocated conciliation he was truly "the penman of the Revolution". "Late Regulations respecting lei the British colonies... considered" was an attack on the Stamp Act, His

⁴⁸ Ibid, pp. 30 – 31

Letters from a Framerin in Pennsylvania were cautious and conciliatory in tone. Samuel Adams was an agitator and pamphleteer who wrote a stream of pamphlets under many pseudonyms.

More sensational than the writings of all these were the work of Thomas Paine (1737-1809). In 1775 Thomas Paine published (his fifty page pamphlet *Common Sense*. This was a daring attack on the British Crown and an eloquent plea for revolt. Written in a vigorous flamboyant style, it remains one of the most interesting pieces of propaganda literature ever penned. Paine ridicules the idea of hereditary monarchy and proclaims that one honest man was worth more to society "than all the crowned ruffians that ever lived." Paine's conviction was that "nothing can settle our affairs so expeditiously as an open and determined "Declaration of Independence."⁴⁹ so "The Present time" he wrote in *Common Sense*, "is that peculiar time which never happens to a nation but once viz., the time of forming itself into a government. Most nations have let slip the opportunity, and by that means have been compelled to receive laws from their conquerors instead of making laws for themselves, but from the error of other nations let us learn "wisdom and lay hold of the present opportunity to being Governmental.

American Crisis was written when prospects were bleak for the patriots. Paine knew how to restore optimism, how to rouse the Fading enthusiasm. The very opening of the paper is superb. These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Altogether in Thomas Paine America had a propagandist of genius whose skill in moving men to action has seldom been rivalled. The passion that throbs in his writings has made his prose vital and effective.

Among the orators of the period, the greatest was Patrick Henry. His "Speech in the Virginia Convention" deserves to be ranked along with the greatest speeches in the English language. It was the eve of the Revolutionary War. The southerners were asking the question whether they should fight if war broke out in the north. In his speech Patrick Henry answered the question, carrying away his audience by the sheer force and eloquence of his speech which ended on the magnificent note "as for me, give my liberty, or give me death."

Benjamin Franklin also contributed his share to the political writings of this period in the form of two brilliant satires "Rules by which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a small one" and "An Edict of the King of Prussia."⁵⁰

One of the greatest luminaries of the period was Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) who later became the third president of the United States. This man who embodied the ideals of his

* The Literature of The United States, As Anthology and a History by Walter Blair, Theodore Hornberger and Randall Stewart

⁴⁹ In The United States 'Declaration of Independence' (1776) "people held certain truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal"

⁵⁰ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, p. 25

day has left his mark upon American politics and American literature.⁵¹ His words are the scriptures of the American faith in democracy and common man, of the nation's trust in popular education and of its belief in individualism. Jefferson rightly considered the ion of Independence as the contribution for which he was most likely to be remembered by later generations. Though not strictly original, it is a momentous work, an unexcelled model of skillful rhetoric, George Washington's Farewell Address is one of the gems of literary prose. It is looked upon as a classic statement of American foreign policy and also a well-considered warning against the danger that can result from faction. Washing-ton's writings are voluminous and form an impressive contribution to the political literature of the period.

Hamilton's "The Federalist". Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804) was a soldier, statesman, lawyer and politician and incidental a writer. But what he wrote illustrates his power of reasoning and lucidity of expression. Being well informed Hamilton could give his thoughts convincing authority and he strikes us as one of the greatest practitioners of argument in American literature.

When the bulk of political writings is taken into account with feel that literature indeed was the effective instrument with which politicians sought to gain their ends. But politics did not stiff literary creativity of the age. In poetry and in non-political writings we find a refreshing originality during this period. Belles-lettre had come into existence. The writer was breathing free and healthier air and literature was well on its way to greatness. The political situation far from affecting literature adverse actually conferred on it a many-sided boon.

2.4 The 19th Century

The first quarter of the 19th century witnessed number of changes in the American literary scene. By this time literature finally emerged. The literature of the 17th century was primarily religious and that of the 18th century dedicated to politics it was the 19th century that finally saw the emergence of a type of writing that could truly be called belles lettre. The spirit of romanticism, though, felt in stray instances previously had now become unmistakably evident. Although no given set of conditions can be given to account for the rise of romanticism in America it is possible to mention certain factors as representative of many and complex channels through which this movement became influential in the literature of America.⁵²

In the first place American Literature had to keep pace with the rapid strides that the country was taking in physical developments. Florida, Texas, California and Alaska had all been acquitted red and made part of the United States. Streams of migrations moved in all directions pushing the boundaries of the nation from there and farther. The excellent hunters and fighters who formed the exodus to the southern and south-western countries have been pictured in the stories of Bret Harte and Mark Twain. From 1845 onwards there appeared an enormous impetus in foreign immigration, which had become considerably small. The disastrous famine in Ireland and the rigid suppression of revolutionary

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 33

⁵² Ibid, p. 46

movements in Europe were the main reasons for this. These immigrants contributed to the vastness in size and population that the United States was now assuming.

With the constant and seemingly endless expansion came the improvement of communications. The federal highway, the network of canals and later of railroads linked all sections of America and helped to bring together the industrial East and the grain and cattle-producing West. Manufacture was vying with agriculture importance and improved machinery gave great profit to those engaged in manufacture and commerce, Yankee ships, for a time, even rivaled those of Great Britain in establishing commercial contacts with China, India and other important trading centers of the world.⁵³

With the speeding up of manufacture there came up the commercial class which had great importance. Industrial prosperity while raising the standard of living also brought about a great differentiation of classes, especially in the East. In the West farming was still the chief interest the cleavage was not so marked as in the East. The South raised cotton and tobacco and was preoccupied with these and politics. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 induced a rush of adventurers and fortune hunters to that place.⁵⁴

These social and economic changes caused a change in the character of the population and also in their interests. People were beginning to throw themselves into some movement or other. The Abolition Movement, and those that clamored for the prevention of war, the rights of the poor, the rights of women, prison reform and temperance were the most important of these. An important civilizing agency of this time was the bulk of newspapers and magazines. The cultural life of the country was much influenced at this stage also by the Lyceum, an institution meant to spread knowledge. "The Lyceum provided lectures, debates, concerts and entertainments of other kinds and enlightened its audiences of philosophical, literary, scientific and educational matters. Through this agency Emerson broadcast his doctrine of self-reliance, which synchronized with the dominant individualism of the time."⁵⁵

Journalism assumed by now a refreshing change. Its belligerently political aspect gave place to news features, diversified literary material and humor. Among the leading newspapers mention may be made of the *New York Evening Post* (founded in 1801), the *Sun* (1833), the *Herald* (1835) and the *Times* (1841). Important journals such as *The North American Review*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harpers Magazine* came into existence. *The Dial* served as the vehicle of American transcendentalists and *Godey's Lady's Book* catered to the feminine reader by giving over-sentimentalized literary matter, designed to foster elegance and refinement.⁵⁵

Education received greater attention than before. More free public schools were established and colleges and universities also multiplied. The eagerness for giving educational advantages to the common man was one aspect of the advance of democracy that had its great triumph in the election of President Andrew Jackson.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid, p. 47

⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 48 – 49

* A College Book of American Literature by Profs. Milton Ellis Louis Pound and George W. Spohn.

⁵⁵ Baym, Nina. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 2, 4th ed., p. 936

⁵⁶ Brooks, Cleanth. *American Literature: The Makers and the Making*, Vol. II, p. 2008

With the removal of Puritan strictness, amusements gradually became popular, Hence theatres now assumed an importance that they hitherto did not enjoy. Theatrical companies sprang up in cities and professional players toured over the country giving performances. Though-translations of European plays of a romantic nature were much in demand, American plays too were staged. Arts such as painting and architecture also flourished during this period. Architecture was mostly classical at this stage and in painting the "back to nature" movement was becoming popular.

These were some of the socio-economic-political factors that made the Romantic Movement possible in America. The climate had changed and the atmosphere was congenial now for production of a purely aesthetic literature which won universal acclaim.⁵⁷

The conditions that favored the rise of romanticism in America. In England the classicism of the Augustan Age was followed by the great romantic revolt. Something identical happened in America as well for the nineteenth century witness marked reaction against the age of Reason. Newton who swayed the thought of eminent writers and philosophers, Locke, and Pope were beginning to be deemed less important. Everywhere there was the breathlessness of something new-a new attitude to man nature and to the supreme deity. All over Europe the change from classicism to romanticism was evident. America too was receptive to the new ideals that were in the air.

One important reason for this is that between the years 1815 and 1820-a period generally considered by many literary historians as the "pivotal period" in the rise of romanticism there was a great incentive among educated young Americans to travel abroad. A tour of Europe was considered as essential part of a young man's education, Notable among those who undertook such journeys were Edward Everett and George Tickner who came into close association with English and German romanticism. These young men on their return to America occupied prominent positions which enabled them to popularize the new spirit which they had imbibed while abroad. Others followed their example and the most illustrious among them of course was Washington Irving whose meeting with Sir Walter Scott was a great blessing for American literature. Irving was already a romantic at heart, and his decided leaning towards romanticism, was confirmed by his experience abroad. He owed much to Fielding, Sterne and Goldsmith: but his greast indebtedness, was to Scott and the German romanticists Ludwing Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffman.⁵⁸

There was another major, factor that opened the gates of America to the flood of romanticism. During the period under consideration, there were published in America the works of European romantic writers. Among them the greatest popularity was enjoyed by Byron. This is evident from the, numerous American editions of his poems. Wordsworth was another English poet who influenced poetical through across the Atlantic. The influence of Wordsworth is seen in the American poet of the 19th century, Witliam Cullen Bryant, No merely Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, but his smaller pieces like *To The Waterfowl* and *The Yellow Violet*, may be taken as examples. It was no wonder that Bryant was

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 2010

⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 2012

Wordsworthian to a great extent for he was brought up (luckily for a poet) in contact with hills and woods and unsophisticated people and also with good books, the most important of which happened to be Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge too was loved by the Americans and so was Shelley. Coleridge influenced not poetry so much as literary criticism. The noted German literary critics, the Schlegels too made important contributions in this direction for their lectures on literature were instrumental in the spread of romantic critical theory.⁵⁹

All these external factors would not have effected a great change in American literature had not the intellectual climate within the country been favorable for the spread of romanticism, Political, social and economic conditions had changed tremendously and old notions were crumbling. The democratic principles in which America had all along believed were more firmly reasserted than ever before, but in other spheres, people were showing greater and greater dissatisfaction with old values and ideas. Rationalism and neoclassicism were found to be wanting, as they somehow did not come close to the common man and his experience. Newton's conception of a well-ordered cosmos was perfectly satisfactory to the people of the eighteenth century. This no longer satisfied the people of the next century. The old beliefs concerning the deity, nature and man were all weakening. It was evident that America was sighing for a new creed, a new movement, intellectual and aesthetic and Philosophic, for the old order had to go and give place to something new.

No discussion of the factors that favored the changes in American literary life in the early nineteenth century would be complete without mention of the agencies which furthered the spread of the new literary spirit. Journals of a high literary standard now stepped into the picture. In 1815 was founded the *North American Review*. Other important periodicals now gave to writers the long-awaited chance of publication. Another interesting literary vehicle emerged during this period in the form of the "gift book." Most important of the "gift books" was Samuel Goodrich's annual gift book called *The Token* which was enormously popular. We can understand the important part played by the gift books when we recall the significant fact that it was in the pages of *The Token* that the poems, sketches and tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne first appeared.

The lyceum which haunted for literary talents and developed them was a very influential literary agency. It created the proper climate for the discussion and dissemination of new ideas and literary theories. Education which had assumed by now enlarged dimensions, and the improvement and extension of transport facilities fostered the spread of the spirit of romanticism.

Many-sided developments within the country, the facilities for travel abroad, and the tremendous impact of English and continental literature thus rapidly brought about in America the creation of a new literature which in its freshness and freedom, in its colourfulness and expansiveness has been likened by critics such as F. O. Matthiessen to a reassertion of the spirit of the Renaissance.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 2013

The features of Romanticism, manifest in the American Literature of the nineteenth century are:

The spirit of romanticism that swept over America in the first half of the nineteenth century was a many-splendoured thing. It had many features many of which are discernible in the literature of England and the Continent during this period.

Romanticism meant a break-away from the rigid restraints of classicism, English romantic writers rose in revolt against the tyranny of the monotonous heroic couplet and revived and experimented in other and freer forms of versification. In America too there appeared an immense variety of literary genres and verse forms such as blank, verse, octosyllabic lines, the Spenserian stanza, the sonnet, the ode, the lyric and the metrical romance.

The need for freedom and fresh avenues was expressed by the poet William Cullen Bryant in his essay on American Poetry, where he condemns the practice of copying eighteenth century, poetical tradition: "The imagination is confined to one trodden circle, doomed to the chains of a perpetual mannerism and condemned to tinkle the same eternal tune with its fetters." Romantics like Thoreau and Emerson rejected the 'set pattern of the eighteenth century and the liberation of the verse was Complete in Walt Whitman.⁶⁰

Far more significant were the changes that romanticism ushered in into the subject-matter and its treatment in literature. The purely rational held no longer any delights for the poet and the reader and there was a pronounced preference for the imaginative. This led to the diligent search for the unfamiliar, and the strange, even the terrible. The spirit that made Shelley compare the very familiar picture of the autumn leaves being scattered by the west-wind to the strange and totally unfamiliar picture of "ghosts from an enchanter fleeing" was at work everywhere. This trend resulted in the "naturalization" in literature of the grotesque. The Augustan contempt for Gothic barbarities yielded to a sympathetic understanding and a nostalgic appreciation of medieval things. Gothic architecture and literature and medieval chivalry gripped the interest of the people. As Prof Grierson says, "No epoch of the past was so rich in imagination-stirring quality, so varied in emotional content, so capable of supplying the poet with moving subjects as the great Christian age, the age that built that Cathedrals, the age of chivalry and knightly ideals of spiritual symbolism and passionate loyalties". In England this age brought to literature a number of haunted castles and fantastic contrivances. In American literature however this manifested in a different manner in the highly effective use of the malign and grotesque in psychological form. Poe and Hawthorne were the two superb craftsmen who could wield with enviable ease this difficult material. Something that was almost as important to the romantics as the Middle Ages was the Orient. The Transcendentalists studied the sages and poets of the East. Thoreau speaks of the *Scriptures of the Nation* or the "collected scriptures or Sacred Writings of the Several Nations, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Persians, the Hebrews and others" which would make the true Bible.

⁶⁰ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, p. 88

Romantic imagination while reaching out to grab the essential beauty of the past, sought to bring the halo of strangeness and charm even around the most familiar. This aspect of the Romantic Movement is vividly explained by Wordsworth in the *Lyrical Ballads*, where he speaks of taking situations from common life and "throwing over them a certain colouring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect". This is precisely what Edgar Allen Poe expects poetry to do, as is evident from his criticism, this is what other romantic poets of America like Bryant and Whitman also emphasized, Poe taught that the end of poetry is to express the yearning for the beautiful – the desire not of the beauty we see, but of the beauty we dream. This leads to the obvious conclusion that poetry – all great art in fact – is necessarily freed from any obligation to fact. To change the actual occurrences of life as he pleases in order to reproduce the ideal is not merely the privilege of the poet, it is his duty. "We struggle by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps appreciation to Eternity alone", There were on the other hand poets Lowell who decried this unbridled imagination that seemed to be a part of romanticism.

With the Romantic Movement Nature became very important in American Literature. The fresh interest in Nature was reflected in its faithful, particularized reproduction in the imagery of poetry and in the romantic landscape of fiction. Even before the Romantic Movement, Nature had found its way into the works of such poets as Freneau. But it was to the nineteenth century poets that Nature had become a major concern. Wordsworth's great love of Nature had its counterpart on the other side of the ocean for American poets.

The influence of Sir Walter Scott was also responsible for, making the treatment of Nature an essential part of literary technique. In his poems and novels Scott used the Scottish landscape as a setting for his narrative, and successfully dealt on its beauty. Washington Irving, responding to Scott, began in American literature the potent tradition of the romantic landscape. Much of the charm of the short stories *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow* to depends on this. In Cooper's *Leather Stocking Tales* we find fuller expression of this. Hence we may say that Cooper had a great share in establishing the romantic landscape in American fiction.

As a result of this new spirit of romanticism, the individual became important. There was an increased awareness of the significance of the individual and of the importance of personality and the varieties of emotional response which manifested itself in the expansion of lyricism. Burns and Thomas Moore were much admired in America and the great popularity of Byron made the personal lyric become one of the dominant literary forms in America.⁶¹

Emerson was a great exponent of the cult of the individual. "Trust thyself", he said, "..... if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts and there abide, the huge world will come round to him". He believed that who so would be a man must be a non-conformist. "The root and seed of democracy is the doctrine, judge for yourself. Reverence thyself". The individualism that the romantics upheld was quite different from

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 84

the rational individualism of the age of Franklin and Jefferson, for reason was no longer exalted. In its place feeling-the-heart, the seat of emotion-came to be praised.⁶² The entire gamut of human emotion-joy, love, rapture, longing, fear, regret, hope faith-all these were richly reflected in the literature of the romantics. An unquenchable curiosity and an infinite longing for beauty were two of the most powerful emotions felt. As Walter Pater has said, "It is the addition of curiosity to the desire of beauty that constitutes the romantic temper. The essential elements then, of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty." Edgar Allen Poe illustrates these qualities of romanticism. His verse and story show this effort to reach to 'the beauty above.' Longfellow, the dreamer of dreams and Whitman-"I am he that aches with love"-handled as material for literature the vibrant human emotions.⁶³

Closely related to the interest in the individual was an interest in the ordinary man and the familiar in human experiences. English poets like Thomas Gray, Burns, Goldsmith, Wordsworth had shown the sacredness of the common man, an idea that was particularly congenial to American temperament. James Fenimore Cooper loved the common man and all his stories throb with this feeling for what Melville called 'The Kingly Commons.' "The search for a common denominator of life and of a democratic society is a major force in the works of Whittier, Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman".* Whitman emphatically declared, everything comes out of the people, the people as you find them; not university people, not F. F. V. people". Emerson, recognizing the latent powers of every man said, "Each man shall feel the world is his and man shall treat with man as a sovereign state within a sovereign state". Whittier endowed the life of the farmer and the shoe-maker with a new dignity and in his beautiful poem *Snow Bound* he recaptured the charm of ordinary every day things and what Emerson had called "the meaning of household life." Whittier, like Wordsworth believed also in making use of a very simple style, using words in the every-day speech of the people about whom he wrote.

Antiquarianism, or an interest in the past was another major literary trend of the times. Scott's metrical and historical romances had an enormous influence in this direction. It was Washington Irving who set American imagination unmistakably along the path towards the past. Making use of materials from his native Hudson River Valley from England and from Spain, Irving wrote some of the finest historical legends in American literature. His *Sketch Book*, *Knickerbockers' History of New York*, *Bracebridge Hall* and *The Alhambra* are the best examples of this. Longfellow chose themes from the American past in three of his major poems, *Evangeline*, *Hiawatha* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. American writers received a lot of encouragement for resorting to historical fiction from The North American Review. It pointed out the rich materials America offered for historical fiction and suggested that the historical romance already popularized by Scott represented a recognized literary form that might be adapted in America for a national literature. James Fenimore Cooper quickly responded and his works such as *The Spy*, *Lionel Lincoln*, *She Wept of Wishton-Wish* demonstrated that American history, native characters and the picturesque American landscape were excellent materials for fiction.⁶⁴

⁶² Ibid, p. 86

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 111 – 13

* Profs: C. A. Brown and J. T. Flanagan: American Literature – A College Survey

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 57 – 59

The interest in the past manifested itself in yet another way. This was the spirit of regionalism. Here again Scott provided the inspiration. The regional element in *Waverly*, *Guy Mannering* and *The Heart of Midlothian* were copied by Mrs. Child, Mrs. Cheney and Mrs. Cushing who published regional novels of colonial and revolutionary days. James Kirke Paulding's *Koningsmarke* (1823), depicts life in the early Swedish settlement on the Delaware and *The Dutchman's Fireside* (1831) is an imaginative recreation of life in upper New York during the French and Indian war. The frontier and the plantations were fertile materials for fiction. The Western frontier especially had a powerful effect upon the nation imagination. Though several writers wrote about the frontier it was Mark Twain who won distinction for his superb blending of fact humor and sentiment.⁶⁵

It was at this period that the American Indian was recognized as a powerful source for literature. "The Indian tribes were perhaps the best evidences of America's past and only authentic 'ruins' which America could produce, since it lacked the moldering castles of Europe." Cooper with his *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) began the tradition of the idealized portrait of the Indian. Famous books in this tradition are, William Gilmore Simms's *The Yemassee* (1835) and Robert Montgomery Bird's, *Nick of the Woods* (1837), John Augustine Stone's *Metamora* introduced the Indian into drama and Longfellow's *Hiawatha* (1855) remains the most significant of numerous poetic narratives utilizing Indian themes.⁶⁶

Last but not least there was romantic idealism or transcendentalism, which emerged after 1830 in the works of Emerson, Thoreau, Margaret Fuller and William Ellery Channing. This movement, its distinctive pattern from the New England Puritan background. Transcendentalism was based on the synthesis of various religious philosophical doctrines. Platonism, the fountain head of all philosophic idealism, the Oriental Scriptures, and the works of formative influences. At the core of transcendentalism thought lay certain clear, concepts. One was the recognition of imagination or intuition as a faculty that enables man to transcend sense, experience and logic and to arrive at a direct apprehension of reality. Nature was accepted as the symbol of the spirit that is immanent in all universe. The divinity of man was stressed and in turn insisted on the right of the individual to develop himself pressures. The transcendentalist view of literature discarded neo-classical concepts of imitation and corrections and regarded the literary work as the organic expression of the intuited vision of the artist.⁶⁷

Transcendentalism was truly a liberating force of the period and it definitely was a blessing to literature as it gave to American literature not only a new significant aesthetic theory, but also two of its major artists – Emerson and Thoreau.

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 63 – 64

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 96

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 172 – 73

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 What is the meaning of American literature? What is its influence on politics?

The meaning of American literature is a very broad subject, since there have been hundreds of influential American authors from lots of different eras writing in lots of different styles. In general, I think literature serves as a means by which one can examine a politics values, ideas, hopes, fears, and dream through fiction. Authors who are famous (I am assuming your mean those who have had an impact on their society) create something that many, many people will read, people of different ethnicities, ages, social class, etc.

It unites people who might not be united in other ways. So, American literature focuses on the literary contribution made by Americans. American literature has done some great things such as chronicling historic events, placing the spot light on some of the best poetry in the world, and providing commentary on politics & issues dealing with our society.

American authors are the best to teach something about the vast & the beautiful land. Famous authors touch lives every day because they have the ability to tell the stories that help us to understand better who we are & where the Americans came from.

3.2 Introduction

During the postwar & the early cold war periods, French intellectuals grappled with the increased presence of American culture, and author Boris Vian developed his own approach. Although he worked within the context of contemporary discourse, occasionally complaining that American culture amounted to vulgar consumerism, he tried to stretch beyond the constraints of common response to the perceived shortcomings in America.

Anti-Americanism was not new to France in the 1940s, but it had its own historical flavors. Postwar intellectual leftist critiques of American adopted arguments about American dehumanization that had a long tradition throughout Europe but that had most recently been articulated in France by conservatives in the 1930s⁶⁸. Although the left appreciated the classless appearance of American society, it condemned capitalism's greedy individualism, the automatic & sheep like behavior of American consumer, the American racist & imperialist drives. At the same time, the Frankfurt school exhibited similar trend in thinking about American.

Horkheimer & Adorno's Marxist – inspired work on critical theory led to the articulation of the theory of the culture industry. This theory codified the political left's fear of Americanization as represented by mass culture, a standardization of mediocrity that mystified consumers into neglecting their real needs, and the equation of consumer behavior with submission to totalitarian & imperialist policies. By the late 1960s, however, France had become more comfortable with consumer habits & the left had learned how to separate critiques of America's racism & foreign intervention from the previously obligatory critique of American mass culture.

Through his appreciation for black American culture in the 1940s & 1950s, Boris Vian helps elucidate the transition.

⁶⁸ Kuisel, Richard. *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization*, p. 13

3.3 Americanization & Modernization

Although Vian decried American racism & imperialism & abhorred lack of immigration of “the masses” or those who felt were outside the culture, he did enjoy certain fruits of American mass culture. A critic of dogmatic fidelity to party doctrine, Vian was what we might call an “irresponsible engaged”. He was not irresponsible in the sense of being unreliable or uncountable, but rather according to his own definition of artistic irresponsibility that freed the intellectual to question ideas & issues individually as they appeared. He was not engaged in the sartrean sense of taking a deliberately active role in history, but he gave himself the responsibility of evaluating discrete manifestation of America & publishing his opinions. Rather than adapting to the left’s politics of the hour; Vian actively formulated his own ideas about American culture, like the 1950s cinéphiles of the cahiers du cinema, Vian developed his own criteria for judging American culture that was distinct from the left’s overly political rejection of America prevalent in the early cold war. These independent thinkers helped forge France transition to consumer society, grappling with ways to reconcile an appreciation for a culture of a abundance with concerns about American racism & economic & cultural domination of Europe in the decade following World War II.

Fear of mass culture & resistance to Americanization included at least two distinguishable strain in France, both of which had been developed before the war and which only became more pronounced after the war. The first was the overtly political use of American culture to infuse France with a sense of benefits of mass culture as connected to American capitalism & democracy. As an American economic power increased, American companies viewed Europe as a market for their goods & services.

Political leaders saw American culture a way to sway Europeans toward embracing democracy, both shedding their fascist heritage & resisting communist influence. The 1948 Smith-Mundt Act explicitly linked American culture products with effort to sell democracy, establishing radio programs, newspapers, and information centers to teach European to appreciate American values. The second strain stemmed from fears that modernization that modernization would destroy a French humanistic tradition.

Americanization would replace a sense of community with selfish consumers who failed to notice that commodities were poisonous to their interest & exacerbated social problems. The second strain was connected to the first as intellectuals viewed policies of spreading American culture in France as deliberate efforts to “colonize” France, rendering the country a pawn to American interests.

Among the 20th century example of American critics, Andre Siegfried (Lee Estate – United d’aujourd’hui 1927), George Duhamel (scene de la vie future 1930) demonstrate the politically conservative anti-Americanization of the 1920s-1930s.

Authors such as Simon de Beauvoir (L’Amérique au jour le jour) evidence of the politically leftists fears of Americanization in the 1940s-1950s.

In *Le Défi américain*, Jean-Jacques servanschreiber signaled that by the late of 1960s France could no longer cling to traditional relationships & hierarchies in the market if it hoped to compete with American economy.

Historians have used these facts to link postwar modernization with the tensions between ant-Americanism & Americanization. For example, Richard Kuisel's *Seducing the French* examines how American modernization threatened France's sense of itself as a humanistic civilization. Kristin Ross' *Fast cars clean Bodies* look at the accelerated process of modernization on taking place between 1958 & 1968, & she reconnected the stories of French modernization & decolonization, explaining how administrative rationalization developed in the colonies also reorganizing the lives of the French citizen in the metropolis. She described how modern France placed Frenchmen & women in managerial roles that yet remained subservient to the process of modernization. In the public sphere, the new figure of the *Jeune Cadre*, or young professional energetically & efficiently managed his workers while at the same time succumbing to a vision of rationalized technological future, and in the private sphere his wife managed a modern home with modern appliances according to the images afforded her in magazines. In the *American Enemy* Phillippe Roger argues that far from being on occasional strain on Franco-American Friendship, anti-Americanism is actually a French tradition dating back to the birth of the American nation.

Despite the concern of anti-American intellectuals during the 1940s & 1950s, the majority of the French were busy coveting or beginning to acquire televisions, refrigerators, and cars.

Boris Vian's concessions to American culture were not based on the tastes of the majority but rather on a barely articulated yet evident belief that the "throw-away" bits of American high culture were more valuable to individual freedom than they were dangerous to French identities. He was aware of the prevailing criticism of Americanization & at times Charles Sowerwine "The 1950s of coke & culture" in France since 1970: culture, politics & society (New York – Palgrays, 2001) pp. 274 – 283 even seemed to believe in the American threat, but instead of dismissing America outright, he learned to choose his battles carefully. In every concrete terms Vian extolled the valns & Jazz to French & American audiences alike, & he adapted the hardboiled style of American crime novels to suit his temperament. Vian never considered America to be paragon for emulation, & he used both Jazz & deductive novels as a way to criticize American conformity & especially racism.

3.4 The Influence of Henry Thoreau upon Mahatma Gandhi

When Gandhi was working out his concept of non-violence resistance, he was impressed by Henry David Thoreau's advice to resist things that were wrong.

Thoreau suggested that individuals could resist immoral government action by simply refusing to cooperate.

Gandhi adopted many of Thoreau's thought in developing his concept of non-cooperation, or Truth Force one of the most significance & tangible effects India has had on life in the U.S. was Mahatma Gandhi's influence on the civil Right leader, Martin Luther King, who adapted Gandhi's idea of civil disobedience to the civil right movement in the U.S. Martin

Luther King always paid tribute to Gandhi as one of the most important sources of his own rules. In 1959, Dr. King made a pilgrimage to India.

The researcher predicts that the writer Thoreau, Gandhi, and King, how their political situations were similar, and how they have influenced each other, politically & philosophically.

So, the influence of Henry Thoreau upon Gandhi, now universally recognized, is generally perfunctorily; almost all popular articles of Thoreau usually devote at least one sentence to Gandhi's indebtedness to "Civil Disobedience" since Indian opinion, the south African newspaper published by Gandhi from 1903 to 1914 is now available & come to light. For example, Gandhi in his 1942 appeal "To American Friends" wrote, "You have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the 'Duty of Civil Disobedience' scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa."⁶⁹

Similarly, Gandhi has written to Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1942, "I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau & Emerson."⁷⁰

Roger Baldwin, chairman of the American civil liberties union, rode with Gandhi on a train trip through France in 1931 & noticed that the only visible book was Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience". Baldwin remarked on the extremeness of Thoreau's doctrine, and Gandhi replied that the essay "contained the essence of his political philosophy, not only as Indian struggle related to the British, but as to his own views of the relation of citizens to government."

3.5 Theodore Dreiser: His Friendship to the Soviet People in 1938 – 1941

The cyber – USSR is grateful, however, for his support against the lies of Trotskyites, British imperialists, and the enemy of the progressive humanity.

On Trotskyism:

From testimony by Earl Browder⁷¹ before the executive committee of the Communist International Secretariat, Moscow, 4 April 1937: opposing the January trail of the Trotskyites in Moscow, the attempt who made by the Trotskyites to organize a counter-offensive with the Committee for the Defense of Trotsky. To counter a newspaper campaign (in the USA), a group of 88 outstanding public figures issued an open letter to American liberals condemning this Committee for the Defense of Trotsky. In their open letter, they reaffirmed their faith in the Soviet Union, their confidence in the Soviet government, and their friendship for the Soviet people, among these names were Heywood Brown, president of the American Newspaper Guild, several editors of the liberal weeklies, "The Nation" and "The New Republic", Mary Van Kleek, outstanding economists, Theodore Dreiser, the most prominent American novelist, Carlos Lamont, a very prominent liberal⁷².

⁶⁹ Tendulkar, D.C. *Mahatma: Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 177

⁷⁰ Ibid, Vol. 1, p. 144

⁷¹ Earl Browder: Leader of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.

⁷² Klehr, Harvey, John Earl Haynes and Professor Fridrikh Igorevich Firsov. *The Secret World of American Communism*

In support of the peace policy of the Soviet Union (1939-41) Theodore Dreiser, would be the best choice because a brochure by Dreiser would reach & influence wild circle of the labour movement & the middle class, Dreiser would write it & undoubtedly with the assistance of the party⁷³.

In 1941, Dreiser did oblige them in his book *America is Worth Saving*, he argued that America should not join Britain (and exiles from occupied countries) in fighting Hitler, because Britain, especially the British Empire, was as bad as Hitler.

"Has England done more for its people than fascism or socialism?" *America is Worth Saving*, 1941, Ch. 10, p. 125.

This is a heretical question. Let no one think. I don't appreciate the enemy of my crime in even asking it ... still more in answering it. Under present conditions of America liberty I am offering myself for public hanging, drawing, and quartering by the Dies Committee.

The new "American" code earmark Nazism & communism together as "alienisms" even to discuss which with attempted detachment is more heinous than for a 19th century schoolgirl to discuss sex. But Imperialism, the system in implacable opposition to which our forefathers placed our constitution, is apparently not an "alienisms".

"To fight for England is inevitably to fight for the British Empire as it exists now." *America is Worth Saving*, 1941, Ch. 10, p. 130.

We find anti Semitism rampant in Palestine, anti-Hinduism rampant in India. No, of course the English are not officially anti-Semitic or anti-Hindu ... it is the Arab & Muslim minorities. But try as they will, the English can't find evidence of such rioting in Palestine before the British mandate, or in India before the East Indian Company.

"The USSR is much better managed than capitalist countries, statistics prove it." *America is Worth Saving*, 1941, Ch. 10, pp. 135 – 144.

3.6 Movements

3.6.1 Civil Right Movement Era

The migration of the blacks from South to North States of America produced a new sense of independence.

The migration also empowered the growing American Civil Right Movement, which made a powerful impression on black writers during the 1940s, 50s & 60s. Just as a black activities were pushing to end segregation and racism and create a new sense of Black Nationalism. Among these writers Richard Wright, James Baldwin, and Ralph Ellison.

It is also worth nothing that a number of important books & essays about rights were written by the leaders of the civil Right Movement. One of the leading examples of these is Martin Luther King Jr's "Letters from Birmingham Jail".

⁷³ American referent to the Marty Secretaint and de-facto American representative to the comintem (Klehr etal, p. 78)

3.6.2 African American Literature

Among the themes & issues explored in African American literature are the role of the African American within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery & equality.⁷⁴

African American literature focused on the issue of slavery. As the turn of the 20th century books by authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois & Booker T. Washington debated whether to confront or appease racist attitudes in the U.S.

During the American civil right movement, authors such as Richard Wright wrote about issues of racial segregation & Black Nationalism. Today African American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature, with books such as *Roots* by Alex Haley, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker.

Slave Narratives:

A subgenre of African American literature which began in the middle of the 19th century is the slave narrative. At the time, the controversy over slavery led to impassioned literature on both sides of the issue, with books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* representing the abolitionist view of the evils of slavery, while the so-called Anti-Tom literature by white, southern writers like William Gilmore Simms represented the pro-slavery viewpoint.

To present the true reality of slavery, a number of former slaves such as Frederick Douglass wrote "Slave Narrative", which soon became a mainstay of African American literature. "Slave Narrative" can be broadly categorized into three distinct forms; tales of religious redemption, tales of inspire the abolitionist struggle, and tales of progress.

The tales written to inspire the abolitionist struggle are the most famous because they tend to have a strong autobiographical motif.

3.6.3 Post Slavery Era

After the end of slavery and the American civil war, a number of African American authors continued to write notification works about the condition of African American in the country.

Among the most prominent of these writers is W.E.B. Du Bois. As the turn of the century Du Bois published a collectional essay titled "The Soul of Black Folk".

Du Bois believed that African American should, because of their common interest, work together to battle prejudice & inequity.

⁷⁴ Graham, M. *Teaching African American Literature: Theory and Practice*, 1st Edition, p. 146

3.7 Upton Sinclair's Influence on American Literature

Around the turn of the century, there were many cultural changes taking place in American society. With the rise of urban society and industrialization, monopolies were forming, businesses were competing, and capitalism was supporting the economy. Many authors wrote about these, but the most prominent author during this time period was Upton Sinclair, who published books dealt with capitalism.

Novels by Sinclair that attacked capitalistic society, supporting Sinclair's that the American dream was only available to the rich, greedy members of society.

In his novel "The Jungle" is a story of an immigrant family who find work in the Chicago stockyards. The family is ripped apart and they are crushed by the evils of urban society.

The novel portrayed Sinclair's disgust for capitalism and his belief that success for the "common man" to meet his needs was unattainable. And the American dream is just a dream, especially those who were not born in the United States.

It is clear that Sinclair feels that capitalism is not working and his support for a socialist economy becomes apparent. "The Jungle" had such an impact and still does today, that it led to the passage of two new laws, The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906.⁷⁵

3.8 Democracy in America

Alexis de Tocqueville's visit to the United States in the early part of the 19th century prompted his work "Democracy in America", in which he expressed the ability to make democracy work.

Throughout his travels he noted that private interest and personal gain motivated the actions of most Americans, which in turn cultivated a strong sense of individualism.

He believed that this individualism would soon "sap the virtue of public life" (395) and create a despotism of selfishness. This growth of despotism would be created by citizens becoming too individualistic, and therefore not bothering to fulfill their civic duties or exercise their freedom. Tocqueville feared that the political order of America would soon become aimed at the satisfaction of individual needs, rather than the greater good of society.

Alexis de Tocqueville viewed participation in public affairs, the growth of associations and newspapers, the principle of self-interest properly understood, and religion as the only means by which American democracy could combat the effects of individualism.

Given that despots have every interest in keeping people isolated, the individualism resulting from equality makes despotism a great danger to equality.

⁷⁵ <http://bookstove.com/book-talk/upton-sinclairs-influence-on-american-literature/>

While Americans generally do not speak of the abstract beauty of virtue, they recognize its usefulness and realize that "man serves himself in serving his fellow creatures and that his private interest it to do good work" (414).

One way to combat individualism is to promote the idea of performing acts which are beneficial to the prosperity of fellow man. While the doctrine of self-interest properly understood does not lead to great virtue, it does establish virtuous habits. "The principle of self-interest rightly understood produces no great acts of self-sacrifice, but it suggests daily small acts of self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a man virtuous; but it disciplines a number of persons in habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command; and if it does not lead men straight to virtue by the will, it gradually draws them in that direction by their habits" (416).

"Despotism... sees in the separation among men the surest guarantee of its continuance, and it usually makes every effort to keep them separate" (399). Exercising freedom through participation in public affairs is therefore extremely vital because it gives people a personal interest in thinking about others in society. Local self-governments are important because they draw people together, and it is therefore more likely that they will exercise their liberty.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ <http://www.directessays.com/viewpaper/35613.html>

CHAPTER IV

THE AMERICAN NOVEL

4.1 The Rise Of Realism (1860 – 1914)

The U.S.A Civil War (1861-1865) between the industrial North and the agricultural, slave-owning South was a watershed in the American history.

The innocent optimism of the young democratic nation gave away, after the war, in a period of exhaustion, American idealists, remained but was re-channeled. Before the war, idealistic championed human rights, especially the abolition of slavery, after the war. American increasingly idealized progress and the self made men.

This was the era of the millionaire manufacturer and the speculator, when Darwinian evolution and the "survival of the Fittest" seem to sanction the something unethical methods of the successful business tycoon.

Business boomed after the war, war production had boosted industry in the North and given its prestige a political clout. It also gave industrial leaders valuable experience, in the management of men and machines. The enormous natural resources (iron, oil, gold & silver) of the American land benefited business. The new international rail system, inaugurated in 1869 and the telegraph which began operating in 1861, gave industry access to materials, markets and communications.

The Constant influx of immigrants provided a seemingly endless supply of inexpensive labor as well. Over 23 million Foreigners (German, Scandinavian & Irish) in the early years and increasing Central and Southern European, thereafter, followed into the U.S. between 1860 and 1910.

Chinese, Japanese and other contract labors imported by Hawaiian Plantation owners, railroad companies and other American business interests on the west coast.

In 1860, most Americans lived on farms or in small villages, but by 1919 half of the population was concentrated in about 12 cities. Problems of urbanization and industrialization appeared. Poor and over crowded housing, unsanitary conditions, low pay and inadequate restraints on business. Labor unions grew, and strikes brought the plight of working people in national awareness. Farmers, too, saw themselves struggling against the "money interests" at the East, the so-called robber barons like J.P Morgan and John Rockefeller.

Their eastern banks tightly controlled mortgages and credit so vital to western development and agriculture, while railroad companies charged high prices to transport farms products to the cities. The farmers gradually became an object ridicule, lampooned as an unsophisticated "hick" or "rube".⁷⁷

The ideal American of the post-civil war period became millionaire. In 1860 there were fewer than 100 millionaires; by 1875 there were more than 1000.

⁷⁷ Vanspankeren, Kaythrn. *Outline of American Literature*, p. 47

From 1860 to 1914, the U.S was transformed from a small, young agricultural excolony to a huge, modern, industrial nation. A debtor nation in 1860, by 1914 it had become the world's wealthiest state, with a population that had more than doubled, rising from 31 million in 1860 to 76 million in 1900. By World War I, the U.S. had become a major world power.⁷⁸

As industrialization grew, so did alienation. Characteristic American novels of the period- Stephen Crane's *Maggie: "A Girl of the Streets"*.

Jack London's, *Martin Eden*, and later Theodore Dreiser's *"An American Tragedy"* – depict the damage of economic forces and alienation on the weak or vulnerable individual, survivors, like Twains *Huck Fun Humphrey Van Der Weyden* in London's the seal-wolf and Dreiser's opportunities sister *Carrie*, endure through inner strength involving kindness, flexibility, and above all individuality.

4.2 Midwestern Realism

William Dean Howells (1837 – 1920) published realistic local color writing by Bret Harter, Mark Twain, and others. He was the champion of realism, and his novels, such as *A Modern Instance* (1882). Carefully interweave social circumstances with the emotions of ordinary middle class Americans.

Love, ambition, idealism, and temptations motivate his characters. Howells was actually aware if the moral corruption of business tycoons during the Gilded Age of 1870s. Howell's *The Rise of Silas Lapham* users an ironic title to make this point.

Silas Lapham became rich by cheating an old business partner, and his immoral act deeply disturbed his family, though for years, Lapham could not see that he had acted improperly. In the end Lapham is morally redeemed. Choosing bankruptcy rather than unethical success. Silas Lapham is like *Huckleberry Finn*, an unsuccessful story. Lapham's business fall in his moral rise. Toward the end of his life, Howells, like Twain, became increasingly active in political cause, defending the rights of labor union organizers and deploring American Colonialism in the Philippines.⁷⁹

The distinction between the "romance" and the "realistic" novel "in America fiction romance a useful one, the distinction is made by Richard Chase, who emphasize that the romance rejects verisimilitude, continuity of plot, and the reconciliation of character to society , and embodies instead" the aesthetic possibilities of radical forms of alienation, contradiction, and disorder.⁸⁰

While it is not my intention to extend this view in detail, or to promote it as a greatest distinguishing features of American fiction.

⁷⁸ Fearon, Peter. *War, Prosperity and Depression: The U. S. Economy, 1917-45*, pp. 244 – 55

⁷⁹ Vanspanckeren, Kaythrn. *Outline of American Literature*, p. 51

⁸⁰ Chase, Richard. *The American Novel & Its Tradition*, p. 2

I do want to suggest that it is within the framework of these widely accepted terms that the significance of American realism must initially be considered.

One might rather say that the American realism begins with Dreiser's sister Carrie (1900) and reaches maturity some twenty to thirty years later in the works of Dos Passos, Farewell, and Hemingway.⁸¹

4.3 Cosmopolitan Novelists

Henry James (1843 – 1916) once wrote introduction art, especially literary art, "make life, make interests & makes importance". James's fiction and criticism is the most highly conscious sophisticated, and difficult of its era.

With Twains, James is generally ranked as the greatest novelist of the second half of the 19th Century.

James is noted for his "International theme" – that is the complex relationship between the American and Cosmopolitan Europeans. What his biographer Leon Edel calls James's first, or "international" phase encompassed such works of Transatlantic sketches" (travel pieces, 1875), *The American* (1877), *Daisy Miller* (1879), and the portrait of a lady (1881). James second period was experimental. He exploited new subject matter feminism and social reform in *The Bostonians* (1886) and political intrigue in *The Princess Casamassima* (1885). He also attempted to write for the theater, but failed. In his major phase returned to international subjects, but treated them with increasing sophistication and psychological penetration. The complex mythical *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bird* (1904) date from this major period. If the main theme of Twain work is appearance and reality. James constant concern is perception. In James, only self awareness and clear perception of others yields wisdom and self-sacrificing love. As James develops, his novels became more psychological and less concerned with external events. In his later works, the most important events are all psychological usually moments of intense illumination that show characters their previous blindness. For example, in *The Ambassadors*, the idealistic, aging Lambert Strether uncovers a secret love affair and in doing so discovers a new complexity to his inner life. His rigid, upright, morality is humanized and enlarged as he discovers a capacity to accept those who have sinned.⁸²

4.4 Naturalism & Muckraking

Wharton's and James's dissections of hidden sexual and financial motivations at work in society link them with writers who seem superficially quite different, such as Stephen Crane, Jack London, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser and Louis Sinclair, like the Cosmopolitan novelists, but much more explicitly, these naturalists used realism to relate the individual in society. Others they exposed social problem and were influenced by Darwinian thought and the related philosophical doctrine of determinism which views individual as the helpless pawn of economic and social forces beyond their control.

⁸¹ Sundquist, Eric J. *American Realism: New Essays*, p. 4

⁸² Vanspanckeren, Kaythrn. *Outline of American Literature*, p. 51

Naturalism essentially a literary expression of determinism. Associated with bleak, realistic depictions of lower-class life, determinism religion as a motivating force in the world and instead perceive the universe as a machine. Eighteen-Century Enlightenment thinkers had also imagined the world as a machine, but as a perfect one invented by God and tending toward progress and human betterment, Naturalists imagined society, instead as a blind machine, godless and out of control.

The 19th Century American historian Henry Adams constructed an elaborate theory of history involving the idea of dynamo, or machine force, and entropy, or decay of force instead of progress, Adams sees inevitable decline in human society.

Stephen Crane, the son of Clergyman, put the loss of God most succinctly.

Aman said to the universe:

"Sir, I exist"

"However." Replied the universe:

"The fact has not created in me."

*A sense of obligation.*⁸³

4.5 Modernism & Experimentation (1914 – 1945)

Many historians have characterized the period between the two world wars as the United States "traumatic coming of age", despite the fact that U.S. direct involvement was relatively brief (1917 – 1918) and its casualties many fewer than those of its European allies. John Dos Passos expressed America's postwar disillusionment in the novel *Three Soldiers* (1921), when he noted that civilization was a "vast edifice of sham, and the war, instead of its crumbling, was its Fullest and most ultimate expression" shocked and permanently changed, Americans returned to their homeland but could never regain their innocence.

Nor could soldiers from rural America easily return to their roots. After experiencing the world, many now yearned for a modern, urban life. New farm machines such as planters, harvesters, and binders had drastically reduced the demand for farm jobs; yet despite their increased productivity, farmers were poor. Crop prices, like urban workers "wages", depended on unrestrained market forces heavily influenced by business interests. Government Subsidies for farmers and effective workers unions had not yet become established. "The chief business of the American people is business" President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed in 1925, and most agreed.

In the postwar "Big Boom" business flourished and the successful prospered beyond their wildest dreams. For the first time, many Americans enrolled in higher education- in the 1920 college enrollment doubled.⁸⁴

The middleclass prospered; Americans began to enjoy the world's highest national average income in this era, and many people purchased the ultimate status symbol – a car.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 53

⁸⁴ Fearon, Peter. *War, Prosperity and Depression: The U. S. Economy, 1917-45*, pp. 246 – 47

The typical urban American home glowed with electric lights and boasted a radio that connected the house with the outside world, and telephone, a camera, a typewriter, or a sewing machine. Like the businessman protagonist of Sinclair Lewis's novel *Babbitt* (1922), the average American approved of these machines because they were modern and because most were American inventions and American made.

Americans of the "Roaring Twenties" fell in love with other things. Most people went to the movies once a week. Although prohibition a nationwide ban on the production, transport and sale of alcohol institutes through the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, began in 1919, underground "speak-easies" and nightclubs proliferated, featuring Jazz music, cocktails and daring modes of dress and dance.⁸⁵

American women, in particular, felt liberated. Many had left farms and villages for home front duty in American cities during WWI. They cut their hair short, wore short dresses and gloried in the right to vote assured by the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1920. They boldly spoke their mind and took public roles in society.

Western youths were rebelling angry with the savage war, the older generation they held responsible, and difficult postwar economic condition that, ironically, allowed Americans with dollars, like writers F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound – to live abroad handsomely on very little money, intellectual currents, particularly Freudian psychology and to a lesser extent Marxism implied a "godless" world view and contributed to the breakdown of traditional values.⁸⁶

Americans abroad absorbed these views and brought them back to the United States where they took root, firing the imagination of young writers and artists. William Faulkner, for example, a 20th-Century American novelist, employed Freudian elements in all his works, as did virtually all serious American fiction writers after WWI.

Despite outward modernity, young Americans of the 1920s were "the lost generation" - so named by literary portraitist Gertrude Stein. Without a stable, traditional structure of values, the individual lost a sense of identity. The secure, supportive family life; the familiar, settled community; the natural and eternal rhythms of nature that guide the planting and harvesting on a farm; the sustaining sense of patriotism; moral values inculcated by religious beliefs and observations – all seemed undermined by WWI and its aftermath.

Many novels, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), evoke the extravagance and disillusionment of the lost generation. In TS. Eliot's, Western civilization is symbolized by a bleak desert in desperate need of rain.

The world depression of the 1930s affected most of the population of the U.S. workers lost their jobs, and factories shut down and banks failed. Midwestern droughts turned the "breadbasket" of America into a dust bowl. Farmers left the Midwest for California in search of jobs.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 250

⁸⁶ Vanspanckeren, Kaythrn. *Outline of American Literature*, p. 55

At the peak of the depression, one-third of all Americans were out of work. Many saw the Depression as a punishment for sins of excessive materialism and loose living.

Exposed poverty, cruelty and corruption. They ignored the Comic side of life. Since humanity, from this point of view, is the mercy of an indifferent universe, their characters are victims who have no will, in their method, Naturalism closely resembles Realism; providing the reader with their selected details to produce a scientifically precise slice of life. The realism of this story is quite obvious; the subject matter is realistic, the happenings as well as the characters. They are realistic in the sense that they corresponded to varying degrees to what happens in real life to characters who seem to be similar to human beings we come in contact within the course of life.

The impression is the most important characteristic of this story. This is a movement which started in painting in the middle of the nineteenth century in France.

Instead of painting a tree and impressionist artist would paint the personal impression a tree leaves on him. For example, his impression of a tree is just a blot of green. Writers who belonged to the same school considered their own personal moods & attitudes legitimate elements in depicting character or setting or action. To them registration of such moods & attitudes is more significant than a photographic presentation of cold facts, as in realism. In other words, the object of the impressionist is to present material not as it is to the objective observer but it is seen or felt by the impressionist or a character in a single passing moment.

The highly selective details in an impressionistic piece of fiction corresponded to the painters brush strokes that can suggest impression.

The United States had preached a gospel of business in the 1920s; now, many Americans supported a more active role for government in the New Deal programs of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Federal money created jobs in public works.

These remedies helped, but only the industrial build-up of WWII renewed prosperity. After Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, disused shipyards and factories came to bustling life mass-producing ships, airplanes, jeeps and supplies. War production and experimentation led to new technologies, including the nuclear bomb. Witnessing the first experimental nuclear blast, Robert Oppenheimer, leader of an international team of nuclear scientists, prophetically quoted a Hindu poem "I am become Death, the shattered of worlds".⁸⁷

4.6 American Versions of Modernism

Used in the broadest sense, "modernism is a catchall term for any kind of literary production in the interwar period that deals with the modern world. More narrowly, it refers to work that represents the transformation of traditional society under the pressures of modernity, and that breaks down traditional literary forms in doing so. Much modernist literature of this sort, which critics increasingly now set apart as "high modernism," is in a sense anti modern: it interprets modernity as an experience of loss. As its title underlines,

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 57

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* – the great poem of high modernism – represents the modern world as a scene of ruin.⁸⁸

Modernism began as a European response to the effects of World War I, which were far more devastating on the Continent than they were in the United States. It involved other art forms – sculpture, painting, dance – as well as literature. The poetry of William Butler Yeats; James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922); Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* (1913-27); Thomas Mann's novels and short stories, including *The Magic Mountain* (1927) – these were only a few of the literary products of this movement in England and on the Continent.

At the heart of the high modernist aesthetic lay the conviction that the previously sustaining structures of human life, whether social, political, religious, or artistic, had been destroyed or shown up as falsehoods or, at best, arbitrary and fragile human constructions. Order, sequence, and unity in works of art might well express human desires for coherence rather than reliable intuitions of reality. Generalization, abstraction, and high-flown writing might conceal rather than convey the real. The form of a story, with its beginnings, complications, and resolutions, might be an artifice imposed on the flux and fragmentation of experience. To the extent that art incorporated such a false order, it had to be renovated.⁸⁹

Some high modernist works, however, order their discontinuous elements into conspicuous larger patterns, patterns often drawn from world literature, mythologies, and religions. As its title advertises, Joyce's *Ulysses* maps the lives of its modern characters onto Homer's *Odyssey*; Eliot's *The Waste Land* layers the Christian narrative of death and resurrection over a broad range of quest myths. The question for readers lies in the meaning of these borrowed structures and mythic parallels: do they reveal profound similarities or ironic contrasts between the modern world and earlier times? For some writers and readers, the adaptability of ancient stories to modern circumstances testified to their deep truth, underlying the surface buzz and confusion of modernity; for others, such parallels indicated Christianity to be only a myth, a merely human construction for creating order out of, and finding purpose in, history's flux.

If meaning is a human construction, then meaning lies in the process of generating meaning; if meaning lies obscured deep underneath the ruins of modern life, then it must be effort-fully sought out. Modernist literature therefore tends to foreground the search for meaning over didactic statement, and the subject matter of modernist writing often became, by extension, the poem or literary work itself. While there have long been paintings about painting and poems about poetry, high modernist writing was especially self-reflexive, concerned with its own nature as art and with its questioning of previous traditions of literature. Ironically – because this subject matter was motivated by deep concern about the interrelation of literature and life – this subject often had the effect of limiting the audience for a modernist work; high modernism demanded of its ideal readers an encyclopedic knowledge of the traditions it fragmented or ironically. Nevertheless, over time, the principles of modernism became increasingly influential.

⁸⁸ Loeffelholz, Mary. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th edition, p. 1184

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 1186

Though modernist techniques were initiated by poets, they transformed fiction in this period as well. Prose writers strove for directness, compression, and vividness. They were sparing of words. The average novel became quite a bit shorter than it had been in the nineteenth century, when a novel was expected to fill two or even three volumes. The modernist aesthetic gave a new significance to the short story, which had previously been thought of as a relatively slight artistic form. (Poems, too, became shorter, as narrative poems lost ground to lyrics and the repetitive patterns of rhyme and meter that had helped sustain long poems on previous centuries lost ground to free verse.) Victorian or realistic fiction achieved its effects by accumulation and saturation; modern fiction preferred suggestion. Victorian fiction often featured an authoritative narrator; modern fiction tended to be written in the first person or to limit the reader to one character's point of view on the action. This limitation accorded with the modernist sense that "truth" does not exist objectively but is the product of the mind's interaction with reality. The selected point of view is often that of a naïve or marginal person – a child or an outsider – to convey better the reality of confusion rather than the myth of certainty.⁹⁰

The contents of modernist works may be as varied as the interests and observations of their authors; indeed, with a stable external world in question, subjectivity was ever more valued and accepted in literature. Modernists in general, however, emphasized the concrete sensory image or detail over abstract statement. Allusions to literary, historical, philosophical, or religious details of the past often keep company, in modernist works, with vignettes of contemporary life, chunks of popular culture, dream imagery, and symbolism drawn from author's private repertory of life experience. A work built from these various levels and kinds of material may move across time and space, shift from the public to the personal, and open literature as a field for every sort of concern. The inclusion of all sorts of material previously deemed "unliterary" in works of high seriousness involved the use of language that might previously have been thought improper, including representations of the speech of the uneducated and the inarticulate, the colloquial, slangy, and the popular. Traditional realistic fiction had incorporated colloquial and dialect speech, often to comic effect, in its representation of the broad tapestry of social life; but such speakers were usually framed by a narrator's educated literary voice, conveying truth and culture. In modernist writing like William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, these voices assume the full burden of the narrative's authority; this is what Ernest Hemingway had in mind when he asserted that the American literary tradition began with *Huckleberry Finn*.⁹¹

"Serious" literature between the two world wars thus found itself in a curious relationship with the culture at large. If it was attacking the old-style idea of traditional literature, it felt itself attacked in turn by the ever-growing industry of popular literature. The reading audience in America was vast, but it preferred a kind of book quite different from that turned out by literary high modernist; tales of romance or adventure, historical novels, crime fiction, and westerns became popular modes that enjoyed a success the serious writer could only dream of. The problem was that often he or she did dream of it; unrealistically, perhaps, the Ezra Pounds of the era imagined themselves with an audience of millions.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 1186

⁹¹ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, pp. 166 – 70

When, on occasion, this dream came true – as it did for F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway – writers often accused themselves of having sold out.

Some Writers in the period were able to use these opportunities to cross over the hierarchies separating high modernism from middlebrow and popular culture – and they crossed them in both directions. Kay Boyle's early short stories and poems appeared in little magazines like *Broom* and *Transition* in the 1920s; in the 1930s, however, as she began writing of the rise of fascism in Europe, she found a receptive larger audience in the *New Yorker* and *Harper's Magazine*. Raymond Chandler began his career in the early 1930s writing crime fiction for cheap popular magazines, moved into authoring film scripts and full-length novels issued by mainstream publishers, and by the 1950s had earned enough respectability to be interviewed about his artistic principles in *Harper's*. Where writers like William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald experienced Hollywood as a graveyard of serious literary ambition, Chandler found in the film industry not only financial rewards but also a powerful new medium for his distinctive popular modernism – a modernism as elliptical and innovative, in its own terms, as Hemingway's.⁹²

4.7 Modernism Abroad & On Native Grounds

The profession of authorship in the United States has always defined itself in part as a patriotic enterprise, whose aims were to help develop a cultural life for the nation and embody national values. High modernism, however, was a self-consciously international movement, and the leading American exponents of high modernism tended to be permanent expatriates like Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, H. D., and T. S. Eliot. These writers left the United States because they found the country lacking in a tradition of high culture and indifferent, if not downright hostile, to artistic achievement. They also believed that a national culture could never be more than parochial. In London in the first two decades of the twentieth century and in Paris during the 1920s, they found a vibrant community of dedicated artists and a society that respected them and allowed them a great deal of personal freedom. Yet they seldom thought of themselves as deserting their nation and only Eliot gave up American citizenship (sometimes, too, the traffic went in the other direction, as when the British-born poet Mina Loy became an American citizen). They thought of themselves as bringing the United States into the larger context of European culture. The ranks of these permanent expatriates were swelled by American writers who lived abroad for some part of the period; Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Claude McKay, Katherine Anne Porter, Nella Larsen, Robert Frost, Kay Boyle, and Eugene O'Neill all did so, as did many others including Sinclair Lewis and Djuna Barnes.⁹³

Those writers who came back, however, and those who never left took very seriously the task of integrating modernism ideas and methods with American subject matter. Not every experimental modernist writer disconnected literary ambitions from national belonging; Hart Crane and Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams, for example, all wanted to write "American" works as such. Some writers – as the title of John Dos Passos's *U.S.A.* clearly shows – attempted to speak for the nation as a whole. Crane's long poem *The*

⁹² Lyttle, Richard B. *Ernest Hemingway: The Life & The Legend*, p. 70

⁹³ Loeffelholz, Mary. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th edition, p. 1188

Bridge and William's *Paterson* both take an American city as symbol and expand it to a vision for all America, following the model established by Walt Whitman. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is similarly ambitious, and many writers addressed the whole nation in individual works – for example, E. E. Cumming's "next to of course god america i" and Claude McKay's "America." And a profoundly modern writer like William Faulkner cannot be extricated from his commitment to writing about his native South.

Like Faulkner, many writers of the period chose to identify themselves with the American scene and to root their work in a specific region, continuing a tradition of regionalist American writing that burgeoned in the years following the American Civil War. Their perspective on the regions was sometimes celebratory and sometimes critical. Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Sherwood Anderson, and Willa Cather worked with the Midwest; Cather grounded her later work in the Southwest; Black Elk's Lakota autobiography recalled the high plains of South Dakota and Wyoming; John Steinbeck and Carlos Bulosan wrote about California; Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost identified their work with New England. An especially strong center of regional literary activity emerged in the South, which had a weak literary tradition up to the Civil War.⁹⁴ Thomas Wolfe's was an Appalachian South of hardy mountain people; Katherine Anne Porter wrote about her native Texas as a heterogeneous combination of frontier, plantation, and Latin cultures. Zora Neale Hurston drew on her childhood memories of the all-black town of Eatonville, Florida, for much of her best-known fiction, including her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. William Faulkner depicted a South at once specific to his native state of Mississippi and expanded into a mythic region anguished by racial and historical conflict.

As the pairing of Hurston and Faulkner suggests, the history of race in the United States was central to the specifically national subject matter to which many American modernists remained committed. Although race as a subject potentially implicated all American writers, it was African Americans whose contributions most signally differentiated American modernism from that of Europe.⁹⁵ The numerous writers associated with the Harlem Renaissance made it impossible ever to think of a national literature without the work of black Americans. Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neale Hurston attained particular prominence at the time; but others, including Claude McKay and Nella Larsen, were also well known. All were influenced by the values of modernism; both Hughes, for example, with his incorporation of blues rhythms into poetry, and Hurston, with her poetic depictions of folk culture, applied modernist techniques to represent twentieth-century African American lives. From time to time, writers associated with the Renaissance expressed protest and anger – Hughes, in particular, wrote a number of powerful anti-lynching and anti-capitalist poems; but in general the movement was deliberately upbeat, taking the line that racial justice was about to become reality in the United States or, like Hurston, focusing more on the vitality of black culture than on the burdens of racism. At least part of this approach was strategic – the bulk of the readership for Harlem authors was white. The note of pure anger was not expressed until Richard Wright, who had come to literary maturity in Chicago, published *Native Son* in 1940.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 1189

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 1188

Contributions to the Harlem Renaissance came from artists in many media; an influence equal to or greater than that of the writers came from musicians.⁹⁶ Jazz and blues, African American in origin, are felt by many to be the most authentically American art forms the nation that has ever produced. African American singers and musicians in his period achieved worldwide reputations and were often much more highly regarded abroad than in the United States.

American literary women had been active on the national scene from Anne Bradstreet forward. Their increasing prominence in the nineteenth century generated a backlash from some male modernists, who asserted their own artistic seriousness by identifying women writers with the didactic, popular writing against which they rebelled. But women refused to stay on the sidelines and associated themselves with all the important literary trends of the era; H. D. and Amy Lowell with imagism, Marianne Moore and Mina Loy with high modernism; Willa Cather with mythic regionalism, Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen with the Harlem Renaissance, Katherine Anne Porter with psychological fiction; Edna St. Vincent Millay and Kay Boyle with social and sexual liberation. Many of these writers concentrated on depictions of women characters or women's thoughts and experiences. Yet few labeled themselves feminists. The passage of the suffrage amendment in 1920 had taken some of the energy out of feminism that would not return until the 1960s. Some women writers found social causes like labor and racism more important than woman's rights; others focused their energies on struggles less amenable to public, legal remedies, as when Mina Lov sought to link motherhood to an energetic vision of female sexuality. Nevertheless, these literary women were clearly pushing back the boundaries of the permissible, demanding new cultural freedom for women. Equally important, they were operating as public figures and taking positions on public causes.

Thus the 1920s saw numerous conflicts over the shape of the future, which acquired new urgency when the stock market crashed in 1929 and led to an economic depression with a 25 percent unemployment rate. Known as the Great Depression, this period of economic hardship did not fully end until the United States entered World War II, which happened after the Japanese attacked the American fleet at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Because Japan and Germany were allies, Germany declared war on the United States, thus involving the country in another European conflict. The war unified the country ideologically; revitalized industry, which devoted itself to goods, needed for the war effort; and put people to work. Indeed, with so many men away at war, women went into the work force in unprecedented numbers. Germany surrendered in the spring of 1945. The war ended in August 1945 following the detonation of two atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Europe was in ruins and – regardless of the wishes of its citizens – the United States had become both an industrial society and a major global power.

The two wars, then, bracket a period during which, no matter how internally fractured it was, the United States became a modern nation. In fact, the internal fractures can be understood as diverse responses to the irreversible advent of modernity. American literature in these decades registers all sides of the era's struggles and debates, while sharing a

⁹⁶ Ward, Geoffery C. and Burnes, Ken. *Jazz: A History of American Music*, p. 38

commitment to explore the many meanings of modernity and express them in forms appropriate to a modern vision. Some writers rejoiced while others lamented; some anticipated future utopias and others believed that civilization had collapsed; but the period's most influential voices believed that old forms would not work for new times, and were inspired by the possibility of creating something entirely new.

The totality of the literary output produced during this period is called American literary modernism. Among literary conflicts, perhaps three issues stand out, all of them related to the accelerating transformations and conflicts of modernity. One conflict centered on the uses of literary tradition. To some, a work registering awareness and appreciation of literary history – through allusion to other literary works, or by using traditional poetic forms and poetic language – seemed imitative and old-fashioned. To others, a work failing to register such awareness and appreciation was bad or incompetent writing. For still others, literary history was best appreciated oppositionally; modernist works often allude to previous literature ironically, or deliberately fracture traditional literary formulas. A related conflict involved the place of popular culture in serious literature. Throughout the era, popular culture gained momentum and influence. Some writers regarded it as crucial for the future of literature that popular forms be embraced; to others, good literature by definition had to reject the cynical commercialism of popular culture.

Another issue was the question of how engaged in political and social struggle a work of literature ought to be – of how far literature should exert itself for (or against) social transformation. Should art be domain unto itself, exploring universal questions and enunciating transcendent truths, or should art participate in the politics of the times? For some, a work that was political in aim counted as propaganda, not art; others thought that apolitical literature was evasive and simplistic; for still others, the call to keep art out of politics was covertly political, in conservative directions, even if it did not acknowledge itself as such.

The researcher predicts that:

The 1920s period witness a great number of conflicts over the shape of the future due to economy when the stock market crashed in 1929 and lead to an economic depression that have been ended when the United States entered World War II, and became major global power. In this time American literature registers all sides of the era's struggles that create American literary modernism.

4.8 Changing Times

The transformations of the first half of the twentieth century were driven both by ideas and by changes in the economic and technological underpinnings of daily life. Much social energy in the 1920s went into enlarging the boundaries for acceptable self-expression. Adherents to small-town, white, Protestant values such as the work ethic, social conformity, duty, and respectability, clashed ideologically not only with internationally minded radicals but also with newly affluent young people who argued for more diverse, permissive, and tolerant styles of life. To some extent this debate recapitulated the long-time American conflict between the individual and society, a conflict going back to the seventeenth-century Puritans and epitomized in Ralph Waldo Emerson's call, in the 1840s; "whosoever would be a man, must be a non-conformist."

Economic and Technology are the most factors that have changed the transformed daily life. In 1920s what change people socially are enlarging and accept self-expression.

World became small-town which means new generation that needs more diverse permissive leads to tolerant style of life.

African Americans, like women, became mobile in these years as never before. Around 1915, as a direct result of the industrial needs of World War I, opportunities opened for African Americans in the factories of the North, and the so-called Great Migration out of the South began. Not only did migration give the lie to southern white claims that African Americans were content with southern segregationist practices, it damaged the South's economy by draining off an important segment of its working people. Even though African Americans faced racism, segregation, and racial violence in the North, a black American presence soon became powerfully visible in American cultural life. Harlem, a section of New York City, attained an almost wholly black population of over 150,000 by the mid-1920s; from this "city within a city." African Americans wrote, performed, composed, and painted. Here as well they founded two major journals of opinion and culture, *The Crisis* (in 1910) and *Opportunity* (in 1923). This work influenced writers, painters, and musicians of other ethnicities, and became known collectively as the Harlem Renaissance.⁹⁷

The famous black intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois had argued in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) that African Americans had a kind of double consciousness – of themselves as Americans and as blacks. This doubleness contributed to debates within African American cultural life. The Harlem Renaissance sparked arguments between those who wanted to claim membership in the cultural at large and those who wanted to stake out a separate artistic domain; between those who wanted to celebrate rural African American life-ways and those committed to urban intellectuality; between those who wanted to join the American mainstream and those who, disgusted by American race prejudice, aligned themselves with worldwide revolutionary movement; between those who celebrated a "primitive" African heritage and those who rejected the idea as a degrading stereotype. African American women, as Nella Larsen's novel *Quicksand* testifies, could experience these divisions with special force. Women were very much called upon in efforts to "uplift," advance, and educate the black community, but these communal obligations could be felt as constraints upon individual freedom and exploration; meanwhile the white social world, given to eroticizing or sexualizing black women, offered few alternatives.⁹⁸

Class inequality, as well as American racial divisions, continued to generate intellectual and artistic debate in the interwar years. The nineteenth-century United States had been host to many radical movements – labor activism, utopianism, socialism, anarchism – inspired by diverse sources. In the twentieth century, especially following the rise of the Soviet Union, the American left increasingly drew its intellectual and political program from the Marxist tradition. The German philosopher Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) located the roots of human behavior in economics. He claimed that industrializing societies were structurally divided into two antagonistic classes based on different relations to the means of production –

⁹⁷ Safadi, Issam. *The 20th Century American Literature*, p. 67

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 172

capital versus labor. The Industrial Revolution arose from the accumulation of surplus capital by industrialists paying the least possible amount to workers; the next stage in world history would be when workers took control of the means of production for themselves. Because, to Marx, the ideas and ideals of any particular society could represent the interests of only its dominant class, he derided individualism as a middle-class or "bourgeois" value that could only discourage work solidarity.

Sometimes wars change life style and sometimes class inequality and racial divisions do so. The need of weapons for example opens the opportunities for African Americans to be changed and showed, and also for class inequality as Karl Marx located the roots of human behavior in economics.

Marx's ideas formed the basis for communist political parties across Europe. In 1917, a Communist revolution in Russia led by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870 – 1914) overthrew the tsarist regime, instituted the "dictatorship of the proletariat" that Marx had called for, and engineered the development of Communism as a unified international movement. Americans who thought of themselves as Marxists in the 1920s and 1930s were usually connected with the Communist party and subjected to government surveillance and occasional violence, as were socialists, anarchists, union organizers, and others who opposed American free enterprise and marketplace competition. Although politics directed from outside the national boundaries was, almost by definition, "un-American," many adherents of these movements hoped to make the United States conform to its stated ideals, guaranteed liberty and justice for all.⁹⁹

Where writers were concerned, a defining conflict between American ideals and American realities in the 1920s was the Sacco-Vanzetti case. Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants, not Communists but avowed anarchists; on April 15, 1920 they were arrested near Boston after a murder during a robbery. They were accused of that crime, then tried and condemned to death in 1921; but it was widely believed that they had not received a fair trial and that their political beliefs had been held against them. After a number of appeals, they were executed in 1927, maintaining their innocence to the end. John Dos Passos and Katherine Anne Porter were among the many writers and intellectuals who demonstrated in their defense; several were arrested and jailed. It is estimated that well over a hundred poems (including works by William Carlos Williams, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Carl Sandburg) along with six plays and eight novels of the time treated the incident from a sympathetic perspective.¹⁰⁰

Like the Sacco-Vanzetti case in the 1920s, the Scottsboro case in the 1930s brought many American writers and intellectuals, black and white, together in a cause – here, the struggle against racial bias in the justice system. In 1931 nine black youths were indicted in Scottsboro, Alabama, for the alleged rape of two white women in a railroad freight car. They were all found guilty, and some were sentenced to death. The U.S. Supreme Court reversed convictions twice; in a second trial one of the alleged victims retracted her testimony; in 1937 charges against five were dropped. But four went to jail, in many people's view unfairly. The Communist were especially active in the Scottsboro defense;

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 138

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 1110

but people across the political spectrum saw the case as crucial to the question of whether black people could receive fair trials in the American South. The unfair trial of an African American man became a literary motif in much writing of the period and beyond, including Richard Wright's *Native Son*, William Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust*, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.¹⁰¹

It was important to mention the role of the industrial revolution that affected the society, socially and economically. It is known that economic change leads to social changed ends to political change, and here surely the writers thought should be coping up with people's interests.

Some writers were concerned to show conflict between American ideals and realists such as Sacco-Vanzetti, Necola, Sacco who avowed anarchists finally they were arrested on a robbery and sentenced to death because of their political beliefs.

The Great Depression was a worldwide phenomenon, and social unrest led to the rise of fascist dictatorships in Europe, among which were those of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in Spain, Benito Mussolini in Italy, and Adolf Hitler in Germany. Hitler's program, which was to make Germany rich and strong by conquering the rest of Europe, led inexorably to World War II.

In the United States, the Depression made politics and economics the salient issues and overrode questions of individual freedom with questions of mass collapse. Free-enterprise capitalism had always justified itself by argument that although the system made a small number of individuals immensely wealthy it also guaranteed better lives for all. This assurance now rang hollow. The suicides of millionaire bankers and stockbrokers made the headlines, but more compelling was the enormous toll among ordinary people who lost homes, jobs, farms, and life savings in the stock market crash. Conservatives advised waiting until things got better; radicals espoused immediate social revolution. In this atmosphere, the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the presidency in 1932 was a victory for American pragmatism; his series of liberal reforms – social security, acts creating jobs in the public sector, welfare, and unemployment insurance – cushioned the worst effects of the Depression and avoided the civil war that many had thought inevitable.¹⁰²

The terrible situation in the United States produced a significant increase in Communist party membership and prestige in the 1930s. Numerous intellectuals allied themselves with its causes, even if they did not become party members. An old radical journal, *The Masses*, later *The New Masses*, became the official literary voice of the party, and various other radical groups founded journals to represent their viewpoints. Visitors to the Soviet Union returned with glowing reports about a true workers' democracy and prosperity for all. The appeal of Communism was significantly enhanced by its claim to be an opponent of fascism. Communists fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War of 1936 and 1937. Hitler's nightmare policies of genocide and radical superiority and his plans for a general European war to secure more room for the superior German "folk" to live became

¹⁰¹ Loeffelholz, Mary. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th edition, pp. 1179 – 81

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 1182

increasingly evident as European refugees began to flee to the United States in the 1930s, and many believed that the USSR would be the only country able to withstand the German war machine. But Soviet Communism showed another side to Americans when American Communists were ordered to break up the meetings of other radical groups; when Josef Stalin, the Soviet dictator, instituted a series of brutal purges in the Soviet Union beginning in 1936; and when in 1939 he signed a pact promising not to go to war against Germany. The disillusionment and betrayal felt by many radicals over these acts led to many 1930s left-wing activists' becoming staunch anti-Communists after World War II.¹⁰³

To Sum up with, political, Economics, and social life are in a circulation links all of them in any culture affect the literature life.

In U.S.A. Depression made politics and economics the biggest issue and vital question of persons freedom with questions of mass collapse. In U.S.A. the member of the communist party intellectuals allied themselves with its causes (the masses later became the official literary voice of the party).

4.9 The Economic Novel

The theme of these earlier novels was politics as revealed by the Gilded Age; on the other hand *The Bread-winners* was one of the early economic novels. Like *Democracy* it was an outcome of the discussions of the vivacious trio, John Hay, Clarence King, and Henry Adams. Written in 1882 by Hay, it was published anonymously in the *Century Magazine* from August, 1883, to January, 1884. Hay never publicly acknowledged the authorship, and it was not until the edition of 1915 appeared with an introductory note by his son, that his name appeared on the title-page. It achieved a notable success – far beyond that of *Democracy*; was warmly praised and sharply criticized; was replied to in other novels; all of which goes to show that it fanned the coals that were smoldering in the industrial life of the day, threatening a general conflagration. It was the first recognition on the part of literature that a class struggle impended in America – a first girding of the loins of polite letters to put down the menace that looked out from the underworld of the proletariat; and as such it assumes importance as an historical document quite beyond its significance as a work of art.

The motive of *The Bread-winners* is the defense of property against the "dangerous classes"; its immediate theme is a satire of labor unions. In an introductory note to the later edition, Clarence Leonard Hay explicitly denies this. "*The Bread-winners*," he says, "is not directed against organized labor. It is rather a protest against the disorganization and demoralization of labor by unscrupulous leaders and politicians who, in the guise of helping the workingman, use his earnings to enrich themselves." He then states the theme thus:

It is a defense of the right of an individual to hold property, and a plea for the better protection of that property by law and order. Civilization rests upon law, order, and obedience. The agitator who preaches that obedience to lawful authority is a sin, and patriotism an illusion, is more dangerous to society than the thief who breaks in at night and robs the householder.

¹⁰³ Ibid, p. 1183

The editor thinks well of the American workingmen. At heart they are sound; their motives are honest; but their ignorance of fundamental economic principles too easily suffers them to fall victim to unscrupulous demagogues whose only object is their exploitation. To prevent such "disorganization and demoralization of labor," which can bring only suffering and failure upon men ill prepared to endure them, is therefore the patriotic duty of the educated classes. The proletariat is groping blindly for leadership; it is stirring uneasily; if the educated classes do not offer an enlightened leadership, the laborer will follow low cunning to immoral ends and blind leaders of the blind will bring irretrievable disaster upon civilization. Selfish appeal will kindle envy and hate; the rich and prosperous will go down before brute force; the rights of property will be destroyed; law, order, and obedience will give place to anarchy.

Such, briefly developed, is Clarence Hay's exposition of *The Bread-winners*; and the exposition seems to suggest the social views of John Hay. He probably had no antipathy to labor unions which are guided in their policy by "sound economic principles" and right "morality" – as the capitalist understands such things. But labor unions which follow their own leaders, which persist in thinking out a proletarian economy, which are bent on substituting a social morality for a property morality, which refuse to be led by the "educated classes," he was bitterly hostile to. It is the unrest furthered by rebellious labor unions that he fears, and it is this that gives point and animus to his satire. That *The Bread-winners* was conceived in a spirit of beneficent paternalism towards the proletariat the present – day reader will have difficulty in discovering. It is too frank in defense of vested interests, it looks with too stern a disfavor upon all labor leaders who refuse to accept the finality of the present industrial order, it exudes too strong an odor of property-morality, to deceive an intelligent reader. Read today it is clearly a partisan defense of economic individualism, an attack upon the rising labor movement, a grotesque satire smeared with an unctuous morality – and because of this, a perfect expression of the spirit of upper-class America in those uneasy eighties with their strikes and lockouts and Haymarket riots.

The plot of the book is slight – it is the story of the oily machinations of Ananias Offitt, a professional agitator who lives off simple honest workmen whom he seduces, organizes a secret Brotherhood of the Breadwinners, urges on riot and robbery at the time of a great strike, is checkmated by the hero – a cultivated and elegant clubman by the name of Captain Arthur Farnham – betrays his tool, and in the end is murdered by him. Fortunately for the welfare of property interests there are "honest" workmen, men like Leopold Grosshammer, who rally to the support of law and order and eventually break the strike. The love-story is provided with two heroines, and the contrast between them emphasizes the class line which property draws. The upper-class heroine is as correct and colorless as Cooper's Eve Effingham: the lower-class heroine is as vulgarly handsome and as brazen as "such people" are supposed to be. A high-school education has spoilt her for the factory or domestic service, filling her empty head with foolish ambitions, but it could not make a lady of her.

Hay was in Cleveland at the time of the great strike in 1877, and he was profoundly disturbed by the experience. Writing to his father-in-law, he said:

The prospects of labor and capital both seem gloomy enough. The very devil seems to have entered into the lower classes of workingmen, and there are plenty of scoundrels to

encourage them to all lengths... I am thankful you did not *see* and *hear* what took place during the strikes. You were saved a very painful experience of human folly and weakness, as well as crime.¹⁰⁴

The crying evils of a buccaneer industrialism which lay behind the strikes, Hay ignored completely. To provide his idyllic background of contented labor before it is seduced by demagogues, he goes back to a decadent domestic economy. His "honest and contented workman" is a carpenter who works for another carpenter – not a factory-hand tending a machine; and when the demagogue comes with his specious appeal he is triumphantly refuted.

"What are we, anyhow?" continued the greasy apostle of labor. "We are slaves; we are Roossian scurfs. We work as many hours as our owners like; we take what pay they choose to give us; we ask their permission to live and breathe."

"Oh, that's a lie," Sleeney interrupted, with unbroken calmness. "Old Saul Matchin and me come to an agreement about time and pay, and both of us was suited. Ef he's got his heel onto me, I don't feel it."

John Hay was convinced that an "educated leadership" alone could save American democracy. But unfortunately – despite his great reputation in diplomacy and statesmanship – his own education seems to have been faulty. He had lately risen into the exploiting class, and he accepted the ready-made opinions of that class. His biographer has admirably stated his position during the days of the strike riot when he was clarifying his views:

Those riots of 1887 burnt deep into Colonel Hay's heart. Like the rest of the world, he had theorized on the likelihood of war between Capital and Labor; but he had reassured himself by the comfortable assumption that under American conditions – equal opportunity for all, high wages, equal laws, and the ballot-box – no angry laboring class could grow up. The riots blew such vapor away: for they proved that the angry class already existed, that the ballot-box instead of weakening strengthened it, and that not only the politicians of both parties but also the constituted authorities would avoid, as long as possible, grappling with it.

The event was too large to be dismissed as an outburst of temper: it must be accepted as a symptom, a portent. Did it mean that a cancer had attacked the body politic and would spread to the vital organs? Was Democracy a failure, - Democracy - for more than a century the dream of the down-trodden, the ideal of those who loved mankind and believed in its perfectibility, the Utopia which good men predicted should somehow turn out to be a reality? Hay had sung his paeon to liberty; Hay had throbbed at the efforts of patriots in Spain and in France to overthrow their despots; he had even exulted over the signs of democratization in England. Had he been the victim of mirage? Was Democracy not the final goal of human society, but only a half-way stage between the despotism of Autocracy and the despotism of Socialism?

These questions he could not evade... But he held, as did many of his contemporaries, that the assaults on Property were inspired by demagogues who used as their tools the loafers,

¹⁰⁴ Thayer, William Roscoe. *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, Vol. II, pp. 5 – 6

the criminals, the vicious, - Society's dregs who have been ready at all times to rise against laws and government. That you have property is proof of industry and foresight on your part or your father's; that you have nothing, is a judgment on your laziness and vices, or on your improvidence. The world is a moral world; which it would not be if virtue and vice received the same rewards.¹⁰⁵

John Hay, it must be recalled, had enjoyed a college education through the aid of relatives, he had been taken under the wing of Lincoln and become his private secretary, he had been thrust forward by influential politicians, and finally he had married wealth – were these things proofs of virtue in a moral world that rewards foresight and punishes improvidence? Or were they rather the marks of a skillful climber? John Hay was a charming and cultivated gentleman, but he was also a child of the Gilded Age, with the materialisms of his generation in his blood. The young man had been an Abolitionist and a political radical; the old man was a McKinley conservative whose chief claim to reputation lay in the "open-door" policy in China. The beginnings of this shift to conservatism seem to have coincided with his marriage to Miss Stone, daughter of a Cleveland capitalist whose interests were threatened by the great strike. He was temperamentally one of John Adams's "natural aristocrats," and having gained entrée into aristocratic circles he took the coloring of his new environment. A son of the frontier, he became a man of the world. Prosperity was necessary to him.

Professing a deep attachment to democratic institutions and hatred of all monarchical principles – in Spain and France – John Hay ceased to be a Lincoln democrat, and took his place amongst the ruling class, accepting the principles of the rising plutocracy. *The Bread-winners* is a dramatization of the Federalistic principle that government exists for the protection of property. "Remembering the date when *The Bread-winners* was written," says his biographer, "we must regard it as the first important polemic in American fiction in defense of Property."¹⁰⁶ John Hay had become a thoroughgoing Hamiltonian. In his younger days his sympathies had gone out to radical republicans everywhere, and he watched the rising tide of liberalism with great satisfaction. In his first visits to Europe he followed closely the liberal movements. He was a warm admirer of Castelar, eulogizing him as one of the heroic figures of modern times. In a lecture in 1869 on "The Progress of Democracy in Europe" he spoke with the zeal of an advanced liberal. But soon thereafter the ardor of his zeal lessened. On later trips to Europe he did not display a like sympathy with the program of the Social Democrats. As economic unrest crept into politics, as strikes and boycotts began to disturb his father-in-law's business, he discovered less sympathy for revolutionary movements. Political revolutions sponsored by respectable middle-class leaders, were one thing; economic revolutions sponsored by the proletariat were quite another thing. A democracy that breeds more democracy is clearly dangerous. So much as has already been accomplished is excellent, of course; but nothing further must be attempted.

There is sound strategy in offensive epithets. And so, taking counsel of fear, he applied to the current economic unrest the words most offensive to polite American ears, and called it socialism, anarchism. Without pausing to weigh the demands of the farmer and the

¹⁰⁵ Thayer, William Roscoe. *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, Vol. I, pp. 6 – 7

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 15

workingman, with no understanding of the meaning of the great proletarian movement then going forward in Europe, he appealed in defense of property to the specter of economic leveling before which every good American of the eighties recoiled in horror. As early as 1869, speaking of Castelar, he said: "He has too much sense and integrity to follow the lead of the Socialist fanatics."¹⁰⁷ Commenting on the unsettled state of things in Paris in 1883, he wrote: "The laborers have had the mischief put into their heads by trade-unions."¹⁰⁸ As he contemplated the agrarian unrest of the seventies and later, he discovered in Greenbackism and Populism only another form of this hateful socialism. It was the work of agitators who were plain rascals.

He was greatly disturbed in 1875 at the state of politics, "with half the Republicans and all the Democrats inflationists at heart, and carrying on a campaign on the bald issue whether the nation shall be a liar and a thief or not."¹⁰⁹ And so late as 1900 he exclaimed petulantly: "This last month of Bryan, roaring out his desperate appeals to hate and envy, is having its effect on the dangerous classes. Nothing so monstrous has as yet been seen in our history."¹¹⁰ Unhappily even in free America with its equal opportunity, and equal laws, there had come to be "dangerous classes" - rather a good many of them, taking the populist farmers and discontented wage-earners into the account - so many, indeed, that John Hay grew gloomy over the outlook. And the outlook was all the gloomier because of our form of government; for is not the ultimate test of our democratic institutions the test of whether they are adequate to protect the property and "civilization" of the few against the "hate and envy" of the discontented many?

That *The Bread-winners* was a dishonest book Hay certainly could not have been brought to believe; nevertheless a Tory who covers his Tory purpose with a mantle of democracy can scarcely be reckoned intellectually sincere. The men of the seventies and eighties - cultivated and intelligent gentlemen like Godkin and Aldrich and Hay - were little more than demagogues in their fustian attacks on agrarian Greenbackers and militant labor unions; they feared and hated them too much to understand them, and they took advantage of their social position to cry them down. The "educated leadership" of the Gilded Age was somewhat sorry thing; it was ethically bankrupt while appealing to high moral standards. The best of such leaders were second-rate-men - mediocre minds cramped by a selfish environment, imbued with no more than a property-consciousness. Of such a world John Hay in his *Bread-winners* was a distinguished spokesman and representative.*

So, there was no doubt that the economic novels were political such as "*Bread-Winners*" and "*Democracy*" which was "Warmly praised and Sharply criticized".

It was first to recognize this part of literature in American. *Bread-Winners* was written to defense property against the dangerous classes. It appeared the satire of labor unions.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Vol. I, p. 321

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Vol. I, p. 414

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, Vol. I, p. 426

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Vol. II, p. 256

* In his plan Professor Parrington included here H. F. Keenan's *The Money Makers*, but apparently he decided against its inclusion. - Publisher.

Literature played an important role to defeat proletarian because the educated classes lead to protect or destroy civilization. The present-day reader will have difficulty to discover the theme.

Some professional agitators who manipulate the feelings of the readers to seduce them to strikes urge them to support law and order eventually break the strike.

John Hay was convinced that an educated leadership alone could save American democracy but unfortunately he had risen to exploiting class and accepted the ready-made opinions of that class, but the 1897 riots affected him by the struggle between capital and labor. Later he changed the support equal opportunity to all Americans.

John Hay as a novelist was influenced by Politicians and he had married wealth were these things proofs of virtue in a moral world. He was a charming and cultivated gentleman and he also feels as a child of his generation in his blood. He was a political radical married to Ms. Stone's daughter. Capitalist whose interest were threatened by great strike, this means that how much the thoughts of novelists affected by the interests of daily social political life of the people.

Political revolutions sponsored by middle-class leaders. Meanwhile economic revolutions sponsored by proletariat.

The Bread-winners was dishonest book according to Hay. Because it justified the political and economic failure according to the desire of policy makers and capitalists.

CHAPTER V

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

5.1 Biographical Sketch of Hemingway

No great American author has ever achieved the great fame that Hemingway (1899-1961) achieved, whether at home or in the world at large, whether as a person, an author, or an adventurer. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for the year 1954. His works have been translated into dozens of languages. The style he developed in writing, whether as a reporter or as a fiction writer, is unique indeed. Hemingway, at age 62, decided to commit suicide by shooting himself in the head. Biographers say that his suicide was motivated by his illness, his terrible suffering from medical and psychiatric treatment, and his great pain.

As a child and as a boy, Hemingway was influenced by both parents. His father was a physician who loved hunting, fishing, and outdoor sports.¹¹¹ As for his mother, she was a music teacher who had interests in culture and the arts. Even as a schoolboy, his literary, cultural, and sports activities demonstrated the influence of both parents. Later on in his life as a young man and an adult those interests grew with him.

His apprenticeship as a writer was in his job as a newspaper reporter after his graduation from high school. In Europe he reported on World War One as a war correspondent. The style sheet of the Kansas City Star, his first journalistic job, instructed the reporters to "Avoid the use of adjectives, especially extravagant ones such as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent, etc.;" and it enjoined "short sentences," "short first paragraphs," and "vigorous English." Later Hemingway expressed his indebtedness to these rules which were "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing."

Describing his style in an interview with George Plimpton, Hemingway said, "I always try to write on The Principle of The Iceberg. There is seven eighths of it under water for every part that shows."¹¹² His short and simple sentences, and his sparing use of words leaving his meaning implicit so that the reader would discern it, characterize his style. Like Twain's style on Huckleberry Finn, which our author admired, Hemingway's style gives priority to feeling over thought and to action over comment.

Hemingway participated in WWI as an ambulance driver and was severely wounded in both legs.¹¹³ Later he lived in Europe for a while, especially in Paris, where he was part of what came to be known as the "Lost Generation", the label which Gertrude Stein gave to those American authors who chose to live in Paris, like Pound, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, and others.

The first novel which brought him fame was *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) which tells the story of American expatriates in Europe. It is a portrait of the general temper of the people after WWI and the physical and spiritual scars it left.¹¹⁴ *A Farewell to Arms*, which followed in 1929, is a love story between an American ambulance driver and a British nurse, both of whom were volunteering with the Italian Army. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is about the

¹¹¹ Bode, Carl. *Highlights of American Literature*, p. 201

¹¹² Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway and His Critics*, p. 34

¹¹³ Fenton, Charles A. *Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway; The Early Years*, pp. 31 – 34

¹¹⁴ Loeffelholz, Mary. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th edition, p. 1667

Spanish Civil War. But *The Old Man and the Sea* (1953) led to his Nobel Prize in 1954. Yet his main contribution is considered in the field of the short story which he enriched with a psychological dimension, coherent plot, and vital dialogue.

When he returned to the United States, was considered a hero and was in a great demand to speak before civic groups about his war experience. His assignments familiarized him with the violence and the seamy side of the city.

The newspaper's style sheet instructed reporters to "Avoid the use of the adjectives" and enjoined "short sentences" "short first paragraphs" and "vigorous English"

Hemingway called these "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing".

A main feature of his philosophy of life is the Hemingway hero – who has his own system of values and discipline in life. Fully aware that life is meaningless, he faces it courageously avoiding any illusion. The greatest fact in our life is Death, so he faces it with courage and nobility. In both his life and his encounter with death, the Hemingway hero derives a meaning for his life from this noble and courageous stance, the stance which is dictated by his own very strict discipline, whether he is a soldier, a hunter, a bullfighter, a writer, or a lover. This hero enjoys the beauty of the physical world through his senses. Drinking and sex are two of the greatest pleasures. Hemingway elevates these pleasures to the level of religion. Hemingway's world, then, is a world without God, and without meaning. The hero has to create its meaning by following his discipline.

His tribute to Spanish culture, *Death in the Afternoon* (1932), centers of the "tragedy and ritual"¹¹⁵ of the bull fighter where Hemingway found on comparable to the art of writing he wanted to perfect. The co-presence of "life and death" in the bullring, the imminence of "violent death" as "one of the simplest thing of all and the most fundamental" in the elemental reality he wanted to test his feeling and his writing against,¹¹⁶ the feelings around were more intense because grounded in bodily sensation.

The bull fighter not only confronted more dangers but, through his stylized ritual performance, "increased" and "created" the danger to his body,¹¹⁷ and the ritual which thus threatened his survival also permitted him to triumph by achieving the grace and power of the matador Romero whom Hemingway had celebrated in his first novel. Such is the disciplined heroism of the bull fighters, and other heroes, even those who are defeated.

The Green Hills of Africa (1935), there he asserts a connection between his game hunting and writing, and he defines his expatriation as a continuation of the settlement of America and the movement west, claiming that "I would go, now, somewhere else as we had always had the right to go somewhere else and as we had always done."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*, p. 9

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 2

¹¹⁷ Ibid, pp. 16 – 21

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 92

Since the early 1930s Hemingway's leftist friends had condemned his abstention from political affiliation and the avoidance strategies in keeping with Hemingway's feelings that "anyone is cheating who takes politics as a way out" from the writers' responsibility "to write straight honest prose on human beings."¹¹⁹

For whom the Bell Tolls (1940) is about the Spanish civil war, and far its hero Spanish instructor who fights with a guerrilla band in the loyalist cause, carrying out his military mission even after it proves to be absurdly futile and while mortality wounded.

Mustering the strength to protect the escape of the Spanish girl with whom who has fallen in love.

Hemingway's stylistic requirement for his art in seeking the "discipline" that enables the imagination to "survive" with much models as Biblical prose, and among Americans, the "good writers" Henry James and Crane.

So, in our novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederick Henry says: "I always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, read them, on proclamations, now far a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyard at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat expect to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity.

Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, and courage, were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the number of roads, rivers, the number of regiments and the dates. Gino was a patriot, so he has said things that separated us sometimes.

This exactly the position of Hemingway. This is the general attitude of people who were disillusioned by WW I, its brutality and mass destruction.

Have cited this quotation because it was a matter of extreme importance of Hemingway in his fiction.

Closer look at his style would show that it is simple, the sentences are characteristically simple. Robert Penn Warren, on whom I depended in presenting the Hemingway code has this to say about the style.

There is a more fundamental aspect of the questions, as aspect of the sensibility of the author. The short, simple rhythms, the succession of coordinate clauses, the general lack of subordination – all suggest a dislocated and un-unified world... subordination implies some exercise of the discrimination – the shifting of reality through the inflect. But in the Hemingway we see a Romantic anti-intellectualism.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ White, William. *By-Line: Ernest Hemingway: Selected Articles and Dispatches of Four Decades*, p. 183

¹²⁰ Brooks, Cleanth. *American Literature: The Makers and the Making*, Vol. II, pp. 175 – 176

5.2 Introduction

In the period between the two World Wars, literature in the United States reached a new height of technical perfection and depth of meaning. By 1925 the literary movement of the century had become stabilized, its shape and scope definable. The protests and preachments of the literary radicals and the neo-humanists had begun to give way to a criticism that was ready to grapple with specific problems of society, personality, and literary form. Fiction, poetry, and drama threw off their old restraints and plunged into an era of experimentation and self-conscious power such as had never been equaled on the Western continent. Sinclair Lewis, in his Stockholm address of 1930, announced this second "coming of age" as an accomplished fact. His audience, if it wished, could read most of the writings he mentioned in all the languages of Europe. Abroad as well as at home, the new literature of the United States was being recognized as a surprising but undeniable force in Western culture. By 1935 the second renaissance had come to full flower¹²¹.

The writers who produced most of this literature were not those who had led the revolt. The older group was still active, but most of them were now saying better what they had said before. The year 1925 saw *An American Tragedy*, *Barren Ground*, and *The Professor's House*, and the Pulitzer Prize for poetry at that time was going to Frost, Robinson, and Amy Lowell for volumes that fell short of their best; but the same years also saw the first important experimental work of Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and their contemporaries. It was a crossroads in time, at which two generations met.

The younger generation of writers, most of whom were born in the final decade of the old century and nurtured in the years when the nation was reaching its maturity as a world power, were quite ready to consider themselves "lost" when they were plunged, at the moment of manhood, into what looked like the collapse of Western civilization. The world they had known, a world in which peace, prosperity and progress had been taken for granted as the evidence of an achieved humanity, was suddenly challenged by barbarities that had supposedly been laid aside for all time. Shocked and dismayed, they first were seized with the spirit of the Crusades and rushed out to set things right, to make the world once more "safe for democracy," to fight "the war to end wars," to care for the wounded, and to arouse the people of Europe against their misguided leaders. Woodrow Wilson led the campaign and provided most of the slogans, but Theodore Dreiser, H. L. Mencken, and the iconoclasts and critics of France, Russia, and England provided their reading. On the surface they appeared to be a company of idealists and reformers, but at heart they knew that the evil they were fighting lay closer to home than they cared to admit¹²².

When the war ceased as suddenly as it had started, these young men looked back to their country only to find that it had suffered the shock but few of the actualities of war, and that its people had profited by war industries and the sense of power and self-righteousness that comes with victory. A second disillusionment then turned them against this insensitive country of theirs, and they took up, with all the enthusiasm they had put into the military

¹²¹ Spiller, E Robert. *The Cycle of American Literature*, p. 185

¹²² Ibid, p. 186

crusade, a battle for literary and moral integrity both in America and in themselves. The vigor they had thrown into the driving of the wounded back from the front in Red Cross ambulances, or fighting in the air or in the soggy trenches, they now put into writing. Many-almost a majority-of them rejected the vigorous materialism of postwar prosperity in the United States and returned, after discharge from military service, to Europe, there to haunt the ateliers of Paris, to discuss art rather than politics, and, if one may judge from their own accounts, to waste their disillusioned minds and bodies in drink and dissipation. Even though the pose of decadence did not suit them as well as it had the sad young men of the nineties, the outlook was not promising for a new American literature that could offer solutions to the problems of humanity.

But the literature of power asks rather than answers questions. In the American writers who reached maturity between wars, what at first had seemed an irresponsible flight from reality turned out to be the means toward a realization of their true calling. These young men needed the perspective of distance as well as of time in order to discover new forms of art for the expression of man's dilemma in the twentieth century. The elder writers had posed the problems with which literary art must deal; the younger must learn to write. Whether they stayed abroad or came home and retreated from their society, they slowly taught themselves their art.

Among critics, Malcolm Cowley (b. 1898) and Edmund Wilson (b. 1895) were their best spokesmen. These two must stand for a host of others because they had a clear sense of the literary history of their own times. In Cowley's *Exile's Return* (1934), the experience of a generation of writers is summarized and evaluated. He and his fellows, he tells us, had found that European intellectuals were even more disillusioned than those at home. The burden of inferiority that American writers had traditionally taken for granted as their birthright somehow disappeared – "it was not so much dropped as it leaked away like sand from a bag carried on the shoulder." The realization that America possessed a folklore, new forms of art, and a recognizable national type and civilization gave them the necessary self-confidence. They created the myth of the Lost Generation and set to work to find themselves again. The story, as Cowley tells it, was a pattern of alienation and reintegration. He carries it up only to 1930, but he hints (especially in his revision of 1951) at the meaning of the following decade as well. Exile occupied the decade of the twenties – exile and devotion to art. Reintegration was still to come, and in 1934 the reconstruction of society seemed the natural means for its accomplishment. There were two paths for the artist: either to escape from society into the subjective problems of his own personality or to identify himself with humanity and accept the movements which seemed to promise best for social reform. In either case, there was work at home for the artist to do.¹²³

Wilson responded to his times even more fully than did Cowley. When *Axel's Castle* appeared in 1931, the new generation received its testament in art; a decade later, in 1940, *To the Finland Station* provided the formula for its faith in social reform. To Wilson must be credited the most impressive body of literary criticism produced by anyone writer of this generation. Combining an immediate but usually accurate comprehension of even a totally

¹²³ Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, p. 106

new work of art with a firm grounding in historical method, Wilson's complete works; though largely ephemeral in their original inspiration, provided the literary chronicle of the era. He succeeded in producing, in his various reviews and essays, what he himself described to Christian Gauss, his teacher, as a contemporaneous "history of man's ideas and imaginings in the setting of the conditions which shaped them."¹²⁴

Wilson's criticism recognizes three forces operating on the literary mind of his times: symbolism, Freudianism, and Marxism. The first is primarily a concern of art as such; the other two are formulations of personality and of society. If English and American critics had failed to comprehend the work of modern writers, the reason, he explains in the introductory chapter of *Axel's Castle*, might be that they had not recognized a literary revolution which had occurred mainly outside English literature: the symbolist movement as developed in France but represented early in the work of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, and Emerson. Here was an indigenous American literary movement which was shared primarily with the great writers of Continental Europe rather than exclusively with those of Britain. All at once the feeling of American writers that they could command their own place in world literature was validated, the explanation was given. *Axel's Castle* was for this era what Van Wyck Brooks's *America's Coming-of-Age* had been for the earlier one.

Wilson's attempt to link modern naturalism with an earlier classicism, and symbolism with romanticism, is not altogether successful, but his discovery and definition of symbolism as such elucidate many lesser questions. It was, he points out, a revolt, as the earlier Romantic Movement had been in its first phases, against the objective and conformist demands of scientific rationalism. The poet must find or invent the special language in which to express his personality and feelings, which are different from those of everyone else. The symbols of the symbolists do not stand for broad generalizations, as do, for example, the Cross or the flag; they are private and special metaphors detached from their subjects and designed to convey unique personal feelings. In Yeats, Valery, Eliot, Proust, Joyce, and Gertrude Stein, Wilson finds the chief exponents of the theory, the makers of modern literature, but he himself is unwilling to accept the divorce of the artist from society which this theory seemed to demand. In his final chapter, he contrasts the renunciation of experience as illustrated in the life-denying hero of Villiers de L'Isle-Adam's *Axel* (1890) with the life of primitive activity as lived by Rimbaud. Neither way would seem satisfactory alone, and yet the twentieth century was forced to a choice. Wilson's book is in effect an angry protest against his times as he is unwilling to accept this impasse either for himself or for literature. Instead of remaining a private language, symbolism, he feels, may come to offer a new and imperfectly understood means of expressing the complicated experiences presented by modern science. One must avoid Axel's castle if one wishes to contribute to the reintegration of modern man and society.¹²⁵

The way was thus open to the influence of Freud, who offered a formula for re-evaluating the individual, and to Marx, who seemed to supply a similar instrument for society. Both claimed to wipe away Axel's belief that illusion is superior to reality, and to deal with man

¹²⁴ Spiller, E Robert. *The Cycle of American Literature*, p. 110

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 189

in the same scientific terms that man was learning to use in dealing with nature. In the critical essays of *The Triple Thinkers* (1938) and *The Wound and the Bow* (1941), and in his historical study of all branches of socialism, *To the Finland Station* (1940), Wilson explored the sources of these two systems of thought and applied them to literary problems. Without allowing himself to be seriously caught in the webs of dogma that entangled many lesser critics of art and society during these years, he provided the rationale of the American literary movement at its climax.¹²⁶ Out of the creative tensions of naturalism-symbolism came the great works of Eugene O'Neill, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, T. S. Eliot, and all the other once-young men who by 1935 had lived through war and spiritual exile and into an uneasy but dynamic harmony with their times and their country.

5.3 The Revolt of the Younger Generation

The revolt of the younger generation was touched off by the semi autobiographical novel of Princeton life, *This Side of Paradise* (1920), by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940).

Fitzgerald had come out of the West-from Lewis's Minnesota-and had served in World War I. Appearing in the same year as *Main Street*, his portrait of the "Jazz Age" was less a satire than a revelation. The background of wealth and privilege and the early personal successes of Amory Blaine in athletics, in friendship, in writing, and in romance are fit preparation for his disillusionment and subsequent abandonment to the search for pleasure, sensation, and forgetfulness. Actually there is more of the pose of hedonistic debauch of an earlier Bohemia inhabited by Oscar Wilde and Swinburne than of postwar cynicism in Blaine's- and Fitzgerald's somewhat sophomoric abandon. There was as much talk as there was action in the destruction of all accepted moral codes that the Jazz generation threatened. Fitzgerald's own frantic quest for experience, his effort to satisfy his own and his even more neurotic wife's greed for wealth and sensation, and his "crack-up" at an early age are faithfully depicted or anticipated in this first novel. Here, from the inside, is a portrait of the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Fitzgerald's strength-and his weakness-lay in the sincerity of his confession and in the gift of words in which it was expressed. For one brief moment-in his most finished novel, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)-he managed to say what he had to say in a tightly wrought artistic form. This brief tale of the love and death of a fabulously wealthy bootlegger becomes authentic only because it is told, not by Jay Gatsby himself, but by the curious young cousin of the unhappily married Daisy with whom Gatsby is in hopeless love. The use of a narrator gives Fitzgerald the detachment that his first novel had needed and that his later novels, *Tender Is the Night* (1934) and the fragment *The Last Tycoon* (1941), also lacked. The story that Nick Carraway has to tell can remain a glamorous mystery because the illusions of which it consists could appear to him as tragedy rather than as the romantic sentimentality they would become in the light of a more rational day. Fitzgerald's success as a popular writer for the magazines and his failure to develop as an artist are reflections of a keen but limited understanding of his own age rather than of moral weaknesses in that age or in himself.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 189

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp. 196 – 97

John Dos Passos (b. 1896) was an artist of firmer and perhaps less sensitive texture. In him the revolt of youth, with its attack on the basic institutions of American society, hinted by Lewis and announced by Fitzgerald, really struck out into the open. In an early volume of essays on the art and culture of Spain, *Rosinante to the Road Again* (1922), he presented himself as a student and critic of world society, and his first important novel, *Three Soldiers* (1921), was more significant as a general study of the effects of war on the human personality than as a revelation of individual character. His radical experiments with the language and structure of fiction were undertaken in the spirit of journalism-the effective exposure of social and cultural conditions-rather than as art for its own sake.¹²⁸

Like Hemingway, MacLeish, and many others, a product of the Middle West, Dos Passos shared with them the pattern of Eastern college education, service in Europe in the armed forces or with the Ambulance Corps, and postwar alienation from his times and his country. His *Three Soldiers* was the first of an endless succession of war novels, by many hands, in a realistic vein. Essentially a reporter, he sought in the civilization of Spain, Russia, and Mexico-the current centers of social revolution-the meaning of alienation and its answer. His novels were interspersed, throughout his career, with reports on his travels, like *In All Countries* (1934), and with tracts on political and social theory, like his study of Jefferson (1954); and in all of his better fiction the core meaning is derived from a political or economic problem. Squarely in the polemic tradition which can be traced back through Howells and Mark Twain to Cooper and Paulding, Dos Passos drew upon his knowledge of architecture for his sense of structure and on his studies of language and symbol for his variety of fictional technique. In his work that aspect of naturalism which depended upon the criticism of society found its most effective expression in the art of fiction because he went to school to Henry James as well as to Theodore Dreiser.

Manhattan Transfer (1925) was his first really experimental novel. Using the panoramic view which became his trade-mark, he told the sordid story of a group of inhabitants of New York City and of their confused and often morbid relationships. His plot centers on the city itself rather than on any individual and his theme is social deterioration and decadence. There are Marxist implications in his attack on the capitalistic system in its every aspect, but his social philosophy is not doctrinaire as was that of some of his contemporaries; for this reason his work has outlived the many novels on similar themes of the period 1925-1939.¹²⁹

The trilogy U.S.A. (1938) is composed of *The 42nd Parallel* (1930), *1919* (1932), and *The Big Money* (1936). Again using the panoramic method to survey, in this case, the whole range of contemporary civilization in the United States, he applied it in a more systematic and complex fashion. His main stream of action involves the lives of a selected few characters whose stories are told much more fully and consistently than in the earlier novel. This solid core of fiction is then seen from several points of view outside itself: the "Newsreel," which uses newspaper headlines to shout at the social awareness of the times; the "Camera Eye," which reflects the subjective level of the author's reactions, often totally irrelevant to the event, by a stream-of-consciousness method; and the thumbnail

¹²⁸ Ibid, p. 199

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 198

biographies of prominent people -Ford, Debs, Roosevelt, Morgan, and others-which offer contrast and parallel to the meaner lives of the fictional characters. These various components are woven together by a system of staggered episodic fragments, with the effect of immediate confusion but over-all unity of impression. Technically one of the most ambitious novels of its time, U.S.A. succeeds in achieving its main objective with sufficient force to hold together its diverse elements and to give a single and powerful total impression.¹³⁰

The second trilogy, *District of Columbia* (1953), is less unified than the first because Dos Passos had turned from attack to defense. By now he had accepted a more native democratic loyalty, and from this base he launched diatribes against the three political systems that seemed to him to threaten those principles: Communism in *Adventures of a Young Man* (1939), Fascism in *Number One* (1943), and the New Deal in *The Grand Design* (1949). Largely abandoning his panoramic method, he now used a more conventional technique and a more conservative social philosophy. Although it can be argued that he had not substantially altered his political and social views, the objects of his attack were so different in the 1940's from those of the 1930's and his methods in the second work so much less experimental than in the first that many of his critics have dismissed him as an exciting revolutionist turned tame conservative. Time alone can discover the unity of purpose in his best writing, both as artist and as social critic, and reaffirm his position in the tradition of social criticism in American fiction.¹³¹

5.4 Hemingway's Break

Hemingway's break with his own past and with the civilization he had left behind in the prosperous land of his birth was complete in a sense in which Wolfe's was only partial. The stoic impersonality of his first hero, his alter ego, is in sharp contrast to the emotional self-abandon and self-pity of the young Eugene Gant. Nick Adams is only present to the stories collected as *in our time*-ironically, a time in which there is no peace-as the boy who observes and learns from the stupidities and sordid violence of a succession of intimate human episodes. Here was a new kind of short story, plotless and episodic, stripped of emotion and chary of language, but bound into a tight and powerful sequence by a receptive and recording sensibility.

Nick disappears in the later work, for Hemingway learned how as author to be that recording personality. By this means he could write of his heroes with a detachment as cool and impersonal as that of the soul regarding its useless body on the morning after death. It is this special quality that distinguishes all of Hemingway's best work; and out of it he created a symbolism and a language that many have attempted to imitate-always without success. His trick of dispassionate compression is not a technical device; it is the essential part of his attitude toward life.

Just what the influence of Gertrude Stein meant to him as an artist would be difficult to determine. Perhaps it was only the new conception of the power and use of language, which was coming from James Joyce and the international Paris group in general, that freed

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 199

¹³¹ Ibid, p. 200

Hemingway from the conventions of fiction which otherwise might have hampered him. From them he might have learned the value of the word and phrase as immediate symbols of intense, momentary, and highly personal experience rather than as instruments disciplined by normative grammar and rhetoric. With a born sense of inner discipline that most of his contemporaries lacked, Hemingway followed in this path and created a new and distinctive style for his special message.

The expatriate group of *The Sun Also Rises* takes its stand squarely on the principle of an alienation from society that had been forced upon it by the circumstances of the times. His war injury and his resulting impotence make Jake Barnes the symbol of his own and his creator's generation. Others in the story are less obviously cut off from normal experience and distracted by violent substitutes. Lady Brett Ashley's final cry, "We could have had such a damned good time together," is set in so low a key that the reader almost fails to realize that here is the whole meaning of the story. The normal world was already a world of the might-have-been. Now it was only a good time—a phrase capable of interpretation on any level from the highest to the lowest—it was intensity alone that they were seeking and that they found fleetingly in frantic lovemaking, in death in the bull ring, in Martini after Martini.¹³² Fitzgerald's jazz was now providing the accompaniment for a macabre dance of death. Nihilism was complete.

So total a denial of values could seem to have only one outcome: this writer would write no more. But Hemingway denied the denial. Ruthless probing to the depths of the human predicament had discovered an unsuspected rock bottom. The will to live was there, and beyond it, as Faulkner was later to assert so defiantly in his Nobel Prize address, the will to prevail. On this base an art could be built.

To the readers of that day, Hemingway's next novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), seemed only another farewell to everything. The symbolic alienation of the Caporetto desertion is not healed by the intensity of Catherine's love and flight. With her death Frederic Henry, the new Hemingway Everyman, is left in a strange land, alone and without direction. Wounded and haunted by his own inadequacy, he had known love and death;¹³³ bound to the level plain, he had finally discovered and had sought the mountains. Even though he might never learn to climb, he could not now die by his own hand. Hemingway heroes do not commit suicide even though they know how to face death when the moment comes.

A later generation of critics would discover how central this story was to Hemingway's vision, how all his other writings were but an expansion or a contraction of the theme here so simply stated. Whether he himself recognized this fact or not, he now rested from storytelling for almost a decade. When he had returned from his African safaris and from his books on bull fighting and on big-game hunting, he was ready to provide for his hero the social frame so lacking in all the early stories. The insensitive Harry Morgan of *To Have and Have Not* (1937) finally learns in his private bootlegging war with the Federal Government that one man alone cannot survive; and, in the Spanish Revolution, Hemingway experienced for himself this revelation. Robert Jordan of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) differs from Frederic Henry only in his recognition of the truth of the

¹³² Ibid, pp. 204 – 5

¹³³ Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel*, pp. 317 – 18

preaching of the poet John Donne, quoted at the start of the novel: "No man is an island, entire of itself." The critics who saw in this book merely a tract for the Loyalist cause were not reading Hemingway. For him now there were two parties to every alienation: the man and his society. His canvas was larger, his theme the same.

It is hardly likely that this novel represented an awakened social consciousness, an overdue conversion of the most subjective and individualistic of American writers to a doctrinaire commitment. As the Communist and Fascist powers poured support into this dress rehearsal for the great conflict, idealists of all countries were drawn to one side or the other, and the Loyalist cause seemed hardly distinguishable from that of democracy. Jordan fights for that cause, but his is a private war. He is forever at odds with the Spanish guerrillas with whom he hides out in the mountain cave while waiting for the moment to come when he may blow up his bridge and so fulfill his destiny. Political theories and programs have little to do with the motives of Pilar, the earth woman, who commands her weakling mate Pablo; and it is in the intense and physical love for a woman of his kind rather than in self-sacrifice for a cause that Jordan finds his reasons for life and for death. The stupidity and suspicions of both parties to the political conflict cancel out any immediate social significance to Jordan's sacrifice. He loves Maria, he blows up his bridge, he meets a meaningless death in flight; but he has heard the bell toll and he can die thinking, "One thing well done can make."

In several of his short stories, Hemingway's meaning is even clearer, his symbols more daring, his language sharper, and his plot more compressed. Perhaps the central symbol is to be found in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1936). In such earlier stories as "The Killers" (1927), or even in the more fully developed "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" (1936), death is confronted with varying degrees of indifference or courage, but in "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" both levels, that of symbol and that of reality, are fully developed. The sordidness of his personal affair with the woman who is tending him is intensified by the wounded man's memories of happier days as he lies in the hot sun of the African plain to wait for his leg to fester and poison his system. On this level, his only hope is the possibility of a rescue by air; but there is a frozen leopard close to the western summit of the snowcapped and towering Kilimanjaro. "No one has explained what the leopard was seeking at that altitude." No one need explain why the plane, bearing him finally to his dream of safety and health, suddenly turned left to head for the unbelievably white square head of the mountain.

In the novel of his maturity—a part of his proposed master work—Hemingway took the same turn. There is little of reality left in *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), even though there was a last pathetic effort to retell his soldier story once more in *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950). The old fisherman is a Christian symbol used to reveal a pagan truth. He and his marlin are never much other than man and nature in their final and unresolved conflict. Both are triumphant, for the old man "gets" his fish even though he is not allowed to have it. "I do not care who kills who," he says when the battle is in its final stages; but in the end he could sleep and dream of lions—or, perhaps, leopards. An era had found a literary voice for its skepticism and its faith.

5.5 Analysis of "A Farewell to Arms" (1929)

A Farewell to Arms, Hemingway's second novel and first significant popular success, was published in 1929, at the end of a ten- year postwar binge of jazz and prohibition, big business and organized crime, the League of Nations' and the rise of fascism. The country, was sexually liberated, utterly bored, and on the brink of economic disaster. Coming at that time, the book appealed most to an appetite for adventure, offering an innocent love affair threatened and deepened by a real enemy; but an enemy from which all readers could feel safe, for the war, though still available to recollection, had faded to a remote, unbelievable fantasy of heroics. Malcolm Cowley patronized the book as the farewell "to a period, an attitude-the simple standards of wartime," and moralized on Hemingway's responsibility to deal with the stuff of daily life, the emotions "less violently stimulated in a world at peace."¹³⁴ Robert Penn Warren, on the other hand, later praised Hemingway's decision to "cut back to the beginning of the process, to the moment that... held within itself the explanation of the subsequent process."¹³⁵

Contemporary critics in general certified the popular enthusiasm for it. They applauded its stylistic achievement, at once "bluff, masculine, hard-boiled, apparently insensitive ...," yet enabling "a very vivid and sometimes poignant picture of the life Hemingway knows." They also admired the "vividly realized scenes," the "brilliantly authentic dialogue," and concluded that Hemingway's "genius declares itself in the perfection of detail."¹³⁶ In particular, Arnold Bennett found it "utterly free of any sentimentality," yet "imbued through and through with genuine sentiment," while Bernard De Voto argued that Hemingway "for the first time, justifies his despair and gives it the dignity of a tragic emotion."¹³⁷

Later critics, notably Edmund Wilson, have sometimes demurred. Wilson sees in Catherine and Frederic "innocent victims with no relation to the forces that torment them." Examined closely, they offer "merely an idealized relationship, the abstractions of a lyric emotion."¹³⁸ D. S. Savage, dismissing the entire Hemingway scene as an "eviscerated, chaotic world of futility and boredom, lit up with flashes of violent action," characterizes the Hemingway hero as a "creature without religion, morality, politics, culture, or history-without any of those aspectsof the distinctively human existence,"¹³⁹ and Hemingway himself as one who had no coherent inner vision of human existence." To Wyndham Lewis, Hemingway was "like an animal speaking." In a ferocious Swiftian tirade, he calls the Hemingway hero a "dull-witted, bovine, monosyllabic simpleton," the "voice of the folk, of the masses, cannon-fodder, cattle outside the slaughterhouse serenely chewing their cud, the people to whom things are done, in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence."

¹³⁴ Malcolm, Cowley. *Review of a Farewell to Arms*, pp. 1 – 16

¹³⁵ Warren, Robert Penn. *Hemingway "Selected Essays"*, p. 81

¹³⁶ Priestly, J.B. *Now and Then*, pp. 1 – 12; Hazlitt, Henry. *New York Sun*, September 28, 1929, p. 38; Passos, John Dos. *New Masses* (December 1, 1929), p. 1092; Johnson, Edgar. "Farewell to Separate Peace". *The Rejections of Ernest Hemingway. Seward Review* 48 (July-September 1940), pp. 298 – 300.

¹³⁷ Arnold Bennett, *Evening Standard* (London), November 14, 1929; *Times* (London), November 15, 1929, p. 20; Clifton Fadiman, *Nation* 129 (October 30, 1929), pp. 497 – 98; Bernard De Voto, "Review of A Farewell to Arms," *Bookwise* 1 (November 1929), pp. 5 – 9.

¹³⁸ Wilson, Edmund. *Ernest Hemingway: Bourdon Gauge of Morale*, pp. 214 – 42

¹³⁹ Savage, D. S. *The Withered Branch: Six Studies in the Modern Novel*, pp. 23 – 43

Hemingway has expressed with genius, Lewis states, the "soul of the dumb ox," which has a "penetrating beauty" like "the folk-song of the baboon, or of the 'Praying Mantis.' "¹⁴⁰

More sympathetic critics, seeking to account for the novel's vivid sense of felt life, have preferred to locate it in a variety of conscious, often contradictory theoretical structures. Carlos Baker writes of the symbolism of Mountain. and Plain;¹⁴¹ Cowley, in a later study than that mentioned above, of nightmare and ritual.¹⁴² Robert Penn Warren has isolated the aristocratic ethics of the Hemingway code,¹⁴³ and Cleanth Brooks has pioneered a belief in Hemingway's Christianity, grounding this, in a rather secular way, in the hero's persistent idealism, his perennial effort to generate significance, moral or otherwise, out of his habitual defiance of the Nada in experience.¹⁴⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre even compares Hemingway's style with that of Camus,¹⁴⁵ and, in this same vein, John Killinger undertakes to trace a rigorously , pure Existentialism throughout the work, an attitude systematically antagonistic to all rituals and codes, to Christianity, and to symbolic constructs of any kind.¹⁴⁶

Hemingway's position within the larger community of modern literature lies, perhaps, somewhere between Kafka and Camus. Hemingway's hero wastes no time in direct assaults on castles or courtrooms, nor is he willing, like Camus' Meursault, to resign himself to a bleak, existential nightmare. His commitment to a secular code, in love, in war, in sports, in earning a living is generally acknowledged. Hemingway, further, as not been willing to have it both ways like Conrad who preserves, through his surrogate Marlow, a final ironic "detachment from that "shadowy ideal of conduct" into whose embrace Lord Jim finally disappears-impressive, but always a little absurd. Hemingway's entire career is, ultimately, an unironic commitment to that ideal embrace.

Hemingway never sought, as Milton exhorted, to make his life into a work of art-he was, rather, relentless in the determination to expose himself to the kind of experience of which art could be made. He quit Kansas City in the spring of 1917 and entered the war as a driver in the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps. Critically wounded in the leg on the Italian Front at Fossalta de Piave, he recuperated through the autumn of 1918 in a Milan hospital, where his nurse was an American Red Cross girl of Polish ancestry named Agnes von Kurowski.

Sherwood Anderson and married Hadley Richardson. In the winter of 1920, equipped with a letter of introduction from Anderson to Gertrude Stein, he returned to Paris as European correspondent for the Toronto Star. There, he eschewed the self-indulgent, histrionic sex, drink, and despair of his Lost Generation comrades, commandeered a table in the back of a St. Michel cafe, and practiced the hard, clear, disciplines of perception and expression in which Stein and Pound had instructed him. Their esthetic, in Hulme's phrase, courted "the exact curve of the thing,"¹⁴⁷ or, as Hemingway himself later described it:

¹⁴⁰ Wyndham, Louis. *Love and War from Men without Art*, pp. 17 – 40

¹⁴¹ Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, pp. 94 – 116

¹⁴² Malcolm, Cowley. "Introduction," *The Portable Hemingway*, pp. vii – xxiv

¹⁴³ Warren, Robert Penn. *Hemingway "Selected Essays"*, pp. 80 – 118

¹⁴⁴ Brooks, Cleanth. "Ernest Hemingway: Man on His Moral Uppers," *The Hidden God*, pp. 6 – 21

¹⁴⁵ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, pp. 34, 35, 38

¹⁴⁶ Killinger, John, *Hemingway and the Dead Gods*

¹⁴⁷ Hulme, T. E., "Romanticism and Classicism," *Speculations*

... the greatest difficulty ... was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion which you experienced . . . the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion, and which would be valid in a year" or in ten years ... or always.¹⁴⁸

It was a technique of precise detail, ellipsis, and repetition. The signature was, finally, not a fumbling, lyric expressiveness which, innocent of irony, excluded the complexity of experience, but a tough, muted, inclusive distillation in the mode of drama.

If a writer of prose knows enough about what he is writing about, he may omit things that he knows and the reader, if the writer is writing truly enough, will have a feeling of those things as strongly as though the writer had stated them. The dignity of movement of an Iceberg is due to only one-eighth of it being above water. A writer who omits things because he does not know them only makes hollow places in his writing.¹⁴⁹

Hemingway's early work in Paris consisted of a small volume, *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, followed in the spring of 1924 by *In Our Time* a group of fierce and authentic vignettes of war and nature, including two reminiscences of his favorite matadors, Garcia and Villalta. His next volume was a *jeu d'esprit* parody of the later bathos of Sherwood Anderson, *Torrents of Spring*. *The Sun Also Rises*, published in 1926, was his first significant, extended piece of fiction, exploring not only the chaos of his fellow Wastelanders, wounded by the lethal abstractions of modern life, but the terms of possible regeneration in the authentic life of the senses, the moral code of the bullfighter. In 1929 he published *Men Without Women*, a volume of stories once more obsessed with his characteristic themes of war, nature, and the code.

Critics of *A Farewell to Arms* acknowledge unanimously the fine density of its texture, the power of its understatement, the toughness of its irony. Searching for its further significance, they have either extrapolated a variety of symbolic machineries, or denied that any exist. From the latter point of view, the novel is no more than a story of two lovers flattened by the obscenity of the war, their doom periodically interrupted by a series of exercises in the acute rendering of the physical world, their philosophical peaks shining through a few clichés about burning ants, baseball, and getting "strong at the broken places."

We can, however, observe certain obsessive patterns in the novel's treatment of the love affair, the war, the natural world, and the fate that inscrutably directs, or fails to direct, it all. Hemingway's initial portraits of the surgeon and the priest suggest the book's preoccupation with the drama of reasonable men caught up in the absurdity of a world at war. The surgeon practices his obsolete Sisyphean skill with stoic resignation—he is calm, still enjoys the pleasures of wine and prostitution, and even aspires toward a lost innocence in his comradeship with Henry and his solicitude for the first fumbling rituals of the love affair.

The priest's commitment is, in another way, more viciously refuted by the environment of war. If the surgeon's skill is disqualified by an operation that will never have time enough

¹⁴⁸ Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*, p. 2

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 192

to heal, the priest's faith is undermined in the ruthless nihilism of the smoky cafes, where the only evidence of everlasting life is meaningless death. Yet he continues to defend his faith, exhorts Henry to go to the Abruzzi, "where the roads were frozen and hard as iron, where it was clear cold and dry and the snow was dry and powdery arid hare-tracks in the snow . . . and there was good hunting" (p. 13)¹⁵⁰, to undertake, perhaps, a mode of religious meditation which will clear his mind for the regeneration of his faith.

Henry himself, the narrator, lives in a house near the river, where there are "pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels," a place where "the leaves fell early that year," and the road, after the soldiers, is "bare and white except for the leaves" (p. 3)¹⁵¹. The war continues, but in a world where "when the rains came the leaves all fell from the chestnut trees and the branches were bare and the trunks black with rain," "the vineyards were thin and bare-branched too and all the country wet and brown and dead with the autumn," a world where "small gray motor cars passed" that "splashed more mud than the camions," and "if the car went especially fast it was the King" (p. 4)¹⁵². It is as though he has already visited the "smoke of cafes," lived through the "nights when the room whirled and you needed to look at the wall to make it stop ..." (p. 13)¹⁵³. For, later, the narrator will explain how he became

embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of regiments and the dates (p. 191)¹⁵⁴.

These are the words which had driven him to the free fall of the cafes and, eventually, to his staring at the wall, at the dense actuality of his experience.

Henry watches the King pass by in a motor car and notices his "little long-necked body and grey beard like a goat's chin tuft" (p. 5). Waiting in a dugout, he gives each of his companions "a package of cigarettes, Macedonias, loosely packed cigarettes that spilled tobacco and needed to have the ends twisted before you smoked them" (p. 50). Wounded in a minor skirmish, he is taken to a hospital where, awaiting a visit from Rinaldi in the hot, fly-filled room, he observes that the orderly "had cut paper into strips and tied the strips to a

¹⁵⁰ Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 13

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p. 3

¹⁵² Ibid p. 4

¹⁵³ Ibid, p. 13

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 191

stick to make a brush that swished the flies away" (p. 65). On the way to the Milan hospital, sidetracked at Mestre, he becomes thirsty until someone "brought me a pulpy orange. I sucked on that and spit out the pith ..." (p. 81). . .

Once in the Milan hospital he soon becomes ambulatory, visits the town with Catherine, where they "walked through the galleria ... stopped at the little place where they sold sandwiches; hum and lettuce sandwiches and anchovy sandwiches made of very tiny brown glazed rolls and only about as long as your finger" (p. 117); and, on another night, "drank a small bottle of chianti with the meal, had a coffee afterward with a glass of cognac, finished the paper, put my letters in my pocket, left the paper on the table with the tip and went out" (p. 142).

Soon the famous Caporetto retreat begins, and Henry tells us how "in the night many peasants had joined the column from the roads of the country and in the column there were carts loaded with household goods; there were mirrors projecting up between mattresses, and chickens and ducks tied to carts. There was a sewing machine on the cart ahead of us in the rain... On some carts the women sat huddled from the rain and others walked beside the carts keeping as close to them as they could. There were dogs now in the column, keeping under the wagons as they moved along. The road was muddy, the ditches at the side were high with water and beyond the trees that lined the road the fields looked too wet and too soggy to try to cross" (p. 205). In a little while he sees the Germans, two from the bicycle troops, " ... ruddy and healthy looking. Their helmets came low down over their foreheads and the side of their faces. Their carbines were clipped to the frame of the bicycles. Stick bombs hung handle down from their belts. Their helmets and their grey uniforms were wet and they rode easily, looking ahead and to both sides" (p. 218). He stops at a barn to rest, hears the "rain on the roof. and smelled the hay and, when I went down, the clean smell of dried dung in the stable" (p. 223).

Henry finally encounters a roadside kangaroo court where, dressed as he is in an Italian uniform, he expects to be shot as a German agitator. In a sudden impulse he "ducked down, pushed between two men, and ran for the river, my head down. I tripped at the edge and went in with a splash. The water was very cold and I stayed under as long as I could. I could feel the current swirl me and I stayed under until I thought I could never come up." He was lucky to find "a piece of timber" to hold on to, and he "lay in the icy water with my chin on the wood" until he approached the shore, where he could see "twigs on the willow bush" (p. 235). On the bank, he takes off his shoes, "emptied them of water," removes his coat, "took my wallet with my papers and my money all wet in it out of the inside pocket and then wrung the coat out," discovers, after he has slapped and rubbed and dressed again, that "I had lost my cap" (p. 236). Later he jumps a freight, bumps his head and slips in "under the canvas with guns. They smelled cleanly of oil and grease" as he "lay and listened to the rain on the canvas and the clicking of the car over the rails," looking at the guns with "their canvas jackets on." The bump on his head swollen, "lying still" to stop the bleeding, "letting it coagulate," he "picked away the dried blood except over the cut ... feeling with my fingers I washed away where the dried blood had been, with rain-water that dripped from the canvas, and wiped it clean with the sleeve of my coat" (p. 239). He becomes "wet, cold and very hungry You did not love the floor of a flat-car nor guns

with canvas jackets and the smell of vaselined metal or a canvas that rain leaked through, although it is very fine under a canvas and pleasant with guns" (p. 240).

In the days that follow, Henry rejoins Catherine, rows to Switzerland, and waits anxiously for the difficult resolution of her pregnancy, all the while visiting wineshops that "smelled of early morning, of swept dust, spoons in coffee-glasses and the wet circles left by wineglasses," drinking "coffee ... gray with milk," skimming the "milkscum off the top with a piece of bread" (p. 245). When they escape it is in a boat whose "oars were long and there were no leathers to keep them from slipping out," rowing slowly because he knew his "hands would blister" (p. 279). Looking back at an inn, he sees the "light coming from the windows and the woodcutters' horses stamping and jerking their heads outside to keep warm . . . frost on the hairs of their muzzles and their breathing made plumes of frost in the air" (p. 312).

In the final moments of Catherine's ordeal, Henry visits another cafe, "stood at the zinc bar and an old man served me a glass of white wine and a brioche. The brioche was yesterday's. I dipped it in the wine and then drank a glass of coffee." Outside, he notices the "refuse cans from the houses waiting for the collector," watches "a dog nosing at one of the cans" (p. 325). Still later, he has lunch, "a dish of sauerkraut with a slice of ham over the top and a sausage buried in the hot wine-soaked cabbage" (p. 328). A few minutes before the discovery of Catherine's fatal condition, he eats some ham and eggs "in a round dish-the ham underneath and the eggs on' top . . . very hot and at the first mouthful I had to take a drink of beer to cool my mouth." He keeps drinking beer, notices, at last, the considerable "pile of saucers" now on his table, and the man "opposite ... [who] had taken off his spectacles, put them away in a case, folded, his paper and put it in his pocket and now sat holding his liqueur glass and looking out at the room" (p. 339)¹⁵⁵. It is, finally, his cue to return to the hospital and the discovery of Catherine's death.

It is clear that the entire novel has registered Henry's sustained fixation on that wall, as though not merely the room but the meaning of life is whirling and only through such painstaking detail can anything human be salvaged.

Robert Penn Warren has remarked the implicit ladder of moral growth toward the code in Hemingway's fiction,¹⁵⁶ and we can trace the growth briefly in the three sections of *The Sun Also Rises*. There, the Hemingway hero suffers, first, the amoral chaos of the Paris cafes, then seeks to purge himself in the authentic life of the senses on a fishing trip, and, finally, commits himself to a code of conduct born in the ruthless skill of Romero, the bullfighter. Later, the code is to be found in the familiar Hemingway world of boxer, big-game hunter, or soldier of fortune; in Harry Morgan, the simple patriarch, or Santiago, the enduring fisherman.

It is, then, as though *A Farewell to Arms* suffers the "Nada who art in Nada" of the smoky wartime cafes, respects the moral achievement in the surgeon's code, but prefers to focus on the second stage, the mode of authentic perception, furnishing its rationale in the priest's image of Abruzzi, and dramatizing its career in Henry's dogged determination to achieve

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 339

¹⁵⁶ Warren, Robert Penn. *Hemingway "Selected Essays"*, pp. 80 – 118

direct sensory knowledge of the inexhaustible surfaces of the world. For, despite the routine cliché of its subject, there is nothing throughout the novel but the sense of felt life, experience with whose radical concreteness there can be no quarrel.

Henry, then, is the Hero as Esthetician, a modern man who is finished getting embarrassed in churches, exhausted by wine and dialectic, frustrated by the exclusiveness of fishing trips, walks in Abruzzi, and the literally un-practicable disciplines of his abandoned architectural studies. In the ultimate chaos of his time, in a world at war, he is simply not impressed, and refuses to abbreviate his awareness of what it feels like to make love, ride in a freight car, or dive into a river. He will always insist on knowing what the weather is like. And, though in steady danger of boring us with the copiousness of his detail, Hemingway has provided his hero with irony sufficient to discourage the reader's impatience.

It is inevitable that Hemingway will pay equal attention to the sweetness of Henry's wine, the texture of the sheets under which he makes love, and the temperature of the water in which he escapes to his separate peace. For the big words, the meaningful hierarchies of civilized value, can no longer account for his experience. The important thing is to stop the room from whirling, and, for Hemingway's purposes, concentrating on a wall or a flower, the side of a mountain, or a package of cigarettes is equally valid.

Erich Auerbach, in discussing the representation of reality in contemporary Western literature, has remarked on the modern writer's obsession with the simple fact, the random occurrence:

What takes place.. in works of this kind.. is to put the emphasis on the random occurrence, to exploit it not in the service of a planned continuity of action but in itself, and in the process something new appears: nothing less than the wealth of reality and depth of life in every moment to which we surrender ourselves without prejudice. It is precisely the random moment which is comparatively independent of the controversial and unstable orders over which men fight and despair; it passes unaffected by them as daily life.

Auerbach, finally, is optimistic about the eventual recovery, through this technique, of more sophisticated systems of value:

*The more it [the random occurrence] is exploited, the more the elementary things which our lives have in common come to light. In this unprejudiced and exploratory type of representation we cannot but see to what extent-below the surface conflicts-the differences between men's way of life and forms of thought have already lessened.... It is still a long way to a common life of mankind on earth but the goal begins to be visible.*¹⁵⁷

There is, however, a further complexity in the structure of Hemingway's novel. For precisely as the chaos of war clears in tension against the firm, precise, dense acts of perception, so the irony functions in another way. It complicates, through the rich, suggestive, sensory detail, the essentially pedestrian plot, the routine love story of wound, hospital, separate peace, pregnancy, and death in childbirth. The style of Henry's perception

¹⁵⁷ Auerbach, Erich, *Mimesis*, p. 488

is employed as arbiter between the world's unsubduable nightmare and the simple, tedious daylight of the personal life, focusing the war while expanding the love story.

It is, finally, on the basis of that love story, in its ostensible simplicity, in the supposed correlative superficiality of its protagonists, that critics have habitually faulted the novel.

Wilhelm Worringer and, later, T. E. Hulme and Joseph Frank have explored the modern writer's obvious preference for spatial over temporal form. In climates of relative cultural stability, the novel form is habitually temporal, reflecting in the chronological progress of the protagonist's life a development available through the moral and religious order of his world, heightening the reader's "sense of active participation in the organic." But where no order exists, where the moment in time reflects only an eternal disorder, "a hundred visions and revisions," the sense of everything happening at once, the writer "reduces the appearances of the natural world to linear and geo, metrical forms-forms which have the stability, the harmony, the sense of order ... [he] cannot find in the flux of phenomena."¹⁵⁸ As in metaphor, experience is assembled as a series of atomistic surface confrontations-in A Farewell to Arms as a string of episodes in which I G the lovers eat, drink, make love, visit the racetrack, and take walks in the mountains. The partly repetitious, circular structure of Wifliam Faulkner's Light in August and Leopold Bloom's day in Dublin are more ambitiously developed examples of this style.

In Hemingway's love story, the fresh concrete surfaces of the fragmentary experiences renew the sense of life possible even in the cemetery of war, while, simultaneously, the lovers' instinct to develop their relationship from sex to love to, finally, an eagerness at the prospect of a child, reflects the persistent human effort not alone to make sense of life, but to believe it as well, to recover at last, in Auerbach's phrase, "the common life of mankind on earth."

Still, within the limits of the book's intention, a critic is justified in demanding that the characters make certain internal connections, not become fixated at the level of simple instruments sent out into battlefields, hospitals, and mountain cottages to register a plethora of sensory data.

Frederic Henry is a former student of architecture who has dropped out of his studies and volunteered as an ambulance driver. There is a certain gratuitousness about his presence in the war at all, but he has few illusions, is already bored with the monotonous routine of carnage and cafes, and feels more comfortable with road signs than with notions of sacrifice. He listens respectfully to the priest's recommendation of Abruzzi but knows that he will probably continue to visit the cafes, to reenact, in their sterility, the moral disaster of his time. Besides, there is always the chance that, once he gets to Abruzzi and clears his mind, he will have nothing to think about-always a danger in cults of sensation. Yet, in his initial courtship of Catherine, he is remarkably innocent, strangely capable of respecting qualities in a woman other than the simple weary skill of the prostitute.

It will be useful, at this point, to explore more fully the ostensible insufficiency of the Hemingway style to treat a complicated human experience, the experience, for example, of the initial lovemaking in the hospital. If an author wishes to set the affair in a hospital, he

¹⁵⁸ Worringer, Wilhelm. *Abstraction and Empathy*

would seem obliged to acknowledge the hospital's shadow on the scene, its gloss on the affair as somehow mortally wounded. But Hemingway locks it at the level of prank, complete with bedpans and wine bottles, rising temperature charts and careless prophylaxis. The irony, unacknowledged, would appear to dismiss their coitus as simply another set of defective twitches between antiseptic sheets, or, humorously, as some form of *ultimate* therapy.

Yet, even here, the cynicism will not work. The unacknowledged irony would effectively demolish the scene if it were allowed to remain at the level of cliché, if the lovers were too aware of their environment and turned the affair-into an embarrassing, willed engagement of superhuman sexual endurance, or simply ignored it and acted out its own haunting paralysis. Hemingway's solution has been to have them accept the hospital as simply the place where their love affair has to begin, the narrator taking the context as seriously as he takes the rest of his experience, pausing to notice a bat flying into the room who "was not frightened but hunted in the room as though he had been outside." In the morning, "we smelled the dew on the roofs and then the coffee of the men at the gun on the next roof" (p. 106)¹⁵⁹. The cliché, in short, is revived in a rich, suggestive, completely human texture.

The underground opera of Henry's desertion appears to constitute another failure to exploit, as Richards has said, the meanings latent in the context-an effort to generate more emotion than the experience warrants.¹⁶⁰ The critic has no qualms about Henry going AWOL, only about what he is expected to make of it-a "separate peace," some form of cleansed rebirth? He would insist that the book indicate to us that it knows that Henry's impulsive defection is nothing more-certainly not a solemn act of abjuration.

But the rationale of Henry's escape is far simpler:

You had lost your cars and your men as a floorwalker loses the stock of his department in a fire... You were out of it now. You had no more obligation. If they shot floorwalkers after a-fire in the department store because they spoke with an accent they had always had, then certainly the floorwalkers would not be expected to return when the store opened again for business (p. 241)¹⁶¹.

Henry, again, avoids both extremes, refusing either to run amok in some absurd demonstration against violence, or to withdraw into a highbrow shell shock, the ultimate version of the sterile dialectic of the smoky cafes. He simply does all he can do, noticing, with painstaking sanity, that "I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine. Tonight maybe ... a good meal and sheets and never going away again except together. . . . I lay and thought where we would go. There were many places" (p. 242)¹⁶².

When he emerges from the Tagliamento and makes his "separate peace," it is simply a quiet, private gesture in behalf of life, a reenactment of his earlier impatience with the big

¹⁵⁹ Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 106

¹⁶⁰ Richards, I. A. *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, p. 55

¹⁶¹ Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 241

¹⁶² *Ibid*, p. 242

words "sacred, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain." For the "big words" on the Caporetto retreat has come, finally, to mean suicide, and the pact is a partly self-dramatic, but eminently sane letter of resignation. Only a madman could call it a betrayal.

Catherine Barkley has a waif-like, lover-cum-partner identity at the beginning. She seems glorified by all those characteristics that the insecure, boyish lover Hemingway has been called would idealize in a woman-she is easy but, somehow, irrevocably pure; has the strength of Beowulf, yet falls apart in a hotel room at the reflection that she is behaving like a whore; is gentle as a deer, and still, in the boat on the way to Switzerland, muses rather crudely about the advantages of being poked "in the tummy" by Henry's oar.

The crucial demurrer about Catherine, however, is her pregnancy. The book arranges for nothing more than an accident, and we might, after all, accept it that way. Though she is a nurse, we know that even nurses get careless in the swirl of such passion. But the logical response, without a ring and surrounded by the vicissitudes of war, should have been abortion, for she even confesses that she has tried everything else. Though she sentimentally presses a St. Anthony medal on Henry at one point, it is clear that she has no religion which would have made that operation intolerable.

Though Catherine is, admittedly, a pleasant, tough little companion, a version of the woman as partner, it is obvious that if she lacked such courage and resource she could hardly have survived at all in a world at war. She is, however, feminine enough on her first night with Henry in the hotel room to feel ashamed, somehow derelict, a tramp. Still, the reader suspects the efficient, businesslike detachment with which she rigs her schedule at the hospital to enable the sex with Henry. Yet again, the very fact of her pregnancy guarantees, in its careless abandon, the sincere intensity of the love affair. Further, though she continually whines about seeing Henry dead in the rain, and though she naively makes her token bet at the racetrack, she can also, during the boat trip, resent her unpropitious maternity. She is, finally, a girl who, at the point of death, pleads with Henry not to "do our things with another girl, or say the same things ..." (p. 342)¹⁶³. Her complexity crystallizes at last, for the woman she is yearns for the reassurance, yet only the frank, open, tough little partner would have the audacity to demand it. She has, then, all along particularized the daily experiences of her life. In the final hours before death she seems to achieve a similar, more memorable concreteness for her identity as well.

In Hemingway's final irony, she is destroyed, not by the war, but by the small hips that would have killed her in Minneapolis, by the same inscrutable fate that arranges for retreats at Caporetto, lovemaking in Milan, and, ultimately, the perennial resource of Abruzzi.

Hemingway's solution throughout *A Farewell to Arms* has been neither to succumb to the war's paralyzing morbidity nor to undertake to resist directly its violent catastrophe. It has been, rather, to focus on what is immediate and dense, and unequivocal and human in the narrator's experience of it. The novel's achievement is in its determination to exploit, if sometimes too painstakingly, the ground on which, if it is ever possible again, a meaningful vision of the human condition will have to be constructed. The style, in short, has been made the symbol.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 342

5.5.1 Four Interpretations

It is clear even from this plot summary that the novel ranges over a variety of locations and kinds of terrain, that it presents a gallery of characters both military and civilian, and that it covers a good many types of relations among these characters. Yet in spite of all this, the novel is a carefully written work, having a tight structure and a concrete shape and abounding with technical devices. No wonder that critics find the novel a rich field for exploration. If you read these interpretations thoughtfully and carefully, you will gain a deep understanding of the novel, and you will come out with a full idea about its various aspects.

a) The Novel as a Tragedy

In his critical analysis entitled "*A Farewell to Arms*," Ray B. West maintains that the physical form of this novel resembles the drama. You must have noticed that the synopsis traced the development of the plot book by book. According to Mr. West each book is like an act in a five act tragedy.¹⁶⁴ The first book is an introduction of all major characters, the main setting (war)¹⁶⁵ and the problems involved. The second book traces the development of the romantic love between Frederick and Catherine. The retreat of the Italian army is portrayed in book three. A very important event takes place in this book, Frederick's decision to escape. In book four we see Frederick and Catherine escaping by rowing across a lake to Switzerland. As in Aristotle's formulation of tragedy, a reversal occurs in book five: all hope collapses and Catherine dies after giving birth a dead baby.

No discussion of tragedy would be complete without tackling two important points: the tragic flaw and hero's enlightenment. As for the tragic flaw, Mr. West believes that Frederick's determination to struggle is a kind of tragic flaw. With the chaotic retreat at Caporetto, especially the carabinieri's brutal conduct with the retreating officers and their arresting of Frederick, he felt that the front was no longer subject to traditional rules of war. So he decided to escape, but to escape is to struggle. "It was not my show anymore," Frederick reasoned. And it is the tragic flaw in tragedies that brings about the tragic end. Finally, tragedy ends with death, most frequently if not always. And it is the death of the hero. But it is Catherine who dies though she is not the heroine. It is not her tragedy; it is the tragedy of Frederick. It has been just mentioned above that his tragic flaw is his determination to escape first to escape the war by escaping from the front and then from Italy – but there is no escape the war. After escaping from Italy, he and Catherine go to Switzerland. In the hospital, Catherine perceives that she is going to die, a lost struggle, but Frederick tries to prevent her death, that is, to struggle against death, a lost struggle, of course. It is only after her death, in the words of West, "that he is truly initiated." This is the moment of enlightenment that the tragic hero experiences at the end of the tragedy. In his anger at the death of Catherine, Frederick orders the two nurses out of the room where the corpse was. "But after I got them out and shut the door and turned off the light it wasn't any good. It was like saying good-bye to a statue." It dawns on Frederick what Catherine realized

¹⁶⁴ West, Ray B. *The Unadulterated Sensibility Twentieth Century Interpretation of Farewell to Arms*, pp. 139 – 51

¹⁶⁵ Wyndham, Louis. *Love and War from Men without Art*, pp. 17 – 41

from the beginning: that death is the end. He puts his trust in war but he is disillusioned and deserts; he puts his trust in the love for Catherine and enjoys life with her in Switzerland, but her death, after giving birth to a dead child, shocks him into realizing that death is the end. And that his inability to prevent her from dying is "as illusory as his belief that he could escape the war by a separate peace."

b) The Religion of Death

A second attempt to discern patterns and organizing principles in the novel is James F. Light's in his "The Religion of Death in *A Farewell to Arms*." Light suggests that "one way of looking at Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is to see its close involvement in four ideals of service. Each of these ideals is dramatized by a character of some importance, and it is between these four that Lt. Henry wavers in the course of the novel." This is a summary of the article in which Mr. Light elaborates his position.

According to Light, the first ideal of service is that of orthodox religion represented by the priest, who wishes to serve God. Henry's attitude to him at the beginning of the novel is one of sympathy but of rejection. Unlike the other officers, Frederick refrains from priest baiting and teasing; but he leaves the priest and joins the other officers when they go to the brothel. Later on in the novel, after Frederick is wounded and has found real love with Catherine, he is closer to the priest. So, when he returns to his duty while he still rejects the priest baiting as he did at the beginning of the novel, now, rather than joining the other officers in going to the whore-house, he remains with the priest. The increased closeness to the priest implies that the love Frederick discovered with Catherine is responsible for the change. However, this movement towards the priest does not continue: at the end of the novel Frederick totally rejects the priest's position. He earnestly prays God not to let Catherine die but she dies. That is, Frederick rejects the ideal of selfless love to God that the priest holds.

The second ideal of service is that dramatized by Gino, the patriot, for whom the "soil is sacred" and death for country is not "in vain." Frederick shows some understanding for Gino's "being a patriot. He was born one." Frederick's innocence, and even naïveté, is expressed in his argument that there is an end to war whereas the novel demonstrates the opposite: no one can escape the consequences of war, and life itself is perpetual war. Frederick later totally rejects Gino's ideal: he deserts the army and makes his "separate peace."

Catherine embodies the third ideal of service: the service of secular lovers to one another, the code she dramatizes in her life as well as her death. She gives herself wholly and selflessly of Frederick, and she does not care about a marriage ceremony. She even calls him her religion. Frederick learns this from her. (At the beginning of the novel he declares that he does not want to love her or love anybody else.) But at the end of the novel so ineffective then is this ideal of secular love that he cannot do anything to help her or himself: she was like statue.

The fourth and last ideal of service is that Rinaldi, the surgeon officer for whom work is the sole justification for life. As a surgeon, his business is the body. With the increase in the

number of the wounded and the injured, he must have felt less and less effective. When Frederick returns to duty after his surgery and recuperation, Rinaldi notices that his friend is closer to the priest. Worse, Rinaldi is convinced that he himself had syphilis. The other doctor at the end of novel cannot do anything to help Catherine. So, the ideal of service represented by doctors dedicated to work is of no help: Rinaldi is himself sick and the doctor at the end of the novel cannot do anything is facing death.

To conclude, none of these ideals of service can offer Frederick any help. The greatest fact in life is Death and we should face it, with no illusion or self-pity. If one faces death this way, one can gain the only immortality man can know. Immortality is not gained by selfless service to God (the Priest), to country (Gino), to the beloved (Catherine), or to mankind (Rinaldi). "Such limited immortality is a poor substitute for victory over death through everlasting life; but it is only kind of immortality, the only kind of religion, the Hemingway of *Farewell* can believe in," concludes Light.

c) Symbolic Interpretation

Now that you have read two attempts to identify the bases or principles of organization in the novel (the first to consider it shaped as a tragedy, the second to consider the four services which attract Frederick), it is time to survey the third and last attempt to discover the organizing principle in the novel, the shape it embodies. This attempt is made by Carlos Baker, the eminent Hemingway critic who sets forth his view in an article entitled "The Mountain and the Plain."¹⁶⁶ He starts by stating that realism, naturalism, and matter-of-factness characterize the surface of the novel. Mr. Baker points out a subsurface activity organized by two opposed concepts: Home and Not-Home.¹⁶⁷ "The Home-concept... is associated with the mountains; with dry-cold weather; with peace and quiet; with love, dignity, health, happiness and the good life; and with worship, or at least the consciousness, of God. The Not-Home concept is associated with low-lying plains; with rain and fog; with obscenity, indignity, disease, suffering, nervousness, war and death; and with irreligion." By means of suggestion, implication, repetition, juxtaposition, and other subtle devices, Hemingway builds up these images and gradually charges them with rich significance and association. Actually the total structure of the novel is developed, according to Mr. Baker, around those contrasting situations. "To Gorizia, the Not-Home of war, succeeds the Home which Catherine and Frederick make together in the Milan Hospital. The Not-Home¹⁶⁸ of the grim retreat from the Isonzo is followed by the quiet and happy retreat which the lovers share above Montreux. Home ends for Frederick Henry when he leaves Catherine dead in the Lausanne Hospital."

Mr. Baker's article is an attempt to identify the symbols and what they stand for. He does not deny that the surface of Hemingway's novel is realistic and naturalistic, but he adds that beneath the surface the novel is symbolic, and its two basic symbols are the mountain and the plain. The mountain symbolizes, or is associated with, home, dry cold weather, etc. But the plain symbolizes the not-home, rain and fog, etc., as stated above. But our critic does

¹⁶⁶ Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, pp. 101 – 02

¹⁶⁷ Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*, pp. 9 – 13

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 48

not intend just to study the symbols in the novel; he goes to the extent of relating symbolism in the novel to its very structure:

The total structure of the novel is developed, in fact, around the series of contrasting situations already outlined. To Gorizia, the Not-Home of war, succeeds the Home which Catherine and Frederick make together in the Milan hospital. The Not-Home of the grim retreat from Isonzo is followed by the quiet and happy retreat which the lovers share above Montreux. Home ends for Frederick Henry when he leaves Catherine dead in the Lausanne Hospital.

This means that you can look at the structure of this novel in various ways: the structure of tragedy in its five acts, the wavering of the protagonist between four different kinds of service from a religious perspective, and the alternating symbols of plain and mountain. Whichever you prefer, you will find that the structure is tight, so tight that I consider it receptive to all those approaches. Each of them reveals a dimension of the richness of the novel.

Before I end this section on symbolism, let me draw your attention to the following key passage, symbolically and thematically. Frederick is sitting in the hall of the hospital waiting to hear how Catherine was. He recalls:

Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first toward the center where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end. When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. But most of them went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell into the fire.

I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the ground. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cup of water on the log, so that I would have the cup empty to put whiskey in before I added water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants.

This episode is symbolic. Read in the context of the novel, the situation of the ants is parallel to that of Frederick and Cathy: there is no way out, death is the one and only fact of life. Moreover, the ants were burnt for no reason, so is the death of Cathy who did not die as a punishment for immorality or any other reason. Somebody might play the role of a savior but he does not. But the fate of the ants is not only the fate of Catherine; actually it is the fate of humanity in the twentieth century. We are trapped in this life and the only way out, however hard we try, is death.

Another symbol in the novel is the rain. You are very frequently aware of the rain, at least because Catherine was very much aware of it. Once when walking with Frederick rain begins to fall. This starts a dialogue between the two of them: mentioning the rain makes her worry whether Frederick will always love her, always, even in the rain. She ends up by

confessing: "I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see me dead in it." When Frederick left her room after her death and walked out of the hospital, he was sad and lonely and he walked back to the hotel in the rain. Rain¹⁶⁹ is the last word in the novel- a sad ending. Rain then symbolizes Death, and it always frightened Catherine.¹⁷⁰

Another symbolic passage or episode is the following in which Frederick managed to run away from the carabinieri, jumped into the river, swam, concealed himself in a train, and was on his way to Milan, to see Catherine. He meditates.

Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. Although that ceased when the carabinieri put his hands on my collar. I would like to have had the uniform off although I did not care much about the outward forms. I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no pair of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck.

I consider this passage symbolic because it is an echo of the Christian concept of baptism. His deserting the army and then crossing the river is a parallel to the idea of baptism, especially that he seems to be reborn after that experience.

Now he is a new man, free from his obligation to the Italian army and, more importantly, he is about to find Catherine and start a new life with her.

d) Irony in the Novel

That should be enough by way of structure and symbolism. It is quite in order to take up irony, another literary device writers use to enrich their work and to make it more effective. This technique is carefully discussed by E.M. Halliday in an article entitled, "Hemingway's Ambiguity: Symbolism and Irony."¹⁷¹ An instance of this irony is seen in the discrepancy between his lot in the army and his general temperament or frame of mind. As a volunteer ambulance driver he lives with officers in comfortable houses, eats and drinks well and enjoys that, even the brothel he visits is exclusively for officers. Yet he is malcontent. His life in the hospital in Milan with Catherine attending to him dramatizes this ironic discrepancy. Another instance occurs in the first pages of the novel. "At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army" (p. 4)¹⁷².

Before he goes on a mission Catherine gives him a Saint Anthony medal, which is believed to be protective, with its gold chain. After he was wounded he never found it. "Someone probably got it at one of the dressing station," was Frederick's ironic comment (p. 44)¹⁷³. In times of war a protective device, rather than give protection, needs to be protected.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 135, 165, 267, 326 and 332

Malcolm Cowley was one of the first Hemingway's critics to the point to his symbolic use of weather see the portable Hemingway, New York, 1994m Intro, p. xvi

¹⁷⁰ Baker, Carlos. *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist*, p. 106

¹⁷¹ Halliday, E. M. *Hemingway Ambiguity Symbolism and Irony*, pp. 57 – 63

¹⁷² Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*, p. 4

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 44

During the retreat, Frederick and his men, in their three cars, get stuck in the mud. Trying to move the car, Frederick ordered two sergeants they had picked up on their way to cut brush to place under the wheels. They refused and departed. Frederick orders them to come back. When they refused he shot one of them. One of Frederick's men, Bonello shot the other. Proudly, he said, "I killed him. I never killed anybody in this war, and all my life I've wanted to kill a sergeant" (207)¹⁷⁴. It sounds like a war is the chance to fulfill one's desire to kill! The irony involved gets grimmer and grimmer: both Bonello and Frederick desert hours later. Prior to their desertion, and while Frederick was captured by carabinieri, they were embittered by the way the carabinieri were shooting retreating officers. Frederick reflected: "The questioners had that beautiful detachment and devotion to stern justice of men dealing in death without being in any danger of it" (224)¹⁷⁵. Obviously, he had forgotten that he administered the same kind of justice when he and Bonello shot the two sergeants.

The crowning irony is the ending of the book. Frederick deserts, thinking that he is out of the war, that he escaped death at the hands of the carabinieri (battle police). So he and Catherine escape to Switzerland. They enjoy peace and safety for a while away from the war – but only to see Catherine dead after delivering a dead baby. Death is the big fact of life; it comes to people in peace and in war.

5.5.2 Characters

a) Catherine Barkley:

Critics seem to agree that heroines in Hemingway are of two types: the first is the all-woman who gives herself totally to the hero; she is merely a love object which allows the hero to dominate her and thus assert his manhood. The other type is the femme fatale who does not allow the hero to possess her completely. Further, she is destructive at least in refusing to submit to the hero and, consequently, allowing him to assert his manhood. This is basically a masculine attitude which is being increasingly rejected especially by feminist criticism. According to Hemingway's philosophy, the first type is the good woman, the second is the bad.

Catherine Barkley is clearly the good type. She submits so completely to Frederick that she is easily considered a mere love object. Yet paradoxically, under her influence Frederick changed his attitude towards love. At the beginning of the novel used to frequent the whore house. After meeting Catherine he was not clear. Witness some of his thoughts: "I thought she was probably a little crazy. It was all right if she was. I did not care what I was getting into. This was better than going every evening to the [whore] house for officers...I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge." (p. 30). Some critics consider her a passive character, a quality in keeping with this type of Hemingway woman, but this is a difficult position to maintain in light of the change she effects in Frederick. As a Hemingway hero, he is to be free from women, playing the love game, merely. But we see him becoming so attached to her that he considers her the source of meaning in his life.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 207

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 224

Catherine fits in the world of Hemingway, the world of the novel. She denies formal religion. She admits to Henry: "But I haven't any religion... You're my religion. You're all I've got" (p. 116).

Yet it is difficult to deny that she is a type of the Hemingway heroine, which implies that she is not individualized. Significantly, we cannot tell, at the end of the novel, the details of her appearance.

Very special about her is her sense that she is trapped. At the very beginning of her relation with Henry she predicted, "We're going to have a strange life" (p. 27). She is afraid of the rain because she sees herself dead in it, and sometimes she sees Frederick dead in it, too (p. 126). She also feels that she would die. And at the end she died.

b) Frederick Henry and the Hemingway Code

Before drawing a character sketch of Frederick Henry, it is necessary to present Hemingway's philosophy of life, usually referred to as the Hemingway code, since Frederick is the typical Hemingway hero whose life and conduct are the embodiment of this code. Hemingway's philosophy is closely related to the Existentialism of the French philosopher Jean Paul Sartre.

First, this philosophy starts with the premise that God does not exist. Moreover, there is nothing called human nature, the concept over which religions and philosophies spent, and are still spending, a great deal of time and effort. Some philosophies describe human nature as sinful and evil, others as good. In the absence of God to believe in on the outside and human nature on the inside, man is left forlorn, alienated, lonely, and lost. Thus man is nothing but what he makes of himself. Whether man makes out of himself and of his life, it will end in death. Death is the great and central reality which the Hemingway hero confronts and never forgets, never creates any illusions about. It should be pointed out that in existentialism and in Hemingway the belief that God does not exist should not lead to nihilism, to the belief that there are no values whatsoever. On the contrary, since God does not exist, man is left with the responsibility of making what he wants to make of himself.

The Hemingway hero is a man who learned or comes to learn the premise mentioned above. He comes to terms with those conditions and with himself. So he makes rules for himself which are called the "Hemingway Code." According to this code the hero must be courageous in facing reality and death. He avoids self-pity in his facing reality and is recognizing that he, and all human beings, are "biologically trapped – just because we are human beings.

The code and the discipline are very important because only through them that man can give meaning to his life. In the words of Robert Penn Warren:

It is the discipline of the code that makes man human, a sense of style or good form. This applies not only in isolated, dramatic cases...but is a more persuasive thing that can give meaning, partially at least, to the confusion of living. The discipline of

the soldier, the form of the athlete, the gameness of the sportsman, the technique of the artist can give some sense of the human order, and can achieve a moral significance. And here we see how Hemingway's concern with war and sport crosses his concern with literary style.

Important for the Hemingway hero is the gratification of appetite, the relish of sensation. This intense awareness of the world of the sense entails emphasis on enjoying nature. Such sensations come to a climax in drinking and sex, both of which are instruments of defense against *Nada*, nothingness. In *A Farewell to Arms* sensations lead to true love. At the beginning Frederick's relation with Catherine is a matter of sensations, of sex, then it develops into true love.

But this true love ends tragically, with the death of Catherine. With her death Frederick discovers that his attempt to find a substitute for universal meaning in a personal relationship is doomed to failure because the human predicament is like the predicament of the ants on the log, in the famous analogy quoted earlier. Yet this failure does not mean that the code and the effort to maintain it are without value. In the words of Tennyson, the great nineteenth-century English poet: "it is better to have and lost than never to have loved at all."

I have started this as an attempt to draw the character of Frederick Henry, and I thought it would be appropriate to discuss the Hemingway code. I find it now that the sketching of the code is really a character sketch of the Hemingway hero, embodied in Frederick Henry, the protagonist of *A Farewell to Arms*.

One last point about the Hemingway hero. He is usually surrounded by characters similar to him in varying degrees, and another group of characters who are different. In other words, and in thematic terms, there is the "we" group, the initiate, the aware on the hand, and the "they," the uninitiate, the unaware. In "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," the old man and the old waiter are the initiate, the young waiter is the uninitiate. In *A Farewell to Arms*, to the first belongs Frederick, Catherine, Rinaldi, Valentini, and Count Greffi; to the second, the officers of the mess, the incompetent doctors, Ettore, as well as all those who are undisciplined.¹⁷⁶

5.5.3 Hemingway's Style

One of the most striking characteristic of Hemingway's work is his style which has been a source of attraction to many readers, of repulsion to others. Imitated as a model and parodied, within a decade or so it became internationally known and influenced many writers, consciously or unconsciously.

His first assignment as a reporter on the *Kansas City Star* exposed him to the newspaper's style sheet which instructed reporters to "Avoid the use of adjectives, especially such extravagant ones such as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent, etc." And required "short sentences," "short first paragraphs," and "vigorous English." Hemingway himself described these as "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing." (qtd. by Fenton, *The*

¹⁷⁶ Safadi, Issam. *The 20th Century American Literature*, p. 199

Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 31 – 34)¹⁷⁷ In his *Death in the Afternoon*, p.2, he wrote that in his creative writings in the early twenties, he was not writing to secure the emotional effects of journalism, but aiming for "the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact that made the motion and which would be as valid in a year or in ten years, or, with luck...always..." In our novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederick Henry says:

I was always embarrassed by the words scared, glorious, and sacrifice and the expression in vain. We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing scared, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it. There were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places and dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the names of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of village, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. Gino was a patriot. So he said things that separated us sometimes.

This is a character speaking in a novel, but it is exactly the position of Hemingway. Actually, it is the part of the general attitude of people who were disillusioned by WWI, its brutality and mass destruction, its belying the big words and human values which were extolled in speeches but betrayed in importance to Hemingway in his fiction.

Style in Hemingway is not merely a matter of diction and grammatical structure. In the foregoing discussion of the Hemingway code, it was made clear that he appropriate style, the result of discipline of the soldier. A closer look at the style itself would show that is simple, at times so simple as to be monotonous. The sentences are characteristically simple or compound (the compound sentence is a number of simple sentences.) Robert Penn Warren, on whom I depended in presenting the Hemingway Code, has this to say about the style, beyond the facts of style mentioned above:

There is more fundamental aspect of the question, an aspect of the sensibility of the author. The short, simple rhythms, the succession of coordinate clauses, the general lack of subordination – all suggest a dislocated and ununified world... Subordination implies some exercise of the discrimination – the sifting of reality through the intellect. But in Hemingway we see a Romantic anti-intellectualism. (pp. 175-76)¹⁷⁸.

Ernest Hemingway, a major novelist of America, is the spokesman of the lost generation of American writers which included writers like William Faulkner, Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis. These writers, including Hemingway, tried to show the loss the First World War had caused in social, moral and psychological spheres of human life.

¹⁷⁷ Hemingway, Ernest. *Death in the Afternoon*, p. 2

¹⁷⁸ Safadi, Issam. *The 20th Century American Literature*, p. 200

They also reveal the horror, the fear and futility caused by the war. Hemingway has put into his novels the precise feelings longings and frustrations that are typical of the lost generation. He is a typical modern man voicing the dilemma and delusion of modern man.

Major Influences:

Mark Twain, the war, and the bible, were the major influences that shaped Hemingway's thought and art. While in Paris, Hemingway came into contact with such eminent literary figures as Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce and T.S. Eliot.

All or some of them might have left their imprint on him. Beside these contemporary journalism and the style of the star (the paper for which Hemingway worked) also helped him to purge his style of stereotyped phrases and metaphoric emebellihmaets.

He learnt to use the simple words for producing the desired effect.

Hemingway's Style:

The main Theme of Hemingway is death and wound. He deals with the impact and tragedy caused by the WWI "Hemingway's world is the world of war, of death and horror, courage and endurance, of capacity to risk and sustain pain and difficulty. This is the world seen through crack in the wall by a man who is pinned down by a fun fire."¹⁷⁹

It is the world of reality and struggle in which he found himself and lived the world, which impinged on his consciousness and in his depiction, he found himself competent.

Malcolm Cowley¹⁸⁰ suggested that Hemingway shouldn't be treated as the writer of naturalistic tradition, but also in kinship with the symbolists and the nocturnal writer like Poe, Hawthorne and Melville.

Lost Generation:

To quote W. M. Frohock:

"Their particular attitude towards time, their consciousness of frustrations and despair like the mood of Hemingway in The Sun also Rises was characteristic of the years of great boom."

American prosperity had made the expatriation of the artist most inevitable; a lost generation slumped around the table of the best cafés in a half dozen European capitals and wrote the American Literary Review that was published in Paris. The gloom, however comfortable, we very deep: we expected the world to end, if it ever got round to doing so rather with a whimper than with a bang. It ended that particular way, with a crash in 1919. (pp. 11 – 12)¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Young, Philip. *Ernest Hemingway*, p. 40

¹⁸⁰ Cowley, Malcolm. "Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway." *From Twentieth Century Views: Hemingway*, p. 40

¹⁸¹ The Novels of Violence in America, 1957, pp. 11 – 12

CHAPTER VI

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

6.1 Biography

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, September 24, 1896. He died in California on 21 December 1940, but his death date also marks the beginning of his new life as one of the pre-eminent American Writers of the twentieth century. It would take another decade for his name to become recognized by scholars and critics, and still another for the general public to become familiar with some version of his life and work.

By the end of the century, F. Scott Fitzgerald had perhaps the largest public recognition of any writer in the world: not only does *The Great Gatsby* (1925) boast yearly sales of over 300,000 in the United States alone, but Fitzgerald's name and image also are totally firmly enlarged on the collective imagination of our culture, both in America and abroad.¹⁸²

Among critics and scholars, Fitzgerald is regarded as one of the three major American Writers of the last century alongside William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway.

We live in an era that celebrates the culture of celebrity, and both Fitzgerald and his wife, Zelda Sayre, possessed the physical attractiveness, charm that would unclear them to a new decade of the public exploitations (the 1920s) as well as engender a virtual orgy of moralistic recrimination from the same public, which found in the couples' personal tragedy a forum for post-depression, post World War II discussions of waste, degeneration and even spiritual inertia.

Newspapers nothing his death viewed him as a relic of the "Jazz Age", and few were willing to concede to him more than, in the words of the New York Times (24 December 1940), a real talent which never fully bloomed.

Fitzgerald himself never totally conceded defeat, even when both present and future seemed at their bleakest. At a particularly low point in 1940, he wrote to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, that though he was no longer read, he believed even then that there was little published "that doesn't slightly bear my stamp" in a small way I was no original "letters p. 288)". His story is, finally, that of a man who was, as he described himself, first and foremost a writer:

A man who, though writing, achieved immortality.

As a young boy, Fitzgerald was aware that his mother, rather than his father, provided the financial foundation of the family – which was to recur frequently in his writing.

When Fitzgerald entered Princeton he met Edmund Wilson, who years later Fitzgerald would describe as his "literary conscience".¹⁸³

The researcher concludes that Fitzgerald used his pain and rejection the loss of Gineva (his girlfriend), his Princeton failure (he never to graduate his study in Princeton), his lost to his best friend the "priest" at Princeton and his participation in the war but he couldn't because the war is over in Europe.

¹⁸² Prigozy, Ruth. *Fitzgerald, F. Scott*, p. 3

¹⁸³ Wilson, Edmund. *Fitzgerald, F. Scott: The Crack-Up*, p. 79

He wrote at this time, in his first novel as a prose, conveys the pain of his last days at Princeton.

"The last light wanes and drifts across the land"
(Nassan literary Magazine, May 1917, p. 95)

Fitzgerald began writing "Every evening, 'he said' I wrote paragraph after paragraph on a somewhat edited history of me and my imagination"¹⁸⁴

The Romantic Egotist, as he called it, was rejected by scribes. But it was ultimately the basis for his successful novel, *This Side of Paradise*.

Fitzgerald met Zelda Sayre, beautiful young woman, he fell in love with her, but she refused to commit herself to him, for she was well aware of his financial situation.

Fitzgerald was in deep and truly love with Zelda, no matter what. He treats this subject fictionally in a short story, *Emotional Bankruptcy* (1931).

He traveled to Montgomery and his engagement to Zelda was now official. But his days of uncertainty and despair found expression in some of his stories *May Day* (1920), *Winter Dreams* (1922) and *The Sensible Thing* (1924). And he would recall over ten years later the sudden shift from desperation and failure to dizzying success in his biographical essays, *Early Success*, *My Lost City* and *Echos of The Jazz Age (Crack-Up)*.

This Side of Paradise was published on 26 March 1920, and Scott and Zelda were married in 1920.

This Side of Paradise is an autobiographical first novel, a coming of age story which coincides with the decade that embraced a youth culture as a nation sought its own new identity in the post World War I. The changes America was experiencing from 1912 through to 1919 were faithfully captured in the novel. Fitzgerald captured the mood of the nation.

The critics were not unanimous in praising the novel: there were many errors overlooked by copy-editors and Fitzgerald was blamed for its illiteracy: Edmund Wilson did note later, however, that despite its many failings, "it doesn't fail to live."
(In his own Time p. 405).

John Peale Bishop wrote to his friend, "it's damn good, brilliant in places, and sins chiefly through exuberance and lack of development (correspondences p. 49). H. L. Mencken is smart set called it "the best American novel that I have seen of late" (1920) and The New York Times praised it too, nothing that "the glorious spirit of abounding youth glows throughout this fascinating tale..."

As a picture of the daily existence of what we call loosely "College men", this book as nearly perfect as such work could be... it could have been written only by an artist who knows how to balance his values, plus a delightful literary style.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Mizener, Arthur. *Afternoon Of An Author A Selection Of Uncollected Stories And Essays*, pp. 84 – 85

¹⁸⁵ Bryer, Jackson R. *The Critical Reputation of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Bibliographical Study*, p. 5

Fitzgerald and his wife did everything possible to live up to their celebrity which coincided with the start of the "Jazz Age".

He described the Jazz Age as "a whole race going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure" (*Echos of The Jazz Age (Crack-Up)*, p. 15)

His own success seemed enhanced, bewildering.

I was adopted, not as a Middle Western, nor even as a detached observer, but as the arch type of what New York wanted... I, who knew less of New York than any reporter of six months standing and less of its society than any hallroom boy in a Ritz Stag line, was pushed into the position not only of spokesman for the time but of the typical product of the same moment (*My Lost City, Crack-Up*, pp. 26-27).

Writer John Dos Passos, who visited the Fitzgeralds and accompanied them on a occasion to an amusement park, noted Zelda's unusual mental states:

*The gulf that opened between Zelda and me, sitting up on that Rickey Ferris wheel, was something I couldn't explain. It was only looking back at it years later that it occurred to me that, even the first day we knew each other. I had come up against that basic fissure in her mental process that was to have such tragic consequence. Though she was very lovely I had come upon something that frightened and repelled me, even physically – though it all. I felt a great respect for her, a puzzled but affectionate respect.*¹⁸⁶

(*The Best Times*, 1966, quoted in Brucoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur*, p. 175)

The Great Gatsby reviews were mixed; the overriding Judgment was that Fitzgerald represented the Jazz Age, and that, at best, *Gatsby* was a novel of limited scope. Many praised the author's cleverness.

Mencken, while admiring the writing, found it only a glorified anecdote.¹⁸⁷ But noted critic Gilbert Seldes praised it without reservation, Fitzgerald has more than matures; he has mastered his talents and gone soaring in a beautiful fight, leaving behind him everything dubious and tricky in his earlier work,¹⁸⁸ Fitzgerald received letters of praise from writers he admired assuaged the pain. T. S. Eliot called it "the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James" (*Crack-Up*, p. 310) and Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein and Edith Wharton wrote him complimentary letters.

In 1925 Fitzgerald conceded the novel's poor sales at home, and in England. He wrote to his wife in 1930 that he had dragged *The Great Gatsby* out of the pit of my stomach in a time of misery.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Brucoli, Mathew J. *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 175

¹⁸⁷ Bryer, Jackson R. *The Critical Reputation of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Bibliographical Study*, p. 66

¹⁸⁸ *The Dial*, August 1925, p. 162

¹⁸⁹ Brucoli, Mathew J and Duggan, Margaret M. *Correspondence of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, p. 329

6.2 The Great Gatsby (1925)

6.2.1 An Analytical Synopsis¹⁹⁰

The narrative begins not with Gatsby, its protagonist, but with Nick Carraway, the narrator who is considered by many readers as a second protagonist if not the protagonist of the novel. Nick is a new arrival in New York City where he is involved in the business of selling bonds. He is a young man who comes from the Middle West, a part of America which is not as developed, urbanized, or industrialized as the East. It is a conservative part of the country which upholds old moral and spiritual values in comparison with the East. He sets up house in West Egg on Long Island, a fashionable, wealthy suburb, from which he starts his social activities. At a dinner party at the home of Tom Buchanan, an old acquaintance married to a distant cousin of Nick, Daisy, Nick meets an attractive young lady, Jordan Baker, a golf player and gets interested in her. It is clear to many people that the marriage of Tom and Daisy is not happy and that Daisy was aware of her husband's deliberate unfaithfulness. In another small party Nick meets Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, a vulgar woman who looks down upon her husband, George Wilson, who owns a garage for car repair.

Another neighbor of Nick's is Jay Gatsby, a mysterious man of great wealth, who lives in a great palace, a center for lavish parties and entertainment. Nick attends one of Gatsby's parties and he meets Gatsby, a young man in his early thirties. During the summer Nick attends several of Gatsby's parties, where most of the guests who greedily enjoy, and even take advantage of, Gatsby's bounty, have not even met their host. In one of those parties Nick once more meets Jordan Baker. However, he loses interest in her when he learns that she cheated in an amateur golf match.

As Nick gets more and more involved in the social life of the neighborhood, he gets to know the past of some of the neighbors. For example, Gatsby introduces him to one Wolfshiem, possibly one of Gatsby's business partners, through whom Nick comes to know of Gatsby's racketeering activities. Furthermore, Jordan Baker tells Nick the of Daisy's wedding to Tom. Before the bridal dinner, Daisy got heavily drunk and announced that the wedding was cancelled and that she wanted to go back to her lover, Jay Gatsby. However, her family and friends prevailed on her and persuaded her to go ahead with the planned marriage to Tom, who was rich and influential, unlike Jay, who was, at that time, poor and unknown.

All that was about the past. As for the present, Jay is still in love with Daisy, and he wants Jordan and Nick to bring Daisy and him together. So Daisy and Jay meet in Nick's house, and then the group moves to Gatsby's great mansion where he shows them the mansion, the furniture, the swimming pools, the gardens, etc. In a famous scene, he shows them his collections of silk shirts.

Gatsby reveals his origin to Nick. His name was Gatz and he was born in the Middle West in a poor family. He dreamt of becoming rich. It was while WWI was going on that he met Daisy and fell in love with her but was too poor to marry her. Upon his return from the war

¹⁹⁰ Safadi, Issam. *The 20th Century American Literature*, p. 174

he became a partner in a drug business, acquired wealth quickly, bought his mansion near where Daisy lived, and wanted to regain her, as if nothing had happened: no marriage, and, more importantly, no time had elapsed!

Gatsby held a small party in a hotel room for Jordan, Nick, Daisy, and Tom. The latter looked down upon Gatsby's low origin, and accused him of being dishonest and of trying to take his wife. On their way back to their homes, Gatsby and Daisy get into Gatsby's car, and Daisy, an inexperienced driver, decides to drive. Nick, Jordan, and Tom follow in another car. Gatsby tells Nick the next day that Daisy hit and killed Myrtle, and that Gatsby was willing to claim that he did the hitting if the death is traced to his car. George Wilson goes to Gatsby's mansion, shoots him and himself. Later, Nick found out what had happened: Tom persuaded George that Gatsby was Myrtle's lover and that he hit her and ran away.

6.2.2 Characters

The foregoing summary is only an attempt to give you background which would help you get into the following discussion of various aspects of this short but very rich and condensed novel. It is only a starting point. Perhaps the best way to approach the novel is to analyze the title character-Jay Gatsby.

Gatsby grew up in a poor family and, because of his poverty, he was rejected by his sweetheart, or by her family, which was enough to make such a boy, any boy, anywhere, dream of becoming rich, especially in America, the land of the American Dream, the dream of liberty, equality, and opportunity, the dream of the full development of one's potential. So upon his return from the war, he wanted to realize his spiritual dream: of gaining the love of Daisy. To him Daisy became the American dream. Is not America the land of opportunity, of fulfillment of dreams? But Gatsby lived in the 1920s, a period which is unsurpassed in American history in its corruption whether in private business or in government circles. Worse, it was post-WWI America, with its, and the whole world's, reaction to the collapse of all human values, faith, and hope. And Gatsby was a man characterized by an "extraordinary gift for hope," "a romantic readiness," and a "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life." Yet the only way available in the corrupt world of the twenties, better known as "the Jazz Age,"¹⁹¹ "the Waste Land," is material success, money. This is the paradox and the irony in Gatsby: his aim, the love of Daisy, is spiritual, idealistic, romantic. But his instrument is money by any means. No wonder that he fails and his dream collapses. He is great in his pursuance of the American dream, in his dedication to the achievement of the dream. There is no question about the loftiness of the dream. The failure is the result of Gatsby's blindness not only to the facts of life in the waste land of the twentieth century, but to reality itself. His blindness to reality is best illustrated in his insistence that the past can be repeated. He wanted to cancel the years of his life, the life of Daisy, the life of Tom, the marriage of Tom and Daisy, and the fact that they had a daughter. Daisy finds in him "safety from human reality."

The character of Gatsby is rooted in his circumstances, in his time and place: post WWI America. Yet his significance is much deeper and wider than this. His roots are deep in the

¹⁹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz_age

American soil: his dream is the dream of the founding fathers, of those who crossed the ocean to create an ideal world. Yet his significance is wide: it goes beyond the life of any individual. His predicament is that of Man in the twentieth century: isolated and alienated in a God-abandoned world. No wonder that he is described as mythic, promethean figure.

The analysis of Gatsby's character leads to what was the most important thing in his life: Daisy, the Golden Girl. His life started with his love for her and it ended by his readiness to sacrifice himself for her. And his entire life was dedicated to her. It is to impress her and to regain her that he amassed his wealth and was ready to sacrifice his life.

But what sort of person is Daisy? She is a very good representative of the Jazz Age. She wants to live the life of material luxury. In this respect she is a typical Fitzgerald woman: lovely and delicate but emotionally frigid. She is physically attractive but her influence on her man, in the case Gatsby, not Tom, is destructive. She seems to be a modern descendant of the *femme fatale*, the fatal woman who proves to be catastrophic to her man.

She is Gatsby's dream, the motivating force behind his search for wealth first and, then, his search for her, for her love, whereas his energetic idealism was wasted on her, she, in her practicality, yielded to realistic considerations and married Tom. Actually at the end of the novel, she, in a way, connived and acted as if she were not concerned, though she was the one who ran Myrtle over.

Many critics consider her a degraded American Dream inasmuch as she glitters but she is not gold - a parody of the American dream. The whole idea of the American Dream is degraded and satirized. The novel seems to say that the American dream because nothing but a spoiled Daisy, and the means to attain the dream is the dollar.

Both Gatsby and Daisy are presented through the eyes of Nick Carraway, the narrator. He is a young man who was brought up in the Midwest, and he upholds the traditional, moral, puritanical values of America. He finds himself in the moral chaos and hedonism of the East. In this moral chaos he is, as many critics believe, the fixed moral point. He admires the positive points stated above in the analysis of Gatsby's character, i.e., his dedication to his ideal, his romanticism, and his idealism.

A trend among critics proposes that Nick is not just a participant/narrator, nor just a co-protagonist, but the protagonist. They build their case on the fact that it is through his angle of vision that we see everything: characters, actions, setting, etc. In other words, he shapes our vision of all the aspects of the world of this novel. In addition to this, he is considered the protagonist because he is the one who changes through his experience. Nick admits at the beginning that he does not like Gatsby, but he appreciates him better the better he gets to know him. Moreover, at the end of the novel he decides to terminate his relation with Tom and Daisy, having discovered how empty and materialistic they are; that they are messy, careless people who use others as tools and leave the clearing of their mess to others. Small wonder that he decides to return home, having been disillusioned by the East, which he came to with the hope of establishing business but found it a waste land, morally and spiritually.

Like Gatsby, he is fascinated by the East: its beauty, wealth, sophistication, and glamor, but unlike Gatsby, he comes to understand the reality beneath the glittering surface, the emptiness, the corruption and even the criminality of what seems to be so beautiful on the surface. Equally important it is to notice that he is the one to have insight in Gatsby, to distinguish him from the others, to discover that he is "worth the whole damn bunch put together." He was able to see the contrast between Gatsby and Tom in terms of motivation: whereas Tom is motivated by selfishness, Gatsby is motivated by devotion to his ideal, though this ideal proved to be "vast, vulgar, meretricious beauty." Unlike Gatsby and Don Quixote, neither of whom learns from his experience, Nick does.

But Nick is not just another character in the novel. He is, probably more importantly, the narrator, and this should lead us to a major aspect of this novel: point of view.

6.2.3 Point of View

There is a strong autobiographical element in *The Great Gatsby*, that is, there are similarities and parallels between the life of its author and the life dramatized in the novel. In such case the easiest choice of point of view is the first person narrator: the author/protagonist narrates. If this is the easiest, it is not the best because it is conducive to subjectivity and emotionalism. The author/narrator would tend to be subjective and disregard the objectivity essential in creating the world of fiction. His inevitable involvement in his own life would spill over to involvement in the novel. The same applies to emotionalism. The objectivity, which resulted from having a narrator who is participant at times, observer at others, saved *The Great Gatsby* from the weakness of Fitzgerald's two earlier novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1919) and *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922).¹⁹²

What other factors make Nick a successful narrator? He is always present whenever and wherever he is needed. Secondly, the tranquil tone in which he voices his recollections. Thirdly, his attitude towards Gatsby. This last is very important since it is basic to the portrayal of the main character and to the dramatization of the contrast between him on the one hand and Tom and his likes on the other. He is usually described as objective and he claims that he withholds judgment of others, but several critics contest this description and cite as example to support their position description Gatsby as being "worth the whole damn bunch put together," a statement which betrays lack of objectivity; it also belies the claim, of withholding judgment. Yet I would like to emphasize that his objectivity is basically in his being a narrator who is both inside and outside the story, in his being participant and observer, and in his learning from the experiences of the others.

Yet this praise of Nick, whether you accept it, wholly or partially, or reject it, should not lead us to some negative characteristics of our narrator. S. Matterson, in his *The Great Gatsby: the Critics' Debate* approvingly refers to critics who doubt the reliability of Nick, who describes himself as honest and careful, whereas his actions belie this. Nick, according to this approach, evades the truth; for example, Did he sleep with Jordan? What was his relation to the woman he left behind in the Middle West? According to this line of thinking,

¹⁹² <http://www.garretwilson.com/books/beautifuldarned.html>

Nick is a hypocrite and his claimed honesty a sham. But if we consider Nick as unreliable, we should not believe his narrative, whereas he clearly guides us through the moral chaos of the world of Tom, his friends, and neighborhood. What he narrates, within the context of the entirety of the novel, seems to be coherent and consistent. The obvious conclusion is that he is reliable, regardless of what might be minor departures from what seems to be the truth.

To his credit as an objective narrator is the fact that, in spite of his contempt for what Gatsby represents, he expresses his admiration for Gatsby's dedication to his ideal and of the qualities which distinguish him from Tom and his likes. Along the same line I should point out Nick's progressive understanding of and admiration for Gatsby in spite of his confession to disliking him early in the novel.

6.2.4 Themes

One of the most important aspects of a literary work is its theme, the main point of a work, the thread, not always visible, that ties all the aspects of the work and arranges them in a certain direction. The Great Gatsby is so rich that more than one theme may be detected. I shall discuss some of them in the following:

The American Dream:¹⁹³

- a. Whether superficial or profound, no reading of this novel would ignore the prominent presence of the idea of the American Dream. This idea was touched upon earlier in this analysis of the novel in relation to the character of Gatsby. Here, however, it is to be the focal point. The American dream is, in this novel, the dream of Gatsby.

Originally, the American Dream is not peculiarly American, it is a dream of humanity – a vision of a new Garden of Eden realized here on earth, a world with no limitations, with unbounded opportunity. But the discovery of America gave a great impetus to this propensity. Settling the New World and living in liberty, having opportunity – all this came to be known as the American dream. This sounds like far from what Gatsby embodies. But this is the point, the theme, of the novel. The dream defined in the previous sentences, which accompanied man's history ever since man was capable of dreaming, was reduced in the America of the post WWI era. The bloody, mechanized, devastating war gave the lie to the empty slogans of traditional morality and the claims of the brotherhood of man. Consequently, what the novel shows is the failure of the American dream, its reduction to cheap materialism, its becoming a destructive force. Gatsby's dream is Daisy, to regain her. But his scheme of regaining her is based on material success, and it results in his destruction. She proves to be only nothing, emptiness. In his idealism and optimism, he was ready to sacrifice himself for her, but she is a careless, selfish woman. The American dream as portrayed in this novel is a severe criticism of the idea of the dream and what becomes of it in an age of materialism, ruthless competition, and selfish carelessness. It is a parody of the American Dream.

¹⁹³ <http://www.ego4u.com/en/read-on/countries/usa/american-dream>

- b. If we abstract the novel from its context, not just the 1920s but also the American culture in general, it would be possible to phrase the theme this way: the tragic consequence of idealizing an unworthy object. The unworthy object is obviously Daisy, and the tragic consequence is what happens to Gatsby. The only weakness of such formulation is that it does not reflect a positive point in the novel, that is, that Nick learned his lesson. He did not allow false dreams to be part of his life, and he did not allow materialism and moral chaos to ruin his career. Though he was disappointed with the East and its way of life, his own life was enriched by the experience.
- c. Another theme, related to the theme of the American dream, is the degradation of the concept of love in a materialistic society. The love of Daisy, the delicate, beautiful, parasitic woman is to be bought by success, especially material success. This is commercialized love. Its results in catastrophe.
- d. It another theme of the novel is wasted devotion. The enormous devotion dedicated to Daisy and the energy and industry of Gatsby which drove him to amass his wealth for the sake of regaining Daisy, the object of his devotion, are wasted at the end.

The above-mentioned themes are not separate. They are related and have a common ground. They are dealt with separately here only for the sake of simplification and explanation. But a good novel like *The Great Gatsby* gains strength and effectiveness from having a number of integrally-related themes.

6.2.5 Symbols

One device writers use to enrich their works and the reader's experience of reading is the use of symbols. Simply put, a symbol is something that is itself and yet stands for or suggests something else. We can see illustrations of this in the following salient symbols in *The Great Gatsby*.

a. The Eyes of Dr. Eckelberg:

Part of his description of the setting of the novel, the narrator describes these eyes as follows:

"But above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic-their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground" (p. 29).¹⁹⁴

The narrator is, describing a billboard, an advertisement for an oculist. However, the description of this advertisement, and the various references to it throughout the novel, shows that what is being described is more than a mere object. For example, these eyes,

¹⁹⁴ Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*, p. 29

which are made of metal or some other hard material, *look*, as if they were real eyes capable of seeing. Moreover, they *brood*, also like the eyes of a brooding human being. But the fact that they are huge, gigantic eyes, that they look and brood on an entire region, and the whole traffic moving both ways on a very busy highway, this fact indicates that they are more than human eyes, they seem to be eyes which see everything--in other words, the eyes of God. Later on towards the end of the novel, they are clearly associated with the eyes of God. The scene is one in which George Wilson is deeply distressed because his wife was killed in a car accident. This accident followed a heated argument between Wilson and his wife: he was accusing her of betraying him with another man. During the argument with her, he said, "God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me, but you can't fool God!" He was describing this to his friend Michaelis, who came to comfort him. But when he said what he said, Wilson was looking at the eyes of Doctor Eckleburg. Michaelis realized that Wilson was thinking of these eyes when he uttered the word "God." So Michaelis drew Wilson's attention to the fact that the eyes of Doctor Eckleburg were only an advertisement (p. 166).¹⁹⁵ So, these eyes are just an advertisement, and, simultaneously, they stand for God's eyes according to Wilson, but perhaps for something else to other characters or readers. Accordingly, they are symbols.

b. The Green Light:

The previous symbol, the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg, is not traditional; it is a symbol invented by the author. As such, it could be interpreted in different ways. But there are traditional symbols whose significance, the meaning they embody, has universal suggestions: for example a flowing river suggests time and its movement, a voyage suggests life, green suggests hope and fertility.

In our novel, Gatsby buys a mansion across the bay from Daisy's house. He says to her while they are together in his mansion:

*If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home
across the bay. You always have a green light
that bums all night at the end of your dock.*

So the green light is just a green light which burns at Daisy's house. But for Gatsby it is associated with Daisy herself, with the love they had years ago, and with his yearning for her and hope to possess her again and live with her in the future. But at the end of the novel, after the collapse of Gatsby's dream, the narrator describes the green light in a much larger context, its significance and its associations go far beyond the hope of an individual like Gatsby. This is what the narrator says while standing on the steps of the mansion after the murder of its owner.

*And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to
melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island
here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes - a fresh,
green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees
that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered*

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 166

in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams [the dream of creating a new, ideal world on the newly-discovered America]. And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world [Europe], I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock... Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us.

Obviously, for Nick green light is associated with the greenness which the immigrants [humanity] saw when they sighted America first. And the green light is also associated with the green breast of America. So America is associated with woman, with fertility and creativity. All these associations and implication are deftly vested in the green light, which is both a light and, as we have seen above, much more than just a green light, which is both a light and, as we have seen above, much more than just a green light.

c. East and West:

East and West, the third symbol, are two geographical directions which have additional significance in the culture of the United States. When the first settlers came to the New World from Europe, they landed in the eastern part of the States, the first part to face them. Later on, whenever new land was needed, the expansion was always towards the West. This continued until all America was settled, East to West. Accordingly, West always meant new opportunity, hope, optimism. This explains the words of advice well-known in American popular culture:

"Go West, young man!" That is, it is in the West that you will have opportunity.

In our novel both Gatsby and Nick come from the West, the area where the corruption of civilization has not yet reached, where people are warm and life is "natural." Gatsby finds it necessary to deal with the East on its own terms. Nick, more significantly, decides to desert the East and go back home, West, after his discovery of the corruption of the civilized, urban East.

d. The Holy Grail:

According to encyclopedias, the Holy Grail is part of medieval legend and literature. It appears variously as a chalice, cup, or a dish. Identified by Christians as the chalice of the Last Supper of Christ brought to England, it had miraculous powers. However, it would be revealed only to a pure knight, and the quest for the Grail appears in many medieval stories. On page 155, the narrator describes Gatsby as having committed himself to "the following of a grail." So his pursuing Daisy acquires religious dimension. You should remember that Gatsby is seen in his mansion raising his hands and stretching them towards the house of Daisy, as if in prayer. This and the other symbols enrich the novel and deepen its significance.

6.2.6 Structure

This novel is so tightly structured, deftly built, that it has no loose ends, no irrelevant digressions, and no needless characters. The setting, both of time and place, is limited to a few months in 1922, the year in which the narrator came to the East in the spring, and the killing of Gatsby occurred in the summer of the same year. Yet the time span we get to know is much wider. We have relevant glimpses of the life of Gatsby as a boy and similar glimpses of the life of the narrator. The place is limited to New York and its neighborhood. But in the background there are various countries in Europe and many locations in the United States. So, there is concentration and, paradoxically, expansion achieved by the careful choice of point of view. The actual action begins with Nick's arrival in New York and ends with his departure late in October 1922, some time after the death of Gatsby. Yet the last paragraphs of the novel stretch back to the arrival of Dutch sailors to the shores of the newly discovered world, America and stretch forward towards the future.

The careful manipulation of the narrator is also demonstrated in the characters, a small number of characters all centered around Nick: Daisy is a distant cousin of his, Tom is an old acquaintance, and Gatsby is his next door neighbor. Around Daisy and Tom there are Baker and the Wilsons. Then there are the characters around Gatsby, present but hardly visible. Yet through Gatsby the novel leaves in the reader the impression of crowdedness: which reaches its most dense in the crowds of his parties.

The tight structure of the novel which results from the skillful manipulation of the narrative point of view is demonstrated in the action of the novel. There is more than one line of action: Gatsby and Daisy, Tom and Daisy, Tom and Myrtle, Nick and Baker. The danger in having this number of strands of action is to loosen the structure. But all these strands are unified and kept under strict control by the presence of the narrator. They are unified because they are all about love different kinds of love, none of them requited. There is no love between Daisy and Tom: she did not want to marry him because she was in love with Gatsby and now what holds them together is just a conventional, superficial sense of family. Tom has his affairs which are common knowledge. The relation between Nick and Baker does not sound like a story of genuine love, since it is not fulfilled and each easily goes his own different way. It might be argued that the only love story is that of Gatsby and Daisy, but actually it is not. On the part of Gatsby it was a love story which started, before her marriage, with deception when he gave Daisy the wrong impression about his social class and financial status. And it ended also with deception because Gatsby was deceiving himself by persuading himself that he can ignore the past and restore the Daisy he knew before her marriage. Gatsby's blind attachment to illusion is best expressed in his famous, widely-quoted statement in response to Nick: "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" On the other hand, Daisy at the end deserts Gatsby and the Wilsons: she killed Myrtle and left the scene of the accident and left Gatsby to face the trouble she herself created. Nick is not very clear about his relation with (or is it love for) Jordan, yet it breaks at the end.

So far we have seen how the point of view is the chief source of unity in the novel tying together structure, setting, characters, and action. A [mal comment on the chronology of the novel is quite in order since in this subject too we can see the impact of the narrator. The novel does not follow a linear chronological development. Sometimes the narrator narrates

what he sees actually taking place while at other times he narrates what he remembers of the past and whatever parts of the past are revealed to him by the characters, especially Gatsby. To conclude, the narrator, whether as observer or participant, holds all the strings and gives the novel its tight unity, its coherent structure.

6.2.7 Style

Style is described in literary handbooks and encyclopedias as the arrangement of words in a manner best expressing the individuality of the author and the idea and intent in the author's mind. It is, traditionally, at its best when it approximates a perfect adaptation of one's language to one's ideas. In its broadest concept, it is a matter of general treatment of the material. In its narrowest sense, it is a matter of diction, choice of words, and grammatical structures, phrases and sentences. It includes also figures of speech.

The style of *The Great Gatsby* has been described as clear, vital, and economical. It is remarkably evocative in the sense that it enables us to hear and, more importantly, to see. It is realistic, but not in the Dickensian documentary sense which depends on minute description of massive details, but in that it makes us sense and see by keen observations and perceptive remarks. Witness how the narrator describes the period of a whole year in Gatsby's past life in a short paragraph of just three sentences which are so specific and evocative that they make us see the Gatsby of those days:

For over a year he had been beating his way along the south shore of Lake Superior as a clam-digger and a salmon-fisher or in any other capacity that brought him food and bed. His brown, hardening body lived naturally through the half-fierce, half-lazy work of the bracing days. He knew women early, and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which in his overwhelming self-absorption he took for granted. (p. 105)¹⁹⁶

Another important element in the style of the novel is its triumphant use of the American vernacular. It is the realistic language of people but masterfully adapted to a work of art. What *seems* paradoxical is that the realistic, sometimes even vernacular, style of this book is simultaneously lyrical and figurative.

Finally, a most important function of the style of this novel is that it gives the narrative coherence, a sense of an unbroken unity from beginning to end. This is really a consequence of the choice of the narrator whose voice determines the style of the novel which contributes to the unity and coherence of the novel whether it is narrating, recalling, commenting, predicting or quoting.. Thus it is an important example of the interrelatedness of various aspects of a masterpiece: style, structure, tone, and point of view.

¹⁹⁶ Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*, p. 105

CHAPTER VII

JOHN STEINBECK

7.1 Introduction

Fiction and drama turned to classicism more slowly and reluctantly than did poetry and criticism; in some degree even avoiding its extremes completely. The generation of novelists who became prominent in the thirties, in addition to Wolfe and Hemingway, included James T. Farrell, John Steinbeck, Erskine Caldwell, and William Faulkner. Naturalists all in their primary inspiration, these men also developed in varying degrees the possibilities of symbolism and moved generally in the direction that Sherwood Anderson rather than Dreiser had indicated, toward fantasy and away from literal realism. At first unnoticed, the silvery laughter of the comic spirit began to be heard above the voices of tragedy, corruption, and death, with which their work was most concerned. As the theme of illusion which had so obsessed O'Neill came more and more to supplant that of reality, their art grew increasingly self-conscious and objective. From the most realistic of them all (Farrell) to the most symbolic and purely aesthetic (Faulkner) there is progress in technical virtuosity and philosophical depth. American fiction, like American poetry and drama, reached its highest point of achievement in the equilibrium of conflicting forces that characterized the mid-thirties, rather than in either extreme.¹⁹⁷

The novels of James T. Farrell (b. 1904) are examples of the persistence of naturalism in American fiction during an era when main currents were moving in a contrary direction.

In intention and method the trilogy *Studs Lonigan* (1935) might almost have been the work of Dreiser himself, for in it Farrell merely retells, with minor alterations, the life of a childhood friend in Chicago's South Side. The character Danny O'Neill represents the author in the story, and it is Danny's story in that Farrell was interested in the arrogance and power of Studs mainly because Danny idealized him as the hero of his Irish-Catholic world and was deeply moved by his failure and death. The tragedy was ready-made, and a literal recording preserved a sense of unity and resolution which is lacking in the subsequent novels about Danny himself and about a second alter ego, Bernard Clare (Carr) who, like Wolfe's George Webber, goes to New York and becomes a writer of fiction.

The world of reality begins to recede in the novels of John Steinbeck (b. 1902). Perhaps one reason is that the scene moves to the California coast where the impossible seems to thrive in the literary products of the Salinas Valley, as well as in its fantastic orchards, vineyards, and religious sects. Another reason may have been the mingling of Irish and German blood which produced the romantic tale *Cup of Gold* (1929) and the pseudo-realistic studies of the people of an isolated valley, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932). Steinbeck's own basic attitude was a comic detachment which allowed him to mingle social concern with good-humored laughter at the irresponsibility of his paisanos. Even the lilt of Irish-English prose is in the tales of the carefree inhabitants of *Tortilla Flat* (1935), followed almost immediately by the plight of migratory workers in the orchards, *In Dubious Battle* (1936); and the two elements of fantasy and reality were mingled inseparably in *Of Mice and Men* (1937), a short novel written with an eye to both stage and movie adaptation. So far, Steinbeck had refused to be typed; his study of the friendship of the lumpish Lennie and his faithful George is believable as a revelation of warped personality at the same time that it is symbolic of man's eternal longing to return to the land.

¹⁹⁷ Spiller, E Robert. *The Cycle of American Literature*, p. 217

The level on which Steinbeck's art finally settled was that of the primitive; in this he proved to be in the richest American literary tradition. He was interested in the animal motivation underlying human conduct, and with its aid he created, a world of unreality with which he could offset that of the ugly world he knew. He was at his best when he succeeded in maintaining a contrapuntal interplay between these two worlds by the use of a larger symbolism, in the fashion of O'Neill rather than of Eliot. The balance between these worlds was so precarious that failure followed success, and success failure, throughout his literary career, sometimes even in the same work. *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) is epic in its recognition of the plight of American migratory workers—specifically, the "Okies," driven westward by the industrialization of their Oklahoma farms—as but one more symbolic event in man's eternal search for the promised land. A tract against social injustice, which aroused vigorous protest and defense from those who thought of it only as fictionalized propaganda, it remained, after the controversy had died down, an American epic, a culminating expression of the spiritual and material forces that had discovered and settled a continent.

In his later massive work, *East of Eden* (1952), Steinbeck used the same primitive base for his study of evil, to symbolize the regenerative power of earth in allowing a choice between good and evil to each of the furthest descendants of Adam. "Nearly everything I have is in it," Steinbeck wrote to his friend Covici, and, he might have added, nearly everything that America has as well. The daring mixtures of comedy and tragedy, myth and reality that crowd these pages give them a richness of texture which can excuse their inequalities of feeling and form. Actually more at home in such comic studies of character as the inimitable *Cannery Row* (1945) and its less happy sequel *Sweet Thursday* (1954), he will perhaps be remembered longer for the amoral and happily incongruous "Doc" and his friends than for Tom Joad or Adam Trask, who had undertaken to measure their experiences with the moral issues of this world against universal truths. For Steinbeck had dared, as had Thoreau, to drive life "into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it."

The distinction between reality and illusion is even harder to make in the novels and short stories of William Faulkner (b. 1897) because he shared Steinbeck's concern for social justice, his faith in the primitive as the seat of truth, and his mixture of moral earnestness with sardonic humor; but he seemed, more successfully than any of his contemporaries, to approach his material as the "objective correlative" of experience, and to preserve his integrity as an artist. Illusion was for him a complete and separate state of being from which he could view his other and real being objectively and with emotional freedom. To unsympathetic readers he seemed a mere sensationalist, trafficking in perversion for its own sake, and many linked him with his Southern contemporary in fiction of the "hard-boiled school," Erskine Caldwell (b. 1903). It is characteristic of the two men that Caldwell protested his artistic sincerity in his early stories, *Tobacco Road* (1932), *God's Little Acre* (1933), and *Trouble in July* (1940), only to lapse into repetitive sensationalism in the later ones, while Faulkner professed sensationalism in the preface to *Sanctuary* (1931) and then made the story one of the principal stones in the larger edifice of his art. Almost from the start of his career, Faulkner showed an aching sensibility to the confusion and loss of values of men in his time. This, coupled with a confidence in his art that allowed him to live his own life in his own way, enabled him to write a series of books which were all parts of each other because they were parts of a steady aesthetic vision.

The publication, in 1946, of Malcolm Cowley's introduction to *The Portable Faulkner* turned public recognition upon him, and the award of the 1949 Nobel Prize (in 1950), an honor which would have seemed to many to be violently it misplaced only a few years before, was by then an overdue acknowledgment of world fame. Faulkner left Mississippi long enough to go to Stockholm and back (as he had earlier to Hollywood and back when the movie industry thought it needed his assistance), but he made it clear that he had work to do at home and that these events were interruptions. The same spirit of humility, fatalism, and seeming innocence characterized his every act except that of writing, where he was quietly at home and busy.

Just where and how he acquired the manner of his early work is hard to discover as we know little about his reading and education. His Own family, who appear under the name of Sartoris in his novels, were active in local politics and business in and around Oxford, Mississippi, for several generations, but they were "new people" set apart from the decayed gentility symbolized in the Comptons or the migrant tenant farmers known as the Snopes. Except for a colorful great-grandfather who took time out from business speculations to write *Rapid Ramblings* in Europe and *The White Rose of Memphis*, there seem to have been few literary or intellectual influences in Faulkner's background, although there was apparently some artistic talent in his mother's family.¹⁹⁸

7.2 Biography

Salinas, California, over the hill from Monterey and close enough to Big Sur that John Steinbeck's mother was able to teach there, has long had the climate to grow some of the most profitable crops in the United States. When Steinbeck was born there in February 27, 1902, that part of the central California coast, some one hundred miles south of San Francisco, was quite untouched by the kind of industrial civilization that had grown up in the East, from which Steinbeck's family had come.

The father, John Ernst Steinbeck, born in Florida, had followed his parents to Hollister, California. He was a miller and served for eleven years as treasurer of Monterey County. In 1890, he married Olive Hamilton, a teacher. The Steinbecks had four children, of whom John, their third, was the only boy. He showed an early literary bent; his favorite pastime was reading, and his favorite book was Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485).

Steinbeck contributed to the school newspaper at Salinas High School, from which he was graduated in 1919, after which he entered Stanford University as an English major. He attended Stanford in a desultory manner from 1920 until 1925 but left without a degree. A contributor to several campus publications during his years there, Steinbeck was particularly affected by his creative writing teacher, Edith Ronald Mirrielees, for whose book, *Story Writing* (1902), he wrote the preface.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 220

¹⁹⁹ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 6, p. 1886 – 88

In the fall of 1925, Steinbeck went to New York City, working first as a day laborer. Before long, through the intervention of an influential uncle, Steinbeck had a twenty-five-dollar-a-week job on the New York *American*, where he had an undistinguished career as a reporter. Urged by an editor from the Robert McBride Publishing Company, Steinbeck produced a collection of short stories. When the publisher rejected the collection, a discouraged Steinbeck shipped out as a deckhand on a steamer going to California via the Panama Canal. He found work as a caretaker at a remote Lake Tahoe resort, benefiting artistically from the isolation the job assured. He wrote three novels, none ever published. In 1929, however, his novel about English pirate Henry Morgan, *Cup of Gold*, was published by McBride. Appearing only two months before the stock market crash of 1929, it sold few copies.

In 1930, Steinbeck married the first of his three wives, Carol Henning, and moved to Pacific Grove, California, where they lived in a modest house provided by Steinbeck's family, who also gave them twenty-five dollars a month on which they could live decently during the Great Depression. Steinbeck met marine biologist Ed Ricketts, who remained his closest friend for the rest of Rickett's life, in the same year.

For his next book-and for most of his subsequent ones-he turned to a California setting and theme. Brewer, Warren & Putnam published *The Pastures of Heaven* in 1932. Before the book could be bound, however, the publisher failed. Despite this, Steinbeck earned more than four hundred dollars in royalties from it, more than his first book or his third book, *To a God Unknown* (1911), brought him. Neither book sold enough copies to cover the \$250 advance he had received for each.

In 1934, the year in which Steinbeck's mother died, the *North American Review* accepted the first two sections of *The Red Pony* and two short stories, one of which, "The Murder," was selected to appear in the O. Henry Prize Stories volume for 1934. It was in 1935, however, that Steinbeck's star began to rise significantly, with the publication of *Tortilla Flat*, a latter-day Arthurian legend with Danny as King Arthur and his boys as Danny's knights.

A number of publishers rejected *Tortilla Flat*, thinking its frivolity inappropriate for the mood of the depression era. Pascal Covici, however, liked Steinbeck writing. When he called his agent to ask whether Steinbeck had any new manuscripts for him to read, he was sent *Tortilla Flat*, which he published, thus beginning a literary relationship that lasted through Steinbeck's years of greatest celebrity. *Tortilla Flat* did not fare well with the critics, but the public liked it; Steinbeck's future was assured. Steinbeck helped people to see that there is more to see than money.

Of Mice and Men followed in 1937 and was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, assuring a minimum of ten thousand sales. In the same year, Steinbeck visited a camp for migrant workers. This visit led to his most celebrated work, *The Grapes of Wrath*, published in 1939. *Sea of Cortez* followed in 1941. The next year, Steinbeck and Carol divorced, and in 1943, he married Gwen Conger, with whom he had two sons before their divorce in 1948, the same year in which Ed Ricketts was killed in an accident. *Cannery Row*, titled for the

sardine factory area of Monterey, was well received in 1945, as was the novella *The Pearl* in 1947. In 1947, *The Wayward Bus* was rejected by the public. Steinbeck continued to write, but he never again attained the level of artistry he had reached in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

When he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962, the academic establishment was not overjoyed, although his faithful public, recalling the work he had produced between 1935 and 1947, was less negative in its judgment. The Nobel presentation speech cited the impact of *The Grapes of Wrath*, but it also noted, among Steinbeck's later work, *Travels with Charley* (1962) and *The Winter of Our Discontent* (1961). Steinbeck died in New York in 1968. In 1974, his boyhood home in Salinas was opened as a museum and restaurant. A collection of his papers is in the Steinbeck Collection at San Jose State University, whose Steinbeck Room attracts numerous scholars.

Steinbeck's close friendship with Ed Ricketts, enduring for almost two decades until Ricketts's death in 1948, had a profound effect upon the author. Ricketts was a deeply philosophical man. Steinbeck trusted him and valued his judgment to the point that he had him read all of his manuscripts or read them aloud to him. Ricketts' judgments were not always valid—he liked *The Wayward Bus*—but were necessary to Steinbeck. Ricketts got Steinbeck to think about nature in ways that he never had before. Steinbeck began to take on the philosophical colorations of his friend and went so far as to include Ricketts' essay on non-teleological thinking, which had been circulating privately among Ricketts' friends since the 1930's, in *Sea of Cortez*.

Steinbeck wrote largely to please himself, and in so doing he often pleased vast audiences of readers as well. Seldom did he please the critics, however, after their vigorous acceptance of *The Grapes of Wrath*. Possibly this is because literary criticism was largely an enterprise of Easterners or of people educated at Eastern, often New England, schools. Their anti-California bias was seldom if ever expressed, but it arguably existed at the subconscious level.

Steinbeck resisted the inroads that the importunate tried to make upon his time. To protect his privacy, he moved away from California in 1945, buying a townhouse on the Upper East Side in New York City, where he continued to live until his death in December 20, 1968.

7.3 Novels Overview

Although John Steinbeck's first novel, *Cup of Gold*, is not much like his later work in theme, setting, or style, it supplies hints of themes that were to pervade his later work. The book is much influenced stylistically by the medieval legends with which Steinbeck had grown familiar during his boyhood. The protagonist of the book, Henry Morgan, is a brigand, a rugged individualist who is as much a nonconformist as Danny is in *Tortilla Flat*. Those two protagonists, each from a drastically different background than the other, would have understood each other and sympathized with the other's outlook.

In his next two books, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *To a God Unknown*, Steinbeck discovered the direction that most of his future books would take. He wrote about the central California agricultural areas in which he had grown up, and, in the latter book, he also experimented with symbolism stimulated by his early reading of medieval literature. The characters in these books are memorable as individuals, but they clearly represent universal types as well.

As promising as *The Pastures of Heaven* was, it was not a commercial success. The beginning of Steinbeck's widespread national acceptance came with *Tortilla Flat*, which might not have been published at all had Pascal Covici not read Steinbeck.

Tiflin must get on with his work, and he turns his back on the past that helped him to reach the point at which he finds himself

This story ends with Jody listening to his grandfather, who confides in him that he fears the new generation no longer has the spirit of which he speaks. Jody, quite tellingly, listens and then asks his grandfather if he would like some lemonade, indicating that, for the first time, the boy is showing sensitivity to someone else's feelings. Jody is moving toward manhood.

The Red Pony builds on Steinbeck's notion that nature is unrelenting and mysterious. Mere humans cannot thwart it any more than they can control it. When Jody's Gabilan becomes food for the vultures, Steinbeck does not suggest that commiseration is the proper emotion. It is part of the natural cycle. Living things feed on living things as inevitably as humans die.

7.4 Analysis of "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939)

The saga of the Joad family as they leave the Oklahoma dustbowl during the Depression to find a new life in California.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, Steinbeck vents his anger against a capitalistic society that was capable of plunging the world into an economic depression, but he does not exonerate the farmers who have been driven from the dustbowls of the Midwestern and Southwestern United States. He deplores their neglect of the land that resulted in the dustbowls, which helped to exacerbate the Great Depression.

The book is interestingly structured. Interspersed among its chapters are frequent inter-chapters, vignettes that have little direct bearing on the novel's main narrative. These inter-chapters contain the philosophical material of the book, the allegories such as that of the turtle crossing the road. As the animal makes its tedious way across the dusty thoroughfare, drivers swerve to avoid hitting it. One vicious driver, however, aims directly for it, clearly intending to squash it. Because this driver's aim is not accurate, he succeeds only in nicking the corner of the turtle's carapace, catapulting it to the side of the road it was trying to reach. Once the dust settles and the shock wears off, the turtle emerges and continues on its way, dropping as it does a grain of wheat from the folds of its skin. When the rains come, this grain will germinate; this is Steinbeck's intimation of hope.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 6, p. 1893 – 94

As the narrative opens, Tom Joad has been released from a term he is serving in the state penitentiary for having killed someone in self-defense. On his way home, he falls in with Jim Casy, a former preacher down on his luck. Jim's initials can be interpreted religiously, as can much of the book. When Jim and Tom get to the farm where the Joads were tenant farmers, they find the place deserted, as are the farms around it, now dusty remnants of what they had been. Tom learns that his family has sold what little it owned, probably for five cents on the dollar, and headed to the promised land, California. En route, they pause to rest up at a relative's place and to work on the antique truck they had bought secondhand for the trek west. Tom and Jim catch up with them there, and they all leave – an even dozen of them – for the land in which they have placed their future hope.

The chronicle of the slow trip west, reminiscent of the turtle's arduous creep across the parched road, is recorded in such realistic detail that the reader is transported into a world peopled by hobos, stumblebums, the dispossessed, the disenchanting, and the dislocated – all of them pushing ahead to the jobs they believe exist for agricultural workers in California. Death haunts the motley band, threatening the elderly and those who are weak. The grandfather dies of a stroke the first night out; his wife dies as the family crosses the Mohave Desert. Noah, the retarded son, wanders off and is not heard from again. Ahead, however, lies hope, so the Joads bury their dead and keep going.

The land of their hearts' desire, however, proves to be no Garden of Eden. The dream of a future that will offer hope and security quickly develops into a nightmare, Tom's sister, Rose of Sharon, loses her baby and, lacking funds for a funeral, prays over it and sets it adrift in the rushes beside a river, much as Moses was set adrift in the bull rushes. Tom gets into trouble with the police, but Jim surrenders in his place and is taken away.

By the time Tom and Jim meet again, Jim is a labor agitator, and, in an encounter with the police, he is killed and Tom is injured. The Joads hide Tom in their shack, then sneak him into a farm. There he takes up Jim's work as a labor organizer.

As the rains come and flooding occurs, the Joads, who are encamped beside a river, endure floods that ruin their old truck. Having no place to live, they go into a decrepit barn, where a boy and his starving father have sought shelter. Rose of Sharon, having lost her baby, nourishes the starving man with the milk from her breasts, thereby saving his life. One is reminded again of the turtle and of the grain of wheat it deposits in the desiccated soil.

The Grapes of Wrath is a bitter tale of humans against nature and against a brutally exploitive society, but it is also a tale of nobility, of self-sacrifice, and ultimately of hope. It often offends the sensibilities, but life frequently offends one's sensibilities, and in that respect this novel is like life. It is a polemic, but it is more detached and objective than many critics have given it credit for being.

7.4.1 Analysis

The Grapes of Wrath derives its epic scope from the way that Steinbeck uses the story of the Joad family to portray the plight of thousands of Dustbowl farmers.

Capturing the westward movement of migrant farmers in the 1930s as they flee drought and industry.

Steinbeck's first description of the land is almost biblical in its simplicity.

"The Surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country."

This is naturalistic narration:

Steinbeck also skillfully captures the colorful, rough dialogue of his folk heroes, "you had that big nose going over me like a sheep in a vegetable patch." Tom says to the trucks driver in chapter two.

Chapter one paints an impression picture of the Oklahoma farms as they wither and die.

And this is a dark vision of the world. As the relentless weather and the mean-spirited driver of chapter three represent the universe id full of obstacles that fill life with hardship and danger.

The Joad family will be called upon time and again, to fight malicious forces – drought, industry, human jealousy and fear – that seek to overturn it.

As the novel unfolds, the short, descriptive chapters emerge like a series of thesis statements on the conditions of life in the Dust Bowl. The chapters recounting the story of the Joad clan can be seen as illustrations of or evidence for the claims made in the shorter chapters. In Chapter Five, Steinbeck sets forth an argument strongly supportive of tenant farmers.

Notably, however, he does not directly vilify the landowners and bank representatives as they turn the tenant farmers off their land. He asserts that the economic system makes everyone a Victim-rich and poor, privileged and disenfranchised. All are caught "in something larger than themselves" It is this larger monster that has created the divides between the victims, stratified them, and turned the upper strata against the lower. Still, Steinbeck does not portray in detail the personal difficulties of the men who evict the farmers, nor of the conflicted neighbors who plow down their farms. His sympathies clearly lie with the farmers, and his descriptive eye follows these sympathies. Correspondingly, it is with these families that the reader comes to identify.

The Grapes of Wrath openly and without apology declares its stance on the events it portrays. This sense of commitment and candor stems from Steinbeck's method of characterization, as well as from his insistence on setting up the Joads and their clan as models of moral virtue. Although Torn Joad has spent four years in prison, he soon emerges as a kind of moral authority in the book. A straight-talking man, Tom begins his trek home by putting a nosy truck driver in his place-having served the lawful punishment for his crime, he owns up to his past without indulging in regret or shame. His deeply

thoughtful disposition, truthful speech, and gestures of generosity endear him to the reader, as well as those around him. He will soon emerge as a leader among his people. His leadership ability stems also from his sense of confidence and sureness of purpose. Tom admits to Casy that if he found himself in a situation similar to the one that landed him in jail, he would behave no differently now. This statement does not convey pride or vanity but a capacity to know and be honest with himself, as well as a steady resolve.

If Tom Joad emerges as the novel's moral consciousness, then Jim Casy emerges as its moral mouthpiece. Although he claims he has lost his calling as a preacher, Casy remains a great talker, and he rarely declines an opportunity to make a speech. At many points, Steinbeck uses him to voice the novel's themes.

Here, for instance, Casy describes the route by which he left the pulpit. After several sexual affairs with young women in his congregation, Casy realized that the immediate pleasures of human life were more important than lofty concepts of theological virtue. He decided that he did not need to be a preacher to experience holiness: simply being an equal among one's fellow human beings was sacred in its own way. This philosophy is lived out by the Joads, who soon discover that open, sincere fellowship with others is more precious than any longed-for commodity. Casy further emphasizes the virtues of companionship when he chastises Muley Graves. The man has allowed his family to leave for California without him, for the sake of practicality, but Casy believes that togetherness and cooperation should always take precedence over practicality.

When they're all workin' together, not one fella for another fella, but one fella kind of harnessed to the whole shebang... that's holy.

Chapter Eight introduces us to the Joad family. Steinbeck sketches a good number of memorable characters in the space of a single chapter. Pa appears as a competent, fair-minded, and goodhearted head of the family, leading the Joads in their journeys, while Ma emerges as the family's "citadel," anchoring them and keeping them safe. Steinbeck does not render the Joads as particularly complex characters. Instead, each family member tends to possess one or two exaggerated, distinguishing characteristics. Grampa, for instance, is mischievous and ornery; Granma is excessively pious; Al, a typically cocky teenage boy, is obsessed with cars and girls.

Some readers find fault with Steinbeck's method of characterization, which they criticize as unsophisticated and sentimental, but this criticism may be unfair. It is true that the Joads are not shown as having the kind of complex psychological lives that mark many great literary characters. Their desires are simple and clearly stated, and the obstacles to their desires are plainly identified by both the novel and themselves. However, it is in the nature of an epic to portray heroic, boldly drawn figures—figures who embody national ideals or universal struggles. Steinbeck succeeds in crafting the Joads into heroes worthy of an epic. Their goodness, conviction, and moral certainty stand in sharp contrast to their material circumstances.

The short chapters that bookend the introduction of the Joad family develop one of the book's major themes. The narrative's indictment of the crooked car salesmen and pawnbrokers illustrates man's inhumanity to man, a force against which the Joads struggle.

Time and again, those in positions of power seek to take advantage of those below them. Even when giving up a portion of land might save a family, the privileged refuse to imperil their wealth. Later in the novel, there is nothing that the California landowners fear as much as relinquishing their precious land to the needy farmers. This behavior contradicts Jim Casy's belief that men must act for the good of all men. In *The Grapes of Wrath*, moral order depends upon this kind of selflessness and charity. Without these virtues, the text suggests, there is no hope for a livable world. As one farmer warns the corrupt pawnbroker who robs him of his possessions: "[Y]ou cut us down, and soon you will be cut down and there'll be none of us to save you."

In these chapters, Steinbeck continues to develop his picture of the farmers' world, with flashes of the desolate farms they flee, as well as of the many adverse circumstances that await them. Steinbeck suggests that the hardships the families face stem from more than harsh weather conditions or simple misfortune. Human beings, acting with calculated greed, are responsible for much of their sorrow. Such selfishness separates people from one another, disabling the kind of unity and brotherhood that Casy deems holy. It creates an ugly animosity that pits man against man, as is clear in Chapter Twelve, when a gas station attendant suggests that California is becoming overcrowded with migrants. When a farmer notes that surely California is a large enough state to support everyone, the attendant cynically replies, "There ain't room enough for you an' me, for your kind an' my kind, for rich and poor together all in one country."

This factionalism not only divides men from their brethren, it also divides men from the land. Steinbeck identifies greed and covetousness as the central cause of the tenant farmers' dislocation from the ground they have always known. The corporate farmers who replace the old families possess the same acquisitive mind-set as their employers. Interested only in getting their work done quickly and leaving with a paycheck, they treat the land with hostility, as an affliction rather than a home, and put heavy machinery between themselves and the fields.

Both Muley Graves and Grampa Joad represent the human reluctance to be separated from one's land. Both men locate their roots in the Oklahoma soil and both are willing to abandon their families in order to maintain this connection. Neither Muley nor Grampa Joad can imagine who he would be beyond the boundaries that, until now, have shaped and defined him. In their scheme to prevent Grampa from staying, the Joads engage in blatant dishonesty, yet their intentions are good. For the Joads mean to sever one kind of connection in favor of another, abandoning the land to keep the family together. They believe in the ability of human connections to sustain their grandfather's life and spirit.

As the Joads depart, their interactions speak further to their common belief in the importance of family and the family structure. Men lead-even if, as in Grampa's case, their guidance is merely ceremonial-whereas women follow. It is important to note this structure now, for once the family is on the road, this traditional power dynamic shifts. This process is prefigured in Casy's insistence that he help Ma Joad salt the meat. Faced with dauntingly difficult work, the group can no longer cling to gender-based divisions of labor.

Thus, while economic adversity may frequently drive divisions between people, it can also serve to erase divisions, to emphasize everyone's common humanity. Steinbeck's text insists that the hardships of the road, while often creating ugliness, can also yield unexpected beauty. A single instance of charity or kindness emerges as an oasis of moral nobility, both testifying to and renewing the strength of the human spirit. Although the Joads declare the family's goal to be their arrival in California, it is these rare and serendipitous places along the road – in which hope is confirmed despite life's atrocities – that constitute the Joad's true destination.

As the Joads set out for California, the second phase of the novel begins: their dramatic journey west. Almost immediately, the Joads are exposed to the very hardships that Steinbeck describes in the alternating expository chapters that chronicle the great migration as a whole; the account of the family provides a close-up on the larger picture. Thus, in Chapter Thirteen, at the gas station, the family encounters the hostility and suspicion described in Chapters Twelve, Fourteen, and Fifteen. The attendant unfairly pegs the Joads as vagrants and seems sure that they have come to beg gas from him. As Al's reaction makes clear, this accusation comes as a great insult to self-reliant people with a strong sense of dignity. The apologetic attendant confides in the Joads that his livelihood has been endangered by the fancy corporate service stations. He fears that he, like the poor tenant farmers, will soon be forced to find another way to make his living. Steinbeck is far from subtle in identifying capitalism and corporate interests as a source of great human tragedy, a form of "ritualized thievery." Corporate gas companies have preyed upon the attendant; the attendant, in turn, insults the Joads and is initially loath to offer them help. The system in force here works according to a vicious cycle, a cycle that perpetuates greed as a method of sheer survival.

These rather bleak observations cast a pall over the Joads' journey and point to even darker clouds on the horizon. Soon after arriving at the gas station, the Joads' dog is struck by a car. The dog's gruesome death stands as a symbol of the difficulties that await the family – difficulties that begin as soon as the family camps for the night. Before the family has been gone a full day, Grampa suffers a stroke and dies. Because Grampa was, at one point, the most enthusiastic proponent of the trip, dreaming of the day he would arrive in California and crush fat bunches of vine-ripened grapes in his mouth, his death foreshadows the harsh realities that await the family in the so-called Promised Land. With Grampa, something of the family's hope dies too. Still, even in this forlorn world, opportunities to display kindness, virtue, and generosity exist.

In this section, the narrator's statement from the end of Chapter Twelve is validated: there will be instances both of bitter cruelty and life-affirming beauty. The story of Mae, in its simplistic illustration of morality and virtue, functions almost like a parable, and considerably lightens the tone of these chapters. The lesson Mae learns is a simple one: compassion and generosity are rewarded in the world. Thus, although greed may be self-perpetuating, as the earlier chapters insist, so is kindness. The entrance of the Wilsons into the story also introduces a hopeful tone by cooperating and looking after their communal interests; the families find a strength that they lack on their own.

The Joads' dreams about life in California stand in bold relief against the realities that they face. Rose of Sharon believes that Connie will study at night and make a life for her in town, but this fantasy rings rather hollow against the backdrop of Grampa's and now Granma's death. Coming after two sets of dire warnings from ruined migrant workers, Granma's death bodes especially ill for the Joads. They now seem fated to live out the cautionary tales of the men they have met in Chapters Sixteen and Eighteen, who now seem like a Greek chorus presaging impending tragedy. Before the Joads even set foot on its soil, California proves to be a land of vicious hostility rather than of opportunity. The cold manner of the police officers and border guards seems to testify to the harsh reception that awaits the family.

The sense of foreboding in this section is heightened as we witness the fulfillment of Ma Joad's greatest fear—the unraveling of the family. In addition to the grandparents' deaths, the reclusive Noah decides to remain alone on the river. Family is the foundation of the Joads' will to survive, for, as Chapter Seventeen makes clear, migrant families were able to endure the harsh circumstances of life on the road by uniting with other families. Collectively, they share a responsibility that would be too great for one family to bear alone. Moreover, whereas to share a burden is to lighten it, to share a dream is to intensify and concentrate it, making that dream more vivid. Thus "[t]he loss of home became one loss, and the golden time in the West was one dream." Interestingly, Steinbeck sandwiches these observations between two chapters in which the Joad family not only suffers a decrease in number but also meets with neighbors who have no interest in cooperating with them. Increasingly, then, these statements about the importance of togetherness serve not so much as an affirmation of the Joads' circumstances as an indication of what they are in the process of losing. The grandparents' deaths and Noah's departure are tragedies for the Joads.

Faced with these losses, Ma Joad demonstrates her strength as never before. Met by the deputy who evicts her from the camp and disdainfully calls her an "Okie," Ma chases the man away with a cast-iron skillet. Similarly, she suffers privately with the knowledge of Granma's death so that the family can successfully cross the desert. These occurrences do take their toll on her: when Tom attempts to comfort her, she warns him not to touch her lest she fall apart. Still, her ability to endure adversity proves remarkable, as does her commitment to delivering her family, or as much of it as she can keep together, into a more prosperous life.

Chapters Nineteen and Twenty One act like a refrain in their repetition of the novel's social criticism. Both present history—especially California's history—as a battle between the rich and the poor. Founded by squatters who stole the land from Mexicans, California has been the setting for a series of desperate measures taken by "frantic hungry men." The landowners fear that history will repeat itself, and that the migrant farmers, who crave land and sustenance, will take their livelihood from them. The migrants, however, seeing acre upon acre of unused land, dream of tending just enough of it to support their families. The migrants' simple desire to produce, and the landowners' resistance, receives particularly poignant illustration in the tale of the man who plants a few carrots and turnips in a fallow field.

Chapter Twenty finds the Joads in Hooverville, where harsh reality further intrudes upon their idealistic vision of solidarity. The Joads have already encountered fellow migrants who do not share their desire to cooperate. The men who have failed to make a living in California, for example, show little interest in joining forces with the family. Disillusioned by their experiences, these men openly doubt and even mock the Joads' optimism. This unfriendliness, combined with an intensifying scarcity of resources, makes it increasingly difficult for the Joads to honor bonds other than those of kinship. The scene in which Ma Joad prepares her stew offers a powerful illustration of this: Here, the scarcity of food forces her to walk a thin line between selfish interest in her own family and generosity toward the larger community. Yet, while Ma looks to the needs of her family first, she does manage to do what she can to alleviate some of the hunger of the onlooking children. Her compassion toward these strangers, whom she nonetheless considers her people, elevates her above the bleak and hateful circumstances that surround her.

While Ma expresses her devotion to community by sharing her stew with her fellow migrants' children, Tom and Casy begin to express this devotion in more overtly political ways and with a sense of often violent outrage. The incident surrounding Floyd Knowles and the fruit-picking contractor signifies the beginning of the two men's involvement in the burgeoning movement to organize migrant labor, to protect workers against unfair treatment and unlivable wages. Although the men have always possessed a sense for injustice, they do not act on their convictions until they witness Floyd Knowles's impassioned speech against unfair labor practices. While the hardships facing the family serve to kindle devotions in some, they serve to rupture loyalties in others. Connie's decision to abandon his wife and unborn child affect.

Rose of Sharon deeply and constitutes a turning point for her. His departure disabuses the girl of all notions of a charmed life in the big city and forces her to come to terms with the conditions in which she lives.

[T]hat police. He done sompin to me, made me feel mean... ashamed. An' now I ain't ashamed... why, I feel like people again.

Life in the Weedpatch government camp proves to turn the Joads' luck around. Perhaps for the first time since leaving Oklahoma, the family finds itself in a secure position. Tom finds a job, and the camp manager treats Ma with such dignity that she says she feels "like people again." The charity, kindness, and goodwill that the migrants exhibit toward one another testifies to the power of their fellowship. When left to their own devices, and given shelter from the corrupt social system that keeps them down, the migrants make the first steps toward establishing an almost utopian mini-society. Moreover, life in Weedpatch disproves the landowners' beliefs that "Okies" lead undignified, uncivilized lives. Indeed, the migrants show themselves to be more civilized than the landowners, as demonstrated by the way in which they respond to the Farmers' Association's plot to sabotage the camp. Most of the wealthy landowners believe that poverty-stricken, uneducated farmers deserve to be treated contemptuously. These men maintain that to reward farmers with amenities such as toilets, showers, and comfortable wages will merely give them a sense of entitlement, embolden them to ask for more, and thus create social and economic unrest. The migrants,

however, meet the association's scheming and violent plot with grace and integrity. Here, the farmers rise far above the men who oppress them by exhibiting a kind of dignity that, in the world Steinbeck describes, often eludes the rich.

The Joads' experiences in the Weedpatch camp serve to illustrate one of the novel's main theses: humans find their greatest strength in numbers. When Ma tries to help Rose of Sharon to overcome her grief at Connie's abandonment, she reminds the girl, "[Y]ou're jest one person, an' they's a lot of other folks." As the novel has suggested time and again, the needs of the group supersede the needs of the individual. As the novel moves into its final chapters, this philosophy takes center stage. The unity of the migrants poses the greatest threat to landowners and the socioeconomic system on which they thrive. This idea begins to dawn on the farmers, who realize the effects that their numbers, once organized, might have. The story about the rubber workers and their mass march indicates the desperation of people in these times to obtain not only economic solvency but the respect they deserve as human beings.

As Tom's political involvement increases, the reader notes a change in his character. At the beginning of the novel, Tom asserted that he was interested only in getting through the present day; thinking about the future proved too troubling a task. Now, however, devoted as his and his family and his fellow migrants, Tom begins to look toward the future and its possibilities.

The Weedpatch camp changes not only individual characters but also the interactions among groups of characters. Thus, we witness a shift of power taking place within the Joad clan. Always a source of strength and indomitable love, Ma Joad begins to move into a space traditionally reserved for male family members: as Pa Joad suffers one failure after another, Ma is called upon to make decisions and guide the family. The altered family structure parallels the more general revision of traditional power structures in the camp. The farmers now make their own decisions, delegating duties according to notions of fairness and common sense rather than adhering to old hierarchies or submitting to individual cravings for control. As Jim Casy had predicted in Chapter Ten when he insisted on helping Ma salt the family's meat, when faced with unprecedented hardship, people can no longer afford to stratify themselves according to gender, age, or other superficial differences.

In the short, expository chapters that intersperse the story of the Joads, Steinbeck employs a range of prose styles and tones. He ranges from overt symbolism (as with the turtle in Chapter Three), to heated sermonizing (as with his indictment of corrupt businessmen in Chapter Seven), to the didactic tone of a parable (as with the story of Mae the waitress in Chapter Fifteen). In this part of the book, Steinbeck turns to the rough, native language of the people to convey a day on a cotton farm (Chapter Twenty-Seven): the effect is an intimate, lively, and moving portrayal of the daily life of the migrants. In Chapter Twenty-Five, the phrasing and word choice evokes biblical language: simple and declarative, yet highly stylized and symbolic. Steinbeck portrays the rotten state of the economic system by describing the literal decay that results from this system's agricultural mismanagement. Depictions of the putrefying crops symbolize the people's darkening, festering anger. The rotting vines and spoiled vintage in particular, both a source and an emblem of the workers' rage, become a central image and provide the novel with its title.

The Joads' dream of a golden life in California, like the season's wine, has gone sour. After a month in the government camp with little work, the family's resources are dangerously low.

The few days of charmed living have passed. Desperate and discouraged, Ma announces that the family needs to move on; her seizure of authority rocks the traditional family structure. Pa is upset that Ma has assumed the task of decision-making, a responsibility that typically belongs to the male head of the household. When he threatens to put her back in her "proper place," Ma responds by saying. "[Y]ou ain't a-doin' your job... If you was, why, you could use your stick, an' women folks'd sniffle their nose and creep-mouse aroun'." The family structure has undergone a revolution, in which the female figure, traditionally powerless, has taken control, while the male figure, traditionally in the leadership role, has retreated.

In this section, the stakes of the conflict established in previous chapters are made clear: the contest between rich and poor, between landowners and migrants, is one that will-and perhaps must-be fought to the death. As the end of Chapter Twenty-Five states, the people's anger is ripening, "growing heavy for the vintage." In other words, their anger must soon be released in a burst of violence. When that happens, lives will be lost. Casy's death stands as a sober reminder of the price that must be paid for equality.

Wherever they's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there... An' when our folks eat, [what] they raise an' live in the houses they build... I'll be there.

The end of *The Grapes of Wrath* is among the most memorable concluding chapters in American literature. Tom continues the legacy of Jim Casy as he promises to live his life devoted to a soul greater than his own. Recognizing the truth in the teachings of the Christ like Casy, Tom realizes that a person's highest calling is to put him or herself in the service of the collective good. As Tom leaves his family to fight for social justice, he completes the transformation that began several chapters earlier. Initially lacking the patience and energy to consider the future at all, he marches off to lead the struggle toward making that future a kinder and gentler one.

Without Tom, and without food or work, the Joads sink, in the novel's final chapter, to their most destitute moment yet. Nonetheless, the book ends on a surprisingly hopeful note: Steinbeck uses a collection of symbols, most of them borrowed from biblical stories, to inject a deeply spiritual optimism into his bleak tale. Thus, while the rain represents a damaging force that threatens to wash away the few possessions the Joads have left, it also represents a power of renewal. The reader recalls Steinbeck's phrasing in Chapter Twenty-Nine, in which the text notes that the downpours, although causing great destruction, also enable the coming of spring: we read that the raindrops are followed by "[t]iny points of grass," making the hills a pale green.

Even the events surrounding the birth of the dead baby contain images of hope. As Uncle John floats the child downstream, Steinbeck invokes the story of Moses, who, as a baby, was sent down the Nile, and later delivered his people out of slavery and into the Promised Land of Israel. As John surrenders the tiny body to the currents, he tells it: "Go down an' tell 'em. Go down in the street an' rot an' tell 'em that way. That's the way you can talk."

The child's corpse becomes a symbolic messenger, charged with the task of testifying to his people's suffering. (Again, in John's speech we find an allusion to the life of the Hebrew prophet: his words echo the refrain or the traditional folk gospel song "Go Down, Moses.")

Says ... he jus' got a little piece of a great big soul. Says... [his piece] wasn't no good 'less it was with the rest, an' was whole.

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

7.4.2 Plot Overview

RELEASED FROM AN OKLAHOMA STATE PRISON after serving four years for a manslaughter conviction, Tom Joad makes his way back to his family's farm in Oklahoma. He meets Jim Casy, a former preacher who has given up his calling out of a belief that all life is holy-even the parts that are typically thought to be sinful-and that sacredness consists simply in endeavoring to be an equal among the people. Jim accompanies Tom to his home, only to find it-and all the surrounding farms-deserted. Muley Graves, an old neighbor, wanders by and tells the men that everyone has been "tractored" off the land. Most families, he says, including his own, have headed to California to look for work. The next morning, Tom and Jim set out for Tom's Uncle John's, where Muley assures them they will find the Joad clan. Upon arrival, Tom finds Ma and Pa Joad packing up the family's few possessions. Having seen handbills advertising fruit-picking jobs in California, they envision the trip to California as their only hope of getting their lives back on track.

The journey to California in a rickety used truck is long and arduous. Grampa Joad, a feisty old man who complains bitterly that he does not want to leave his land, dies on the road shortly after the family's departure. Dilapidated cars and trucks, loaded down with scrappy possessions, clog Highway (p. 66): it seems the entire country is in flight to the Promised Land of California. The Joads meet Ivy and Sairy Wilson, a couple plagued with car trouble, and invite them to travel with the family. Sairy Wilson is sick and, near the California border, becomes unable to continue the journey.

As the Joads near California, they hear ominous rumors of a depleted job market. One migrant tells Pa that 20,000 people show up for every 800 jobs and that his own children have starved to death. Although the Joads press on, their first days in California prove tragic, as Granma Joad dies. The remaining family members move from one squalid camp to the next, looking in vain for work, struggling to find food, and trying desperately to hold their family together. Noah, the oldest of the Joad children, soon abandons the family, as does Connie, a young dreamer who is married to Tom's pregnant sister, Rose of Sharon.

The Joads meet with much hostility in California. The camps are overcrowded and full of starving migrants, who are often nasty to each other. The locals are fearful and angry at the flood of newcomers, whom they derisively label "Okies." Work is almost impossible to find or pays such a meager wage that a family's full day's work cannot buy a decent meal. Fearing an uprising, the large landowners do everything in their power to keep the migrants poor and dependent. While staying in a ramshackle camp known as a "Hooverville," Tom and several men get into a heated argument with a deputy sheriff over whether workers should organize into a union. When the argument turns violent, Jim Casy knocks the sheriff unconscious and is arrested. Police officers arrive and announce their intention to burn the Hooverville to the ground.

A government-run camp proves much more hospitable to the Joads, and the family soon finds many friends and a bit of work. However, one day, while working at a pipe-laying job, Tom learns that the police are planning to stage a riot in the camp, which will allow them to shut down the facilities. By alerting and organizing the men in the camp, Tom helps to defuse the danger. Still, as pleasant as life in the government camp is, the Joads cannot survive without steady work, and they have to move on. They find employment picking fruit, but soon learn that they are earning a decent wage only because they have been hired to break a workers' strike. Tom runs into Jim Casy who, after being released from jail, has begun organizing workers; in the process, Casy has made many enemies among the landowners. When the police hunt him down and kill him in Tom's presence, Tom retaliates and kills a police officer.

Tom goes into hiding, while the family moves into a boxcar on a cotton farm. One day, Ruthie, the youngest Joad daughter, reveals to a girl in the camp that her brother has killed two men and is hiding nearby. Fearing for his safety, Ma Joad finds Tom and sends him away. Tom heads off to fulfill Jim's task of organizing the migrant workers. The end of the cotton season means the end of work, and word sweeps across the land that there are no jobs to be had for three months. Rains set in and flood the land. Rose of Sharon gives birth to a stillborn child, and Ma, desperate to get her family to safety from the floods, leads them to a dry barn not far away. Here, they find a young boy kneeling over his father, who is slowly starving to death. He has not eaten for days, giving whatever food he had to his son. Realizing that Rose of Sharon is now producing milk, Ma sends the others outside, so that her daughter can nurse the dying man.

This structure enables Steinbeck to use many different writing styles. The short (usually odd-numbered) chapters use highly stylized, poetic language to explore the social, economic, and historical factors that forced the great migration. Steinbeck's first description of the land is almost biblical in its simplicity, grandeur, and repetition: "The surface of the earth crusted, a thin hard crust, and as the sky became pale, so the earth became pale, pink in the red country and white in the gray country." The chapters devoted to the Joads' story are noteworthy for their remarkably realistic evocation of life and language among Oklahoma sharecroppers. Here Steinbeck displays his talent for rich, naturalistic narration. (Naturalism is a school of writing favoring realistic representations of human life and natural, as opposed to supernatural or spiritual, explanations for social phenomena.) Expertly rendered details place the reader squarely and immediately in the book's setting,

quickly drawing us in after an interlude of more distanced poetics. Steinbeck also skillfully captures the colorful, rough dialogue of his folk heroes-"You had that big nose goin' over me like a sheep in a vegetable patch," Tom says to the truck driver in Chapter Two-thus bringing them to life. By employing a wide range of styles, Steinbeck achieves what he called a "symphony in composition, in movement, in tone and scope."

7.4.3 Chapter Roles

Protagonist: *Tom Joad*

If this novel has one, single protagonist, it probably is Tom Joad. He's the first character that we meet, and we are deeply invested in his wellbeing. Tom turns out to be a fountain of knowledge, and he's the one who gets things done. He takes good care of his family, and he works tirelessly to help them survive. Reverend Casy helps Tom to understand the world and to find a higher purpose. Tom, who largely only been concerned about his family in the past, develops over the course of the novel to care for all of the downtrodden families he sees around him. He dedicates his life to fighting for justice and equality among the migrant worker community at the end of the novel. We love him because he's so helpful and so selfless. We are drawn to him because he grows so much throughout the course of the novel.

Protagonist: *The Joads*

The Joads are our heroes, and at times it's hard not to think about them as a family unit. We want them to succeed and to prevail. We want them to find happiness in California. We root for them as they encounter obstacle after obstacle on their quest for peace. They are the focus of our attention.

Antagonist: *The Banks*

The landowners blame the banks when they kick tenant farmers off of the land. They refer to the banks as being part of the "monster"; they are machines who are starving for money. While we don't exactly get to know the faces and people behind the "monster," we know they are greedy, selfish, cruel, and scared of the growing desperation among the migrant worker community. It is because of the banks that the Joads lose their land and head to California.

Guide / Mentor: *John Casy*

Reverend Casy is the spiritual compass of the entire novel. Throughout the novel, as he soaks in the heartbreak in the world around him, he gradually builds and develops his own philosophy. He believes that all humans are connected through a giant collective soul. Eventually, this philosophy leads him to fight and to die for the rights of migrant workers. Casy inspires Tom and shows him what it means to live for a higher purpose.

Foil: *Ma Joad to Rose of Sharon*

Ma Joad goes about her days selflessly, cooking, cleaning, and nurturing her family. She doesn't talk about her wants or needs, except to dream about having a little house one day next to an orange orchard – a dream which she quickly realizes will never be. Rose of Sharon is all about herself. She talks her mother's ear off about the kind of luxuries she'll bask in while in California. And when these luxuries don't immediately flock to her, she grows grumpy and dejected. Ma Joad's great joy in life is her family, while Rose of Sharon

is all about her own wants and needs. We can't help but contrast these two dames, because they are related, and because they are the only two grown women that we really get to follow in *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Foil: Uncle John to Reverend Casy

Both loners, both single men, both carry the weight of guilt the size of a giant blue whale on their shoulders. Upon close inspection, Uncle John and Reverend Casy have oodles in common with each other. John's guilt stems from failing to get his wife a doctor when she complained of a stomachache (which turned into a fatal appendicitis), and Casy's guilt stems from his days as a preacher when he did not do as he preached when he did not do as he preached (i.e., he slept with lots of women). However, they cope with this guilt in very different ways. John is compelled to confess his sins, perform random acts of kindness for his family, and drink himself silly in order to chase away a feeling of guilt. Reverend Casy wants to be among the people, wants to help migrant workers cope with the dismal circumstances of California. He finds his solace in fighting injustice. Where John turns inward, Casy seems to look outward at the world around him.

CHAPTER VIII
WILLIAM FAULKNER

8.1 Biography

Faulkner, internationally acclaimed as one of America's foremost novelists, is also noted for his short stories and novellas.

William Faulkner was born William Cuthbert Faulkner in New Albany, Mississippi, September 25, 1897, to Murry C. and Maud Butler Faulkner; he was the oldest of four children, all boys. The family moved in 1898 to nearby Ripley and in 1902 to Oxford, Mississippi, the author's primary home throughout his life. His father's employment included being treasurer of a railroad, owner of businesses, and administrator of the local University of Mississippi. Faulkner's early loves included trains, horses, hunting, and reading. In adolescence, after years of truancy and low performance, he quit high school in his senior year. Friendship with the future lawyer Phil Stone and frequenting the university campus were positive influences.

In 1918, Faulkner left Oxford to work in Connecticut at an arms factory; rejected by the army as too short and too small, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, training as a cadet in Toronto, Canada, until the end of World War I²⁰¹.

He traveled in the United States and abroad, worked as the university postmaster, attended the university as a special student, and began publishing poems in university and other periodicals. In New Orleans, he was befriended by Sherwood Anderson. Important works published early in his career were a collection of poems, *The Marble Faun* (1924), and two novels, *Soldiers' Pay* (1926) and *Mosquitoes* (1927). Three works in progress during 1927 treated the places and people of Faulkner's future work: Yoknapatawpha County, the Compsons, the Sartoris, and the Snopeses; Faulkner had taken Anderson's advice to return home and write about what he knew.

The years 1929 through 1937 mark the first major phase of Faulkner's career. *Flags in the Dust* (not published until 1973), his first "Yoknapatawpha" novel had been rejected; it was shortened, revised, and published as *Sartoris* (1929). A few months later his greatest novel, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), also appeared. In anger over its poor reception, Faulkner wrote *Sanctuary*, a violent, salacious novel. It was rejected as unfit for publication. That same year he married the recently divorced Estelle Franklin; following a honeymoon, they and her two children lived on the University of Mississippi campus; working and writing in the boiler room, Faulkner published *As I Lay Dying* (1930). Starting with "A Rose for Emily" (1930), he began publishing short stories in national magazines (no less than forty-eight appeared in six years, including some of his best stories). Republishing of his works in England and translations elsewhere (the French versions of Maurice Coindreau, for example) added to his international reputation; it would be some time before his own country recognized him. A severely revised *Sanctuary* was published in 1931, as was the first of many collections of stories, *These 13*.

²⁰¹ Magill, Frank N. *Magill's Survey of American Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 668

In 1932, Faulkner launched a second career, one which would compete for his time and presence for the next thirteen years: He became a Hollywood scriptwriter. Also in 1932, *Light in August* was published and Faulkner's father died, making Faulkner the head of the Faulkner family. The next year, his daughter Jill was born. He took flying lessons; soon he would be a pilot, own a plane, help establish the local airport, and give flying lessons. Another volume of poems, *A Green Bough* (1933), and a second collection, *Dr. Martino and Other Stories* (1934), were published. His works often served as the bases for films: In 1933, the story "Turn About" (1932) became *Today We Live*; *Sanctuary* became *The Story of Temple Drake*. In 1935, Faulkner's brother Dean died in a crash of Faulkner's plane. *Pylon* (1935) is a novel set in New Orleans (under another name) about flyers. Publication of *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) marked the end of production of the earlier major novels. During this time Faulkner supported a wife, three children, Dean's widow and daughter, and two black servants (Uncle Ned and Caroline Barr, known as Mammie Callie) primarily by selling short stories and writing film scripts. In 1929 he had purchased a large antebellum house, the Sheegog place, renaming it Rowan Oak (or Rowanoak); he restored the house and did the landscaping himself. In 1937, he purchased Bailey Woods and renamed it the Greenfield Farm.

The second major period seems to have begun with the publishing of *The Unvanquished* (1938), a novel of the Civil War that utilizes six previously published stories and one written for this work. Faulkner became less private in his life and in his ideas. His works became more philosophical and at times even moralistic. *The Wild Palms* (1939) is actually two novellas with alternating chapters. The first of the Snopes trilogy, *The Hamlet*, appeared in 1940. It was followed by a novel incorporating stories about black people, *Go Down, Moses* (1942). In 1939, the first of many honors came with Faulkner's election to the National Institute of Letters.²⁰²

During the next twenty years, Faulkner's final period, he became increasingly a public person, speaking out on racial segregation and representing the United States as an ambassador of goodwill in places as diverse as Japan, Venezuela, and Europe. In 1945 he was finally released from a contract to write scripts; in the meantime his contributions to magazines had become fewer. In 1947 he conducted classroom interviews at the University of Mississippi. Later he would become writer-in-residence, doing the same at the University of Virginia and buying a home in Charlottesville. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 and the Pulitzer Prize in 1955; the French bestowed membership in the Legion of Honor upon him. His daughter married Paul D. Summers, Jr., in 1954; there were three grandsons born between 1956 and 1961. Faulkner died in Byhalia, Mississippi, July 6, 1962, while undergoing medical treatment following a fall from a horse.

Works published after 1942 include the novels *Intruder in the Dust* (1947), *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), *A Fable* (1954), *The Town* (1957), *The Mansion* (1959), and *The Reivers* (1962). Collections include *The Portable Faulkner* (1946), *Collected Short Stories of William Faulkner* (1950), and *Big Woods* (1955); also appearing after 1942 were occasional stories, letters to editors, and essays in periodicals. Numerous works, such as collections of interviews, letters, previously unpublished works, biographies, and new editions, have appeared since Faulkner's death.

²⁰² Ibid, p. 667

8.2 Novels & Short Stories Overview

Faulkner's works, like their creator, are highly complex. His style has caused much difficulty for readers, especially if *The Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August*, *As I Lay Dying*, or *Absalom, Absalom!* is the reader's introduction to Faulkner. These best of his earlier Yoknapatawpha novels vary in structure but are alike in one point—an obscurity that results from unusual, complicated organization and presentation. *The Sound and the Fury* has multiple narrators, extended streams of consciousness, and subtle time shifts; it is divided into four at times seemingly disconnected parts. *Light in August* has three narratives interwoven, with past and present intermixed. *As I Lay Dying* is a series of numerous brief chapters, each a stream of consciousness, usually but not always by a member of the Bundren family. *Absalom, Absalom!* is told using various levels of time and narrator viewpoint.

Faulkner himself and some of his major critics have recommended *The Unvanquished* as the best starting place. In spite of multiple narratives, real and metaphorical, there is one narrator: Bayard Sartoris, an old man recalling experiences of his early life during the American Civil War. Several viewpoints are presented, but all by him. Time is interrupted by an occasional flashback or digression, but generally the thrust is chronological, once the digressive nature of the entire narrative is recognized. Violence and hardship are moderated by generous doses of good-natured humor. Focus is on two races, blacks and various classes of Mississippi whites. Since Bayard Sartoris is a rather normal adolescent through much of the plot, his viewpoint is not tedious. Another good entree into Faulkner is *Intruder in the Dust*, in which traditional form of single narrator and chronological time are, with some lapses, followed.

Place is extremely important to Faulkner; in most of his better works his setting is his fictional Yoknapatawpha County (based in part on his own home county of Lafayette) with its town of Jefferson, largely Oxford renamed and without the state university (he moves Oxford and the university to another site). Faulkner utilizes local people, including members of his own family: His grandfather, J. W. T. Faulkner, becomes old Bayard Sartoris; his great-grandfather, a mythic figure with a shady past, a record of violence, Civil War experience and public leadership, becomes Colonel John Sartoris. V. K. Surratt, Faulkner's genial peddler/story teller, is lifted from real life and temporarily given his real name. Various other characters are based on one or more real people. Similarly, the narratives are based on tales, often traditions handed down by his family or others.

In turn, he might borrow freely from history or classical mythology, from existentialism, psychology, the Bible, or any of the numerous books that he read. Next to the Bible, he most often mentioned Miguel de Cervantes (author of *Don Quixote*), the sixteenth century Spanish writer; other influences included Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and Polish-British novelist Joseph Conrad. Following the philosophy of Henri Bergson, the French thinker, Faulkner did not view time as chronological. Having watched a man write the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin, Faulkner sought to write the history of the human soul in one sentence. Faulkner's style is often verbose, especially if a talkative narrator is speaking or a troubled individual is pouring out thoughts in a stream of consciousness. There may even

be an occasional sentence that goes on for pages. The later novels, with obvious exceptions (the commissary section of "The Bear" in *Go Down, Moses*, for example), and the short stories are written in a style much more readable than some of the earlier novels.

Although Faulkner's writing is recognized as excellent by critics in both the United States and abroad, it should be noted that his work is uneven; this fact is especially obvious since almost everything he wrote is now available, including apprenticeship poems and stories. Even his mature work, however, is somewhat uneven; critics regard his earlier Yoknapatawpha novels and a few later ones such as *The Hamlet* and *Go Down, Moses*, for example, to be of better literary quality than the apprenticeship novels (*Soldiers' Pay* and *Mosquitoes*) or *Pylon*.

Faulkner's philosophy has been difficult for many critics. He believed in God but did not pretend to be a Christian. He borrowed freely from the Bible, yet used as parallels to Christ uncouth characters such as Joe Christmas in *Light in August*. His attitude toward race, especially toward black and white relations, angered whites and blacks, integrationists and segregationists. He was in favor of moderate, gradual integration. In his works, he often treats the themes of incest and miscegenation; sometimes they are combined, as in *Absalom, Absalom!* His attitude toward the South combines regional pride with shame at offenses past and present. His complex treatment avoids the two extremes that one often finds in works about the South: squalid poverty on the one hand, magnolias and hooped skirts on the other. His setting is more a particular region—northern Mississippi—than the entire South. A most successful regional writer, he nevertheless achieves universality by combining the local perspective with a broad treatment of the human condition. Both a Greek stoic and a Christian humanist, he believed in the worth of the individual. Most especially his ability to endure and prevail; thus, in spite of much darkness in Faulkner's works, they possess an overriding optimism in an age of pessimistic trends in literature.

are among the important characters of *Sanctuary*. The MacCallums (McCallums) are the protagonists of the short story "The Tall Men" (1941). In Sartoris, their hill farm home more than fourteen miles north of Jefferson becomes young Bayard's refuge after old Bayard's death. Here drinking and hunting (two of Faulkner's favorite avocations) take place. Another family, a nameless and poverty-stricken black family, share their hospitality on Christmas Day. They stand in contrast to others in the novel who are stereotypes of black characters in literature and drama of the time. Following the death of young Bayard, who has foolheartedly flight-tested an unsafe plane in Dayton, Ohio, the focus is on Benbow Sartoris, who represents a new generation of the family. Bayard's wife Narcissa has named the son Benbow in hopes that he will avoid the curse of the Sartoris men.

The acknowledged giant of Southern realism in William Faulkner (1897-1962), the Nobel prizewinner of 1949, who, contrary to many novelists, continues to rise in reputation subsequent to his death. As of now Faulkner looks like the lone American novelist to match with the towering European novelists like Balzac and Dickens – immensely prolific, peopling his works with hundreds of memorable characters and gripping conflicts, summoning to rich and convincing life the total though imagined community in which he lived, embracing by implication the whole spectacle of man's modern experience. Like

these great European novelists Faulkner lacks the intellectual profundity of Mann or Camus, but compensates by sheer narrative power and a vast sympathy for agonized mankind. Like Balzac and Dickens again he speaks for his age in a thoroughly humanistic voice. The moral significance of man is secular, and the role of the artist is by the indirections of his art to stimulate in the reader both an awareness of humanity's inner struggles and a realization of the possibilities of reconciling these struggles.

The earlier Faulkner novels were often branded as sordid naturalism, replete with the pettiness and obscenity of weak and vicious mortals. The *Kenyon Review* article by G. M. O'Donnell in 1939 began a reappraisal and enormous upgrading to which the novelist himself made momentous contributions. In accepting the Nobel Prize Faulkner asserted quite un-naturalistically: "I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail.... it is [the artist's] privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past." While Writer-in-Residence at the University of Virginia, Faulkner categorized three stages in man's heroic response to the errors of his world: "The first says, This is rotten, I'll have no part of it, I will take death first. The second says, This is rotten, I don't like it, I can't do anything about it, but at least I will not participate in it myself, I will go into a cave or climb a pillar to sit on. The third says, This stinks and I'm going to do something about it. "The utterly defeated and unattractive characters of Faulkner simply capitulate to the way of their world. His more attractive and praiseworthy characters will never achieve the amplitude of their desires but will display the heroic responses.

For most of his life Faulkner lived in Oxford, Mississippi, administrative seat of Lafayette County and site of the University of Mississippi. His imaginary Yoknapatawpha County (accent on the penult) shares with the real Lafayette County the northern boundary of the Tallahatchie River. The river bordering Lafayette County to the south is the Yocana. Faulkner explains the older form, which gives its name to the functional Yoknapatawpha, as Chickasaw Indian meaning "water runs slow through flat land". Oxford appears in Faulkner novels, as Jefferson, and he transposes Oxford in his fiction forty miles away, feeling that the representative nature of Jefferson would be clouded by the introduction of an academic atmosphere (until recently the University of Mississippi was the only tertiary institution in the state). Although census figures have always shown a slight white majority in Lafayette County, Yoknapatawpha has several thousand more negroes than whites suggested by the ubiquity of negroes. Almost all of Faulkner's fiction uses the locale of Yoknapatawpha, now as well established in literature as the Wessex of Hardy and likewise the arena for a tragic perception of life. Wessex, however, was sullied by the perversity of fate, while Yoknapatawpha is defiled by the perversity of man.²⁰³

The first Yoknapatawpha novel, *Sartoris* (1929), establishes the authentic vein of most subsequent Faulkner fiction and sets up the novelist's two major categories of white Southerners. Whatever their names in subsequent works, Faulkner's aristocrats will display characteristics of the Sartoris clan. The name means "well tailored", and these grandees

²⁰³ Brooks, Cleanth. *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country*, pp. 6 – 9

have worn the Confederate gray with superb aplomb. They swagger with the nonchalant ease and dashing mien of the born gentleman. They blithely assume that they are the unquestioned leaders of society, the colorful ideals and idols of all. In the antebellum days there may have been some truth to their image of themselves, but sober fact indicates that their forbears were rawboned adventurers whose somewhat dubious exploits have been blown up to romantic legend. In the twentieth century the Sartoris males are straitjacketed by this legend, and when Bayard Sartoris III emulates their traditional wild during in a mechanical era, he kills his grandfather in an automobile accident and himself in an airplane crash. Actually, Miss Jenny, not fettered by the Sartoris male's illusion of his glamour, better exemplifies the genuine virtues of the Old South.

In 1919 privilege is still respected, as Bayard Sartoris II is bank president, but the vice president is Flem Snopes, a canny riser from "po', white trash". The Snopes clan, breeding at a prodigious rate, is the antithesis of the Sartoris aristocrats. The Snopeses descend from the coarse "rednecks" who settle on rocky hillsides and scrawny marshland or back country, where the huge plantations monopolized the good land. The very name Snopes has a vulgar nasality to it, a whiff of animal Snopes and bestial rooting about. Although decadent and outmoded, the aristocrats display gentlemanly compunctions and a true sense of community responsibility. The "po' white" Snopes characters are quite unlovely in their selfish greed and brutal behavior, but their animal cunning and ruthless aggrandizement better fit them for the harsh realities of the modern South. They will displace the anachronistic aristocrats. Faulkner can occasionally find some redeeming humanity even in the snot-nosed, snaggle-toothed Snopeses, but their triumph is a sad deterioration of the South.

Few other works match *Sartoris* in evoking the feel of the American South, whether it is plowed Mississippi fields steaming after a warm rain or the Sunday parlor whose dead air still seems to reverberate with memories of the headlong charge of Sartoris cavalry, right out of a Scott novel, spurring their mounts through the hotel lobby, screaming the high-pitched Rebel Yell, pistoling the astounded Union officers. Perhaps no other work is so effectively an insider's considered and balanced appraisal of the American South in legend and in fact. The novel is also a study of all human alienation, the thwarting drag older of an older generation upon today's shaken youth, the lack of equipment by this generation to meet the vicissitudes of a changing world of men.²⁰⁴

The decaying aristocrats of *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) are the Compsons, whose antebellum ancestors included a general and a state governor. All the twentieth century male Compsons are pitiful failures in life. Much of the blame rests upon Jason Compson III who has provided no moral background for his offspring but has retreated into *fin de siècle* decadence, cynically sneering at a world that has passed him by. The abysmal depths are those of Benjy, a congenital idiot. His brother Quentin Compson III, is a victim of the impossible Southern myths and commits suicide. Jason Compson IV is the only child appreciated by the non-entity of a mother, Caroline Bascomb, who married above her station and welcomes the Bascomb characteristics in Jason IV. Actually Jason IV is a Snopes figure, a heartless materialist; in a modern Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece, gold

²⁰⁴ Day, Martins. *A Handbook of American Literature: A Comprehensive Study from Colonial Times to the Present Day*, p. 511

is all. The novel moves from the inarticulate Benjy to the brutally realistic Jason, but it is really a descent. The emotional truth of the idiot surpasses the intellectuality of Quentin III, who lives and dies by empty words and disembodied theories. Worst is Jason IV, who strips away all of life in the feverish pursuit of nought but money.

The most commendable and most important Compson, Caddy, appears solely in the reveries of her brothers. Caddy was the only one of them with the spirit of outgoing affection. She was the only member of the family truly to love Benjy and to give joy to his benighted existence. The others victimized her by pedestalling her as the Southern Lady of the old code, the family honor incarnate. Her family will not permit her normal sexual development; so she explodes in conduct that will blight her family and make her own life mere "sound and fury". Quentin III is incapable of perpetuating the old code, botching the attempt to shoot Caddy's seducer, Dalton Ames. He futilely wishes to push back the hands of the clock and even claims incest that he and Caddy can escape from change and reality. But Quentin III is all words and myth, devoid of action and accomplishment, except his own escape by self-destruction. He is truthfully as deficient in love as the base Jason IV, who is angered that the downfall of Caddy injures his desire for a good job and good face in the community. It is the loss of money not the flight *per se* of Caddy's daughter Quentin (confusingly bearing the same name as her dead uncle) that infuriates Jason IV. Sordid as the girl's escapade is and dubious as her future appears, there is hope for her in her escape from the doomed Compsons.

The first three sections of the novel painfully illuminate the modern wasteland. In the concluding section the way out is demonstrated by Dilsey, the negress cook. The self-centered, imperceptive Compsons never understand that Dilsey actually was the cohesive force within the family and its potential savior. Serenely she accepts reality but transforms it by love. From the murky darkness of Benjy we move through the sterile distortions of Quentin III and Jason IV to emerge into the bright light and sharp clarity of Dilsey.

Initially the reader is a bit taken aback by Benjy's interior monologue. This *tour de force* projects a mindless mind that is unable to interpret experience or even separate present. It is extremely rich in pure sense reception, and later in the novel puzzles and gaps will be explained. The streams of consciousness from Quentin III and Jason IV, as brilliant as the technique in Joyce and Woolf, superbly differentiate the mindsets while revealing the parallel deficiencies of both brothers. Symbolic weight is suggested in mirrors as casting back and reversing reality, in honeysuckle as the pure and restorative powers of nature, in water as purification and as the life challenge (cf. Quentin III to Eliot's Prufrock).

Overall interpretation varies from Irving Howe's assertion that this is a social novel of the declining South to Jean-Paul Sartre's contention that this is a metaphysical scrutiny of the relation of time to the individual. Existentialism demands the open future, but the Compsons have encapsuled themselves in the circumscribed past. Clearly paramount are the Christian motifs. Sections III (Good Friday) and I (day before Easter) proclaim the nullity of the novel's title from *Macbeth*. The concluding section (Easter Day) reasserts the declaration of in "Canticle of the Sun" by St. Francis. Though Dilsey is certainly no dogmatic Christian and makes a very human saint, here is truly the resurrected spirit. Rebirth in altruistic love is the one answer for a shattered world.

The Bundren family of *As I Lay Dying* (1930) consists of Snopes-like characters, the first of their class to dominate a Faulkner novel. Every whit as coarse and brutish as Steinbeck's "Okies", these "po' whites" outrageously violate all conventional morality. In their amoral world it is impossible to principles of a Sartoris or Compson. Caddy's illicit was a devastating tragedy; to everyone but Dewey Dell pregnancy is ludicrously funny. The ostensible head of the Bundren clan, Anse, is a whining egotist of meager intelligence. Never really loving his wife Addie, he promises to transport her body to Jefferson for burial with her kin chiefly because he needs store-bought dentures. Nonetheless, to the astonishment of "outsiders" he displays remarkable fortitude and independence, alloyed, of course, with his posturing and ugly crudity. These plebeians never spout the highfalutin eloquence of their betters and never realize the epic dimensions of their journey. Through flood and heat they bear the corpse of the dead Addie in the mythic pattern of the bearing of Arthur to Avalon or Livingston from the heart of the Dark Continent to civilized burial. But this heroic mission is bizarrely grotesque, as buzzards circle the putrescent cadaver and even the most sympathetic "outsiders" are nauseated by the horrible stench. It is doubtful that any other work in literature so incredibly blends the noble and the base, the dignified and the laughable, the lyrical and the gutsy naturalistic.

The novel might seem a parody upon man's greatest solemnities, a flattening of all values in the absurdities of human behavior and the utter blank of death's extinction. Certainly Anse is appallingly unaltered by the odyssey, blithely securing new teeth and a new wife within twenty-four hours after finally committing Addie to earth. Even as her flesh rots, however, Addie is the great symbol of life, of the importunate cry of sexuality, of the power to generate new lives, of the cohesive strength to weld a family together and give sustaining meaning to its members. All four of her sons gained identity and purpose through her monumental role as Magna Mater. Their unswerving fulfilment of the promise given her is their struggle to hold on to the life-meaning she transmitted and then to form a new psychic identity when she is completely removed. The most perceptive of the sons, Darl, breaks under the ordeal and is sent to the insane asylum. Cash and Jewel through suffering and service strengthen their manhood for their new lives. Nine-year-old Vardaman is initiated into the harsh truths of adulthood.

The account is told in fifty-nine interior monologues from the seven Bundrens and from eight "outsiders". Dialogue is realistic-naturalistic from the articulate Dr. Peabody to the fumbling illiteracies of the Bundrens, conscious thought is more formal and orderly, unconscious thought is poetic and highly symbolic. The author never intrudes, leaving judgment solely to the reader. That judgment will mean head-shaking at the crazy perversity of man and head-nodding at the wondrous pontency and power of life.

Perhaps the most discussed Faulkner short story is "A Rose for Emily" in the collection *These 13* (1931). The rose is an ironic romantic tribute to Emily Grierson who long ago killed Homer Barron, a Northern construction man, when he threatened to leave her. When Emily dies, the citizens of Jefferson find Barron's putrefying corpse in her bed. Barricaded in her house she had frozen the past, protecting her dreams at the cost of her sanity - a parable of the myth-clutching South.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 514

8.3 Analysis of "The Sound and the Fury" (1929)

8.3.1 Analysis

The Sound and The Fury is about another family, the Compsons; like the Sartoris, they are of the aristocratic social level, the planter class. Unlike the Sartoris, who live four miles north of Jefferson, they live in town. They consist of Mr. and Mrs. Compson and four children: Quentin, the oldest son, commits suicide while a student at Harvard University; he is attracted to his sister Caddy. Benjy, born Maury, is an idiot son. Jason, the youngest son, is grasping and amoral, without feeling for other people. The other important members of the household are Miss Quentin, Caddy's illegitimate daughter (named for her uncle), and the black female servant Dilsey, modeled to a great extent after the Faulkner family's Mammy Callie.

Faulkner's most esoteric novel, especially through the first two of the four parts, *The Sound and the Fury* is his most difficult to read, causing problems for both scholar and beginner. Obviously modeled after James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922), it consists of three streams of consciousness, each by a male character, followed by a fourth section in omniscient viewpoint with strong partial focus on a female. Part I unfolds the thoughts and emotions of Benjy, who on his birthday (he is thirty-three), Saturday, April 7, 1928, confuses the present with the past of 1910. His pasture, sold to pay for Caddy's wedding and Quentin's education at Harvard, is now a golf course; players' shouts to their caddies remind him of his sister and of his former dependence on her.

Quentin's section is set at the earlier time of Thursday, June 2, 1910. During the events before his death, he tears the hands off his watch, wanders through the town, becomes friends with a young girl, has a violent confrontation as he tries to find her people, and eventually dresses and brushes his teeth before killing himself. His death results from his inability to accept his sister's infidelity, an act foreshadowed by an experience on the day of their grandmother's wake: Climbing up to look in the window after sat in the mud, she has revealed her soiled drawers.

Jason's section is less esoteric, more direct, because it pours out the thoughts of a crass, greedy, cruel man who is unimaginative. Remaining at home after the deaths of Quentin and his father, he works in a business. He extorts money from Caddy by insisting that she avoid contact with her daughter and by threatening to expose Miss Quentin's background. The money that Caddy sends her, Jason takes for his own. His section is set in the present: Friday, April 6, 1928, the day before Benjy's birthday and two days before Easter. Miss Quentin, now seventeen, runs off with a man from a carnival, stealing money from Jason, who ironically had previously stolen it from her. Much of the section serves to characterize Jason, especially his contempt toward Quentin, Benjy, Caddy, Miss Quentin, Dilsey, women in general, and nearly everyone else. Throughout the sections, the parents and a relative, Uncle Maury, are also characterized: The father fails to assume authority, the mother is a whining, dependent hypochondriac, the uncle is an immoral ne'er-do-well.

Jason's conflict with Dilsey, who tries vainly to keep the family from disintegrating, and his pursuit of Miss Quentin are depicted in both the third and fourth sections. The latter, sometimes called the Dilsey section in spite of its third person narrator, reaches its grand climax in Dilsey's worship experience on Easter Sunday morning, April 8, 1928, the day after Benjy's birthday. She takes Benjy with her and walks to the Second Baptist Church, the black church, where a small, unattractive substitute minister preaches. In the course of Reverend Sheegog's sermon, she reaches a state of ecstasy—one of the rare genuine religious experiences in all of Faulkner's work. The setting of the days of Easter week, though not in chronological order, parallel those in Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (c. 1320). The year 1928 reflects a Faulkner custom often employed: to make the time of writing the present in a work in progress.

The novel begins April 7, 1928. We are first introduced to Benjy and Luster. Benjy inexplicably moans and cries. His billows are deafening, and his thoughts do not flow logically from one to the next, so we can thus quickly presume that he is mentally handicapped. Luster is Benjy's family's servant, and must follow Benjy around and attend to his every need. As the scene begins, Benjy stands on the outside of a golf course, moaning, but Luster is only concerned with finding his precious quarter to see a circus coming to town that night, and thus is impatient with his charge.

Benjy's mind travels back and forth in time. Places, objects, smells, and other characters' mere presence seem to trigger Benjy's flashbacks to his childhood. For example, as he tries to climb under the fence and snags himself on a nail, he remembers a time as a child when Caddy his sister, unsnags him from the same fence, and helps him crawl through.

This flashback takes place at a Christmas when Benjy was a child. Here, we meet Caddy, Versh a family servant, Benjy's mother, and his Uncle Maury. When Caddy returns home from school, she wants to go outside and play with her brother. Mrs. Compson is very worried that her little baby will get sick in the winter cold. Uncle Maury convinces her that the kids will be fine. While Benjy's mother calls him her "poor little baby," Caddy treats him as though there were nothing wrong with him. She also lets him know that he can always depend on her: "'You're not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy.'" April Seventh, 1928, p. 9.

As Benjy and Luster pass by the carriage house, Benjy's mind then races ahead to a time when he and his mother took a trip in their carriage to the cemetery.

One of Mrs. Compson's other children, Jason says, "Father and Quentin can't hurt you" April Seventh, 1928, p. 11. He is referring to Mrs. Compson's husband and son, Quentin, whose graves Mrs. Compson and Benjy are going to visit. For a moment, Benjy's mind travels backwards to the aforementioned Christmas with Caddy. Uncle Maury had asked the two of them to deliver a letter to their neighbor, Mrs. Patterson. He instructed them to keep it a secret, and Mrs. Patterson appeared anxious while receiving it in her husband's presence, but we don't know what the letter says.

As Luster follows Benjy around the neighborhood, he runs into a friend of his. They talk about today being Benjy's 33rd birthday. While Luster searches for his quarter, he tells Benjy to go play in the creek. Wading in the water reminds Benjy yet again of his childhood.

In this scene, Caddy, Quentin, Versh, Jason, and Benjy are all present. Caddy and Quentin's clothes got wet while playing, and the children squabble and threaten to tell on each other to Dilsey and their parents. At the time, our narrator was not called Benjy: "'Carry Maury up the hill, Versh.' Versh squatted and I got on his back." April Seventh, 1928, p. 20.

Benjy's memory then jumps forward to an evening where T.P. and Quentin get drunk off of sassafrilla. A wedding is taking place at the same time, but nobody mentions whose it is. In their drunkenness, they make Benjy try the alcohol, and Versh must eventually carry Benjy back to bed.

Benjy's memory of Versh takes him back again to the same night when all the children were playing by the creek. Roskus, T.P.'s father, tells the kids to come back home; their parents had company. Though Caddy tries to convince herself and the other children otherwise, their parents were not enjoying the wedding. Their father doesn't seem to care about their mischief, but only tells them to listen to Dilsey, Roskus' wife, who seems to run the entire household. All the children can figure out is that their mother is upset and isn't feeling well. Dilsey shuttles them away from the house to Versh's quarters, and Benjy's impressions jump ahead to a scene where Roskus is milking cows in the barn.

Here, he gives Dilsey his opinion on the Compson family, and also confirms the earlier guess that Benjy's parents changed his name: "'They ain't no luck on this place.' Roskus said. 'I seen it at first but when they changed his name I knowed it.'" April Seventh, 1928, p. 29.

Abruptly, Benjy's mind jumps to two years later. In this scene, we find out that Frony is Dilsey's daughter, and Luster is her son. Still a baby at the time, Luster plays with a member of the Compson family, a little girl named Quentin, whose parentage is not revealed. Roskus repeats his belief that the Compson family is unlucky, and states another reason why: "'They aint no luck going be on no place where one of they own chillen's name aint never spoke.'" April Seventh, 1928, p. 31. Here, we find out that the Compsons no longer speak of one of their children.

Benjy's mind again returns to the night when something was wrong at the Compsons, but the children had no idea what that was. Caddy insisted the entire evening that every child should mind her, but she had no more idea as to what was going on as anyone else did. In fact, Frony let it slip that she knew that Damuddy, the Compsons' grandmother, had died. Caddy refuses to believe her, and Jason starts to cry. Caddy wants to prove to everyone that a party, not a funeral, is going on, so Versh boosts her up to peek into the window from an outside tree: "We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers." April Seventh, 1928, p. 39. She sees nothing but adults standing around looking solemn. Peeking into the window reminded Benjy of seeing a more grown up Caddy with flowers in her hair.

This was the same night of the wedding, when Quentin and T.P. made Benjy drink sassafrilla. Benjy then narrates a frenzied, disconnected series of senses he feels while drunk. He ends up crying, and says that Caddy was there to comfort her, in her "shining veil," April Seventh, 1928, p. 40, on the day of her wedding. Benjy enjoys his memories of

Caddy and continues to think of her, this time, when she was only fourteen. He had been crying and moaning, and while Dilsey was very patient with him, Caddy was the only family member who took the time to see what was wrong with him, and spent time comforting him and playing with him. Just for his own happiness, Caddy still agreed to sleep in the same bed with him.

Benjy's memory rewinds again to the night the children found out their Grandmother died. Dilsey found the children, and ordered them back inside the house.

Quentin, Benjy's brother, narrates this chapter of the book. He tells his story on June 2, 1910, while attending Harvard University in Massachusetts. The scene begins as he wakes in his dorm room to the ticking of a watch his father gave to him. When the elder Compson handed it down to Quentin, he shared with him his defeatist opinion about life:

"I give it [watch] to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools." June Second, 1910, p. 76.

In the present day, Quentin decides to cut class. As he lies in bed, his mind every once in a while drifts to conversations he has had with his father. In one, Quentin laments that he wishes that he were the "unvirgin" instead of "her" being the "unvirgin." The "her" he refers to is his sister, Caddy. He ends almost every paragraph repeating the phrase, "That never had a sister." June Second, 1910, p. 77. He also insists that he has committed incest with Caddy. His virgin status calls into question his confession of incest. We find that the sexual aspect of incest does not seem to be what attracts him to the act. Instead, he likes the idea of being punished with Caddy for his wickedness:

"Because if it were just to hell; if that were all of it. Finished. If things just finished themselves. Nobody else there but her and me. If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. I have committed incest I said Father it was I" June Second, 1910, p. 79.

His father tries to ease his pain and anguish with his cryptic wisdom: "It's not when you realize that nothing can help you--religion, pride, anything--it's when you realize that you don't need any aid." June Second, 1910, p. 80.

For the moment, Quentin's mind returns to the present. He breaks the face of his relentlessly ticking watch, packs a trunk full of clothes, and writes two notes, one of which, along with his trunk key, he addresses to his father. The other note goes to Shreve. While he was finishing this, he momentarily flashes back to glimpse at Caddy, running in her bridal gown, towards Benjy's bellows. It was the same wedding night Benjy had remembered when T.P. got drunk. Quentin's thoughts return to the present, and he leaves his dorm to run errands for the day. He visits a watch shop to fix the one he had just broken. While there, he appears to be spellbound by the many different, contradictory tickings of the shop's clocks, and asks the owner if any of them told the correct time. None did. The owner found nothing wrong with his watch, for it still kept time correctly, so

Quentin leaves. While leaving, he glances at his watch again, thinking that it was "Holding all I used to be sorry about like the new moon holding water." June Second, 1910, p. 85.

Quentin then visits a hardware store, where he buys two flat irons. When he gets on the streetcar to leave the store, he sits behind an African-American man, which prompts him to think about his attitudes towards "colored folks." He finds that he misses Roskus and Dilsey.

Quentin gets off the car and stands along the Charles River, leaning against the railing. While staring at his long shadow, he thinks, "Niggers say a drowned man's shadow was watching for him in the water all the time... What a sinful waste Dilsey would say. Benjy knew it when Damuddy died. He cried. *He smell hit. He smell hit.*" June Second, 1910, p. 90. Watching the crew team, Quentin's thoughts turn to less morbid subjects. He sees a fellow Southerner and Harvard classmate, Gerald. His mother, Ms. Bland, spoils him and is quite overprotective, having bought herself an apartment Cambridge, while her real home is in Kentucky. Quentin's thoughts of Gerald quickly turn to thoughts of his sister. He sounds almost jealous in the way he remembers Caddy fooling around with a young man named Herbert, whom she ends up marrying in April of the same year that Quentin writes. Quentin's mind returns to a few months earlier, at home with his family and Herbert. Caddy's fiancé had just bought her a car, and we hear Mrs. Compson's voice raving on and on about how wonderful Herbert is, and how great it is that he might invite young Jason, her favorite son, to join him in his bank.

During the course of the entire conversation, Quentin keeps thinking to himself that his sister never meets his gaze. Quentin's images of his sister always seem to mingle with the scent of honeysuckle. We also find out during his flashback that the family sold Benjy's pasture in order for Quentin to attend Harvard. Mrs. Compson's voice enters Quentin's head, and we hear she and her husband arguing about Caddy. The subject of Caddy's promiscuity upsets Quentin, and he asks his father why he had to be so blunt about his sister's exploits. His father replies, "I didn't mean to speak so sharply but women have no respect for each other for themselves" June Second, 1910, p. 96. Quentin is determined that, "Father and I protect women from one another from themselves our women" June Second, 1910, p. 96.

His father knows that they must at least try and protect the Compson women, for his rather biased wisdom dictates that women "have an affinity for evil for supplying whatever the evil lacks in itself... until the evil has served its purpose whether it ever existed or no." June Second, 1910, p. 97.

Mrs. Compson's voice returns to Quentin's thoughts, and, as usual, she complains about how her family is ungrateful and selfish, a trait of the Compsons, not the Bascombs (her maiden name). She laments that Caddy has disgraced the family, yet how she did it is still unknown. She says that her son Jason is the only one that cares about her, and she begs the elder Jason to let the two of them go live together, so that they may escape their curse.

As he continues to run errands in Cambridge thoughts of home haunt Quentin. As he hops onto a city streetcar, his memories reveal that he has shot Herbert. How he shot him or whether or not the shot was fatal, we don't know, but all that Quentin hears is Caddy's

voice, repeating that he has shot Herbert. Quentin remembers a conversation he had with Herbert the first time he met him. Like Quentin, his sister's fiancé also went to Harvard. He seems to have done well for himself as a working adult, but Quentin knew that he had cheated on his exams while at Harvard. In his conversation, Quentin confronts his future brother-in-law about it, and Herbert tries to pay him to keep quiet. Quentin does not take the money, and they almost get in a fight because Quentin does not let him off the hook so easily, but Caddy enters the room just before anything could happen. When she and Quentin are alone, she gets mad at him for poking his nose in her business, but as Quentin continues to tell her that Herbert is not an upstanding gentleman, she admits to him that she has to marry somebody. Not only is she sick with blackguard and needs someone to take care of her, she is also pregnant. The baby may not even be his, because, as Quentin finds out, she has slept with many different boys. Caddy tries to explain to her brother, the virgin, why she has been so promiscuous: "There was something terrible in me sometimes at night I could see it grinning at me I could see it through them grinning at me through their faces it's gone now and I'm sick." June Second, 1910, p. 112.

Quentin's thoughts turn morbid, when he recalls that Versh told him about a man who mutilated himself with a razor to commit suicide. When he thinks of a time he complained to his father about his tortured existence as a virgin, his father tells him, "Purity [specifically, virginity] is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature. It's nature is hurting you not Caddy." June Second, 1910, p. 116. Our narrator interrupts his memory to leave his flat irons underneath a bridge by the river. He notices dead plants floating in the water, and wonders to himself:

"And maybe when He says Rise the eyes will come floating up too, out of the deep quiet and the sleep, to look on glory. And after a while the flat irons would come floating up. I hid them [flatirons] under the end of the bridge and went back and leaned on the rail." June Second, 1910, p. 116.

Quentin watches the motion of the river quietly, and talks to someone in his thoughts: "Only you and me then amid the pointing and the horror walled by the clean flame" June Second, 1910, p. 117. We had seen the "clean flame" earlier in Quentin's chapter, in reference to the flames of hell.

Quentin interrupts his thoughts of mortality as he finds himself shooting the breeze with a few young local boys fishing off the bridge. They are quite unsuccessful in catching a famously stubborn trout, so they decide to go swimming instead. One of the boys seems to be the butt of the other two's teasing, so becomes upset and decides not to swim with them. During this time, Quentin talks to the little boy, trying to make him feel better.

After making friends with the young men, Quentin thinks, as usual, of Caddy. He remembers a desperate conversation the two of them had about the unhappy state of their family. While Quentin begs his sister to run away with Benjy and him, Caddy reminds him that the money needed to run away has gone to his Harvard tuition. We also find that Mr. Compson has developed a serious drinking problem, which may kill him if he doesn't quit. Caddy said she did something so awful the year before this conversation took place that it exacerbated his drinking. The agonizing memory ends with Benjy, pulling at his sister's dress, his bellows deafening.

As Quentin's flashback ends, he walks into a bakery in Cambridge. At the same time he enters, a little girl slips in with him. While the woman working at the bakery refuses to serve the girl because she is an Italian immigrant, Quentin insists that the woman wait on her, and he buys the girl a bun himself. The girl pays for her own loaf of bread, and the cashier reluctantly gives her an old loaf. Quentin and the girl leave together, and he buys her some ice cream. After they eat together, he tries to head back towards campus, but she silently follows him. He unsuccessfully tries to find her house. She cannot help him much, as she refuses to speak. Instead, he wanders around the immigrant sections of Boston, pointing in different directions, looking in her eyes to see if she recognizes any of the alleyways.

While she follows him around town, Quentin's thoughts drift back to home. He remembers lying in the barn with a girl named Natalie. She told the inexperienced, but curious Quentin that sex was like "dancing sitting down" June Second 1910, p. 135. In the midst of their awkward making out, Caddy walks into the barn.

As Quentin's attention immediately turns to his sister, Natalie leaves, apparently angry with Quentin for his preoccupation with Caddy. After she leaves, Quentin tries to tell Caddy what the two of them were doing. She doesn't seem to care, but instead is very angry with him. The scene ends with them physically fighting in their muddy, rainy barn.

As Quentin's thoughts bring him back to the present time, a furious looking man storms up an alleyway, and the little girl finally speaks up, recognizing this man as her brother, Julio. He shakes a stick at Quentin, cursing at him, accusing him of stealing his sister while physically assaulting him. Boston police arrest both men. In the midst of being arrested, Quentin starts to laugh uncontrollably. It takes him several minutes to stop and by the time he calms himself, right before his eyes, he sees a big car, occupied by classmate Gerald, his mother, his roommate Shreve, another classmate, Spoade and two young women. Gerald, Shreve, and Spoade all follow the procession to the police station. While Shreve argues with the constable over the misunderstanding, Quentin remains quiet, appearing detached and amused about the whole situation. He manages to not get in trouble, and ends up having to pay a fine of six dollars to get himself out of this scrape.

Gerald, Shreve, and Spoade take him back to Mrs. Bland's car. Quentin is not even thinking about his brush with the law, but instead continues to obsess over his virgin status:

"I could not be a virgin, with so many of them walking along in the shadows and whispering with their soft girlvoices lingering in the shadowy places and the words coming out and perfume and eyes you could feel not see, but if it was that simple to do it wouldn't be anything and if it wasn't anything, what was I" June Second, 1910, p. 147.

Mrs. Bland interrupts his thoughts momentarily, but while she rattles on boringly, his mind again drifts back to memories of Caddy. He remembers an exchange they had concerning sex. As his sister talks about some of the men she had been intimate with, Quentin insists, *"we did how can you not know it if you'll just wait and I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait"* June Second, p. 148.

While Caddy tries to comfort Quentin, who insists that he was the one boy who slept with her, she knew that he has never touched any female before in his life. Hysterical, Quentin draws out a knife with which to kill Caddy, and says that he will end his own life, too. He is crying so uncontrollably, however, that he can hardly steady the blade in his hand. He drops his knife on the ground, and in the barn's darkness cannot find it. They give up their attempt for the moment.

Caddy must leave to go meet her boyfriend, but Quentin chases her, fighting her, trying to keep her from him. He fails to restrain his sister, so he simply follows her to where she's meeting her boyfriend, Dalton Ames. She assures Quentin she will only be gone for a short while, and tells him to meet her later.

In Quentin's walk along the edge of the woods, the moment he smells honeysuckle, he breaks into a sprint to escape its suffocating scent. He makes it to the pasture, where he sees Caddy walking back towards the house. As they walk back together, Quentin asks Caddy if she loves Dalton Ames. She doesn't seem to want to have this conversation with her brother, but by now he is crying, and she must console him. In her own sadness, Caddy says, "don't cry I'm bad anyway you cant help it" June Second, p. 158. Quentin answers, "theres a curse on us its not our fault is it our fault" June Second, p. 158.

Caddy finally goes to bed, but, unsettled, Quentin wanders around, and happens to bump into Dalton. He arranges to meet him the next day at a nearby creek. At this meeting, Quentin orders his sister's boyfriend to leave town by sundown, and threatens to kill him if he stays. Caddy's lover laughs off young Quentin, whose body is shaking in his anxiety. Dalton assures him, "listen no good taking it so hard its not your fault kid it would have been some other fellow" June Second, p. 160. Obsessive Quentin then asks him if he had ever had a sister, and Dalton replies to him, "no but theyre all bitches" June Second, p. 160. The moment Dalton uttered those words; Quentin goes to slap him in the face. The bigger, stronger, Dalton held both of Quentin's wrists, as Quentin struggled, still trying to beat up the boy that disgraced his sister.

Dalton pulls out a rifle, and shoots a nearby bird. He offers his gun to Quentin for protection, but Quentin refuses. Quentin remembers what happens next like it was a dream:

"I hit him I was still trying to hit him long after he was holding my wrists but I still tried then it was like I was looking at him through a piece of colored glass I could hear my blood." June Second, p. 161.

Shortly thereafter, Dalton takes off on his horse, leaving Quentin to recover by himself. We find that Caddy's boyfriend did not hit or shoot at Quentin, but that Caddy's young brother had passed out, hurting his head when he banged the ground. Caddy came running after she heard the gunshots, and was relieved to see Quentin only slightly hurt. She tried to run after Dalton, but Quentin held her back, asking her again if she loved him. She told him to repeat her boyfriend's name while holding his hand against her throat. Whenever Quentin said Dalton's name, he could feel the blood surging through her body, a sign that she did indeed love him.

Quentin's flashback ends for the moment, and we find him back in Boston, nursing a black eye and a bloody, cut up face, courtesy of Gerald Bland. Because he passed out and thus forgot what happened to him, his friends Shreve and Spoade tell him that as Gerald boasted about one of his female conquests, Quentin jumped up in his face, asking him if he ever had a sister. When Gerald said no, Quentin began to punch him, repeating his query over and over, until Gerald boxed him around so much he couldn't even stand up straight. Once he feels better, Quentin sends away his friends. He needs to be alone, and takes a ride on a streetcar.

Riding the streetcar, Quentin admires the early summer sunset, and remembers the summers of his youth. He recalls its sights and smells, especially, and remembers feeling trapped by honeysuckle's sad, strong scent. It drove him crazy:

"[T]he whole thing came to symbolise night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of gray halfflight where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves" June Second, p. 170.

As the streetcar crosses the Charles River, he notes that he is seeing it and smelling it for the last time.

Quentin heads back to his dorm, where he takes off his bloody clothes and changes into a clean suit and tie. He pours a lot of gasoline onto a vest, and combs his hair. By now, his thoughts have turned into frantic delusions. He imagines himself with his family, in what seems like hell: "the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even them without a ray of light." June Second, p. 173.

He thinks of how the family sold Benjy's pasture so that he could benefit from a Harvard education. Harvard had "a fine sound" June Second, p. 174., according to his parents, and was worth more than Benjy's pasture. Bitterly, suicidal Quentin now thinks, "A fine dead sound we will swap Benjy's pasture for a fine dead sound." June Second, p. 174

Listening to the clock ticking away, he thought back to a pivotal conversation he had with his father before leaving for college. Quentin tries to confess to his father that he did commit incest with Caddy. His father sees through him, though, and Quentin quickly breaks down, telling him he wishes he had, because "it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been." June Second, p. 177.

His father tries to reassure him that whatever pain he feels over what has happened to Caddy is only temporary.

This only makes Quentin feel worse. His perceptive father realizes that Quentin hates the uncertainty of life. According to his father's bleak wisdom, Quentin's problem is that he cannot bear to think there will be many other sorrows in a lifetime, and that nobody has any control over how their own affairs will develop.

Quentin's flashback ends, and he puts on his gas drenched vest. Well dressed and clean, he leaves his dorm for the last time, for he is leaving to kill himself.

Jason narrates the section entitled, "April Sixth, 1928," a day before Benjy tells his story. He begins with a commentary on his niece, Quentin: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" April Sixth, p. 180. The scene opens as Jason, now the man of the house, discusses with his mother, Mrs. Compson, about what they should do with young Quentin. Melodramatic Mrs. Compson, a hypochondriac, constantly laments her and her family's state. The only thing for which she is thankful is that her favorite son, Jason, is still around to help her relieve all of her burdens, one of which is her grandchild. A teenage troublemaker, Quentin skips school all the time, dividing her hours among several young men of the town.

After talking with his mother, Jason storms into the kitchen, ready to whip Quentin for her bad behavior. Dilsey tries to get between the two of them, but he shoves away the frail, arthritic old woman. Ready to beat Quentin with his belt, Jason stops as he sees Mrs. Compson hobble down the stairs. Quentin is safe momentarily from Jason's belt. He lets her get ready for school, and in the meantime yells at Luster for not fixing his tire. We also find that Benjy's retardation terribly humiliates his brother. If it were up to Jason, he would send his big brother to a home in Jackson.

Quentin comes downstairs, ready to go to school. Jason has an incredibly adversarial relationship with his niece, evidenced by the previous scene, and by the fact that they immediately begin to squabble the minute Quentin gets in the car. This time, they fight over who pays for her expenses. While she says her mother's monthly checks pay for everything she needs, Jason counters, "Ask her [your grandmother] what became of those checks. You saw her burn one of them, as I remember." April Sixth, p. 187. They continue to exchange harsh words on the way to school. As they arrive on campus, Jason chides her for being such a loose woman. She tells him defiantly, "I'm bad and I'm going to hell, and I don't care. I'd rather be in hell than anywhere where you are." April Sixth, p. 189.

After dropping Quentin off at school, Jason continues in his car to his job, where he works as a store manager. In his mail, he finds a check and a letter from Quentin's mother, asking him why she hasn't heard at all from him about the welfare of her daughter. Jason puts the letter away to discuss his stocks. His gambles aren't garnering much profit. In his discussions with fellow townspeople, Jason expresses his disgust with east coast Jews, and is constantly exasperated with any black person he encounters. He believes that eastern establishment Jews are taking the money he has invested in the stock market, and he is never satisfied with any work a black laborer has done. He goes back to find a letter from a girlfriend in Memphis, telling him how much she misses him. He destroys it, thinking to himself:

"I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them. Always keep them guessing. If you cant think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw." April Sixth, p. 193.

He is about to open a letter addressed to Quentin from her mother. Before he can do that, however, he is called to work. While working, he has a flashback to his father's funeral. He died only one year after Quentin did. This takes Jason's memory back one year earlier, when young Quentin was brought to the Compson house as a baby. As usual, Mrs. Compson cries and complains about the new burden in her life. This is the first time we find out for certain that Caddy is Quentin's mother. The reason Quentin will be raised by the Compsons is because Herbert, Caddy's husband, has kicked Caddy out of their house, for sleeping with another man. In fact, Caddy doesn't even know who Quentin's father is.

Her loose ways have disgraced her family so much that Mrs. Compson forbids everyone in the household from uttering her daughter's name. Even though Mr. Compson and Dilsey don't want to completely shut out Caddy from the family, Mrs. Compson is adamant that Quentin will know as little as possible about her sinful mother.

Jason's memory moves ahead to his father's funeral again. As they put his father to rest, Jason becomes as tender as we will ever see him: "Well, I got to...watching them throwing dirt into it, slapping it on anyway like they were making mortar or something or building a fence, and I began to feel sort of funny and so I decided to walk around for a while." April Sixth, p. 202.

While he wanders around, he bumps into Caddy, who is donning a black mourning veil for her father, whose death she had to find out about in the obituary section of the newspaper. Jason warns her that the family wouldn't want her there. She pays him one hundred dollars to see her baby girl. He says he would do it only if she promises to leave on the train that night. She promises to do so, but does not know that Jason will trick her. Jason is still bitter about not getting a job with Herbert's bank, and blames Caddy for it. Though he does smuggle the baby out of its cradle, he holds it up as he rides past Caddy in a carriage, allowing his sister to barely catch a glimpse of her own daughter. She doesn't leave town that night, but instead confronts Jason the next day at his store. They exchange curses with each other, and Caddy storms out of the store. When he returns home from work, he hears Benjy's uncontrollable bellows. From this clue, he knows that Caddy has visited home, and then finds out that Dilsey is the one that allowed her into the house. Though he berates her for doing it, she stands up to him. He threatens Caddy afterwards, and told her, "if she tried Dilsey again, Mother was going to fire Dilsey and send Ben to Jackson and take Quentin and go away." April Sixth, p. 208. She leaves, making Jason promise to take care of young Quentin.

His flashback ends, and Quentin enters the store as he opens Caddy's letter for her. In the letter is a money order for her daughter worth fifty dollars. She demands the money, not seeming to care about what her mom has written her. Jason does not let Quentin touch the money order. He lies to her, saying it's only worth ten dollars. Quentin is not at all happy with that small sum of money. Even after she begs him to see the order, he refuses, and hands her a ten-dollar bill from his own pocket, threatening to take the check home to her grandmother, who burns every check Caddy sends. She signs the back of the money order, still not having seen the dollar amount, and sulks her way out of the store.

After Quentin leaves the store, Jason takes his lunch break, making a stop before going home. He goes to a print shop to fabricate a blank check. He forges Caddy's signature, and writes in a dollar amount of two hundred dollars. When he arrives home, he shows his mother the check, which she proceeds to burn with much hand wringing and ceremony, just like every other month. In this situation, we realize that Jason lies to both Quentin and his mother. First, he cashes Quentin's checks from Caddy for his own benefit, giving Quentin only a fraction of the actual amount meant for her. Second, he has let his mother labor under the illusion that the family has not received a single penny from Caddy Compson in seventeen years. Jason also tries to hide from Caddy how he handles the checks she sends every month. In her most recent letter to him, however, she shows that she's beginning to see through his shenanigans, demanding to know where her money goes.

After Mrs. Compson and her son finish burning the fake check, they sit down for lunch minus Quentin, who refuses to come home to eat today. During lunch, Jason tells his mother that his Uncle Maury has asked for more money. She willingly and frequently throws money at her irresponsible brother, who probably won't spend it on anything worth investing. She does it because he is the last of her people, the Bascombs, of whom she is very proud. Just as she begins to get emotional about it, Jason escapes back to work.

There, he gets into an argument with his boss involving his own integrity (or lack thereof). We find that he has stolen his mother's car, paid for with the one thousand dollars he was supposed to have invested in the store. Additionally, the reason he is not a partner in the store is because he had embezzled some of its finances. The only reason Jason's boss keeps him in the store is because he has sympathy for the Compson family. Jason shrugs off his boss' indictment of him, thinking to himself, "I'm glad I haven't got the sort of conscience I've got to nurse like a sick puppy all the time." April Sixth, p. 229.

He goes back to work, and shortly thereafter spots Quentin and a man wearing a red tie run past the store. He is furious to see her skipping school again, and chases after them all through town. While Jason tries to keep up with his niece and her new male friend, who he realizes is from the road show in town, he begins to think back on his youth. Images of his tortured family haunt his memory. He seems especially bitter towards his father, who drank himself to death.

By the time Jason decides to head home to see if Quentin is there, he has developed a pounding headache. He does not find his niece there, so he ventures back into town. Just as he turned onto the main road, Quentin and the boy from the road show screech past him in a stolen car. Jason chases after them again, finally spotting their stolen vehicle parked outside the woods. He parks his car there, too, and tramps through the maze of trees and ticks and lice of the forest. He is a mess, but he doesn't seem to notice. Jason's rage and his pounding headache seem to blind him. He finally spots the two of them running out of a ditch, but they quickly get into their car and speed away, leaving Jason in the dust. He goes back to his car, and finds that the two of them have let the air out of his tires. Humiliated and even more upset, he gets it fixed at a nearby station, and heads back to town. He received a telegraph, urging him to sell his stock, for the market would be experiencing an incredible downturn. Angry with his broker, for he never gives good advice, Jason ignores the warning, deciding to buy. He then heads back to his store to finish the workday.

A few hours later, he heads back home, to find that Dilsey is not making supper, but is breaking up a fight between Mrs. Compson and Quentin, who arrived home shortly before her uncle. After a short while, Dilsey comes downstairs, ready to make dinner. Luster, her grandson, has been talking about going to the road show all day, wishing he had a quarter to buy a ticket. Coincidentally, Jason's boss had given him two free tickets to the same show that Jason had absolutely no intention of seeing. Instead of simply giving his servant the ticket, he demands money for it, knowing that teenage Luster hasn't even a nickel. Jason proceeds to burn the tickets over the stove, watching Luster's face fall in disappointment. Dilsey shakes her head at him, and promises to procure for a quarter for her grandson by tomorrow night.

In the meantime, Dilsey has prepared supper, but neither Mrs. Compson nor Quentin will come down to eat. As usual, the woman of the house is feeling under the weather, and makes a big production of making it downstairs. Quentin manages to come down as well, but sulks all through the meal, saying nothing. Throughout supper, Jason makes indirect comments to his mother about Quentin's loose behavior, until finally Quentin explodes, seething with anger at her uncle. She blames his cruelty to her for her behavior: "Whatever I do, it's your fault...If I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me. I wish I was dead. I wish we were all dead." April Sixth, p. 260. After yelling this at her family, she storms up to her room. Her grandmother blames her behavior on her heritage, saying she has inherited all of her namesake's and her mother's headstrong traits: "Sometimes I think she is the judgment of both of them upon me." April Sixth, p. 261.

The argument ends their family supper together, and they all retreat back to their own rooms for the night. Quentin has already gone up to her room to study. Mrs. Compson trudges up the stairs to her own room, and Jason heads back to his room. Hearing Benjy snoring away, he makes a comment about how he should have been sent to the asylum while under anesthesia for a sterilization operation. Bitterly, Jason thinks to himself before he goes to bed:

"And just let me have twenty-four hours without any damn New York Jew to advise me what it's going to do...I just want an even chance to get my money back. And once I've done that they can bring all Beale street and all bedlam in here and two of them can sleep in my bed and another one can have my place at my table too." April Sixth, p. 264.

Dilsey, the Compsons' black servant, is the center of the April Eighth part of the book. Dilsey is a shrunken, wrinkled, and arthritic elderly woman. Though now weak, we see that she has a strong spirit:

"She had been a big woman once but now her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadded skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts." April Eighth, pp. 256 – 65.

However physically tired Dilsey may be, she still does the bulk of the work around the Compson household. The section begins Easter morning, as Dilsey is awake early, beginning to fix breakfast, starting a fire in the fireplace and attending to the needs of the family. Luster, her grandson, is usually supposed to do some of this work, but he overslept, having gone to see the road show in town the night before. Mrs. Compson calls for her incessantly, not realizing, or not caring, that a trip up and down the stairs for Dilsey is an incredibly painful one. Instead of offering to help her, she nags her about a number of things, including not having breakfast ready soon enough, and allowing Luster to sleep in this morning. Dilsey tries to shut up her boss as best she can, so that Mrs. Compson can get out of her hair, which will allow her to attend to the tasks of the morning.

Dilsey prepares breakfast, and the whole family, minus Quentin, comes down to eat. In the meantime, Jason has discovered that his window was broken during the night. They send Dilsey up the stairs yet again to fetch Quentin for breakfast. Jason especially wants Quentin to come downstairs, because he wants to question her about the window. Mrs. Compson, Jason and Dilsey see that Quentin is not in her room. Almost instinctively, Jason races to his own closet, and finds that the money he stores in a locked box has been stolen, the lock broken. He calls the sheriff's office to report a robbery. Downstairs, Luster tells Dilsey that he sees Quentin climb out of her window every night, including last night.

Dilsey lets the Compsons handle their situation by themselves for the time being, for she and her family are going to their church's Easter service. She insists on taking Benjy with them. No members of the congregation make any comments to them about it either, because they all have a great amount of respect for Dilsey and her family.

At church, there is a guest preacher, Reverend Shegog, who has come all the way from St. Louis to give his sermon. Though he is supposed to be very famous, he appears tiny and wrinkled, almost comical. As his sermon begins, he doesn't even sound like a black preacher. His inflection, vocabulary and tone are those of a white man's. As he warms up to the crowd, however, his voice warms, and his sermon sounds more like what the congregation had hoped. His voice became beautiful and full of emotion, as described here: "It was as different as day and dark from his former tone, with a sad, timbrous quality like an alto horn, sinking into their hearts and speaking there again when it had ceased in fading and cumulate echoes." April Eighth, p. 294. Reverend Shegog's voice grew louder and louder, as he paced back and forth, sweating, bringing the congregation to their feet. They sang and cried and exclaimed "Yes, Jesus!" as he repeated over and over, "I got de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb!" April Eighth, p. 295. The sermon also moved the usually distracted Benjy, who sat in devoted attention to the preacher. Seeing this, and being caught up in the emotion of the sermon, Dilsey began to cry, with tears falling down her face even after they had all left church. She murmured to herself, "I've seed de first en de last...I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin." April Eighth, p. 297.

After Dilsey and her family return from church, Dilsey immediately goes back to work. This time, Mrs. Compson is calling for her, asking her if she has found a note from her granddaughter, Quentin. She is convinced that Quentin has committed suicide, just like her uncle, or has run off to have illegitimate children with any common man, like her mother.

Dilsey tells her such talk is ridiculous, but Mrs. Compson enjoys complaining, so continues with her laments. Jason hasn't come home yet, but his mother insists that Dilsey make him some lunch, anyway. As she prepares his food, she sings hymns to herself, constantly saying, "Ise seed de first en de last." April Eighth, p. 301.

As Luster and Benjy sit down for food, the scene shifts to Jason. We find him at the sheriff's house, ready to recount the story of how he was robbed. After hearing Jason's story, the officers are not ready to point the finger at Quentin and her road show friend, which frustrates Jason, whose rage towards his niece is almost palpable. As if they hadn't heard the first time, Jason retells his story. He was "harshly recapitulant, seeming to get an actual pleasure out of his outrage and impotence. The sheriff did not appear to be listening at all." April Eighth, p. 303.

Instead of caring about the robbery, the officers perceive that Jason has driven out his niece. They also suspect that the three thousand dollars he had hoarded in his metal box were not in fact his to keep, but that the money were the checks Caddy had sent to her daughter. Because they have no hard evidence that Quentin had stolen her uncle's money, the officers refuse to investigate the case at all.

Frustrated and enraged, Jason storms out of the station, determined to catch the pair himself. He hires a random young black man standing around the town square to drive him towards Mottson, the next stop for the road show. We find how Jason feels in his heart about the robbery: "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor of the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for ten years; together they merely symbolised the job in the bank of which he had been deprived before he ever got it." April Eighth, p. 306. Here, we see that he is still bitter about the fact that he never had the chance to get a job in the bank with Caddy's husband, Herbert, because Herbert ended up throwing Caddy out of the house. Growing angrier and angrier by the second, we find that what really irks him is that a female, Quentin, had outwitted him. What makes it worse to Jason is that his niece isn't even a respectable young girl, but "a bitch." April Eighth, p. 307.

While in the car, he spots circus tents, and a car that looks like the Ford the two had stolen two days earlier. He didn't think that perhaps others may own the same model of car, and he didn't plan that perhaps the two of them might see him before he saw them. He just assumed that he would see them first, grab them, and demand their money, leaving them to rot wherever they please. Jason assaulted the first people he saw, and demanded to know where Quentin and the road show boy were. Though the two men had no idea where the two had run, Jason provokes a physical fight with the two men. He hits his head on a rail, and the men send him away. Jason is stranded, miles away from Jefferson. He ends up having to pay four dollars to a stranger in Mottson to drive him home.

Meanwhile, back at the Compson house, Dilsey has sent out Luster to play with Benjy, buying herself time to eat her lunch in peace. Outside, Luster teases Benjy, so Benjy starts to bellow and moan. Watching people play golf on his old pasture, Benjy moans some more, and cries become louder and louder each time. Frustrated because he cannot get him

to stop, Luster provokes him: "You want somethin to beller about? ...Caddy! Beller now. Caddy! Caddy! Caddy!" April Eighth, p. 316. Dilsey comes to see what's the matter, and is able to get Benjy to stop his wailing.

To comfort him further, Dilsey tells Luster to take him for a ride in the carriage around the neighborhood. Being a teenager, Luster wanted to show off in front of his peers. He tries to get Queenie, the old horse, to go faster. Just he braces himself to go faster, Benjy starts to wail louder than ever before: "There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound, and Luster's eyes backrolling for a white instant." April Eighth, p. 320. Just as Luster turns back to the road, Jason arrives on the scene, knocking Luster off the driver's seat. He appears to be angrier than ever, striking not only Luster, but also, Benjy, for wailing. Despite Jason's blow at him, Benjy's voice has grown to a roar. Once Luster takes the reins to direct the carriage back home, Benjy becomes quiet. The three men head home in silence. The last image of the book comes from Benjy's eyes:

"The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and façade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place." April Eighth, p. 321.

8.3.2 Plot Overview

Attempting to apply traditional plot summary to *The Sound and the Fury* is difficult. At a basic level, the novel is about the three Compson brothers' obsessions with their sister Caddy, but this brief synopsis represents merely the surface of what the novel contains. A story told in four chapters, by four different voices, and out of chronological order, *The Sound and the Fury* requires intense concentration and patience to interpret and understand.

The first three chapters of the novel consist of the convoluted thoughts, voices, and memories of the three Compson brothers, captured on three different days. The brothers are Benjy, a severely retarded thirty-three-year-old man, speaking in April, 1928; Quentin, a young Harvard student, speaking in June, 1910; and Jason, a bitter farm-supply store worker, speaking again in April, 1928. Faulkner tells the fourth chapter in his own narrative voice, but focuses on Dilsey, the Compson family's devoted "Negro" cook who has played a great part in raising the children. Faulkner harnesses the brothers' memories of their sister Caddy, using a single symbolic moment to forecast the decline of the once prominent Compson family and to examine the deterioration of the Southern aristocratic class since the Civil War.

The Compsons are one of several prominent names in the town of Jefferson, Mississippi. Their ancestors helped settle the area and subsequently defended it during the Civil War. Since the war, the Compsons have gradually seen their wealth, land, and status crumble away. Mr. Compson is an alcoholic. Mrs. Compson is a self-absorbed hypochondriac who depends almost entirely upon Dilsey to raise her four children. Quentin, the oldest child, is a sensitive bundle of neuroses. Caddy is stubborn, but loving and compassionate. Jason has

been difficult and mean-spirited since birth and is largely spurned by the other children. Benjy is severely mentally disabled, an "idiot" with no understanding of the concepts of time or morality. In the absence of the self-absorbed Mrs. Compson, Caddy serves as a mother figure and symbol of affection for Benjy and Quentin.

As the children grow older, however, Caddy begins to behave promiscuously, which torments Quentin and sends Benjy into fits of moaning and crying. Quentin is preparing to go to Harvard, and Mr. Compson sells a large portion of the family land to provide funds for the tuition. Caddy loses her virginity and becomes pregnant. She is unable or unwilling to name the father of the child, though it is likely Dalton Ames, a boy from town.

Caddy's pregnancy leaves Quentin emotionally shattered. He attempts to claim false responsibility for the pregnancy, lying to his father that he and Caddy have committed incest. Mr. Compson is indifferent to Caddy's promiscuity, dismissing Quentin's story and telling his son to leave early for the Northeast.

Attempting to cover up her indiscretions, Caddy quickly marries Herbert Head, a banker she met in Indiana. Herbert promises Jason Compson a job in his bank. Herbert immediately divorces Caddy and rescinds Jason's job offer when he realizes his wife is pregnant with another man's child. Meanwhile, Quentin, still mired in despair over Caddy's sin, commits suicide by drowning himself in the Charles River just before the end of his first year at Harvard.

The Compsons disown Caddy from the family, but take in her newborn daughter, Miss Quentin. The task of raising Miss Quentin falls squarely on Dilsey's shoulders. Mr. Compson dies of alcoholism roughly a year after Quentin's suicide. As the oldest surviving son, Jason becomes the head of the Compson household. Bitterly employed at a menial job in the local farm-supply store, Jason devises an ingenious scheme to steal the money Caddy sends to support Miss Quentin's upbringing.

Miss Quentin grows up to be an unhappy, rebellious, and promiscuous girl, constantly in conflict with her overbearing and vicious uncle Jason. On Easter Sunday, 1928, Miss Quentin steals several thousand dollars from Jason and runs away with a man from a traveling show. While Jason chases after Miss Quentin to no avail, Dilsey takes Benjy and the rest of her family to Easter services at the local church.

A Note on the Title

The title of *The Sound and the Fury* refers to a line from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Macbeth, a Scottish general and nobleman, learns of his wife's suicide and feels that his life is crumbling into chaos. In addition to Faulkner's title, we can find several of the novel's important motifs in Macbeth's short soliloquy in Act V, scene v:

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle.*

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*
(V.v.18–27)

The Sound and the Fury literally begins as a "tale / Told by an idiot," as the first chapter is narrated by the mentally disabled Benjy. The novel's central concerns include time, much like Macbeth's "[t]omorrow, and tomorrow"; death, recalling Macbeth's "dusty death"; and nothingness and disintegration, a clear reference to Macbeth's lament that life "[s]ignif[ies] nothing." Additionally, Quentin is haunted by the sense that the Compson family has disintegrated to a mere shadow of its former greatness.

In his soliloquy, Macbeth implies that life is but a shadow of the past and that a modern man, like himself, is inadequately equipped and unable to achieve anything near the greatness of the past. Faulkner reinterprets this idea, implying that if man does not choose to take his own life, as Quentin does, the only alternatives are to become either a cynic and materialist like Jason, or an idiot like Benjy, unable to see life as anything more than a meaningless series of images, sounds, and memories.²⁰⁶

8.3.3 Analysis of Major Characters

Mr. Jason Compson III

Mr. Compson is a well-spoken but very cynical and detached man. He subscribes to a philosophy of determinism and fatalism—he believes life is essentially meaningless and that he can do little to change the events that befall his family. Despite his cynicism, however, Mr. Compson maintains notions of gentlemanliness and family honor, which Quentin inherits. Mr. Compson risks the family's financial well-being in exchange for the potential prestige of Quentin's Harvard education, and he tells stories that foster Quentin's nearly fanatical obsession with the family name.

Though he inculcates his son with the concept of family honor, Mr. Compson is unconcerned with it in practice. He acts indifferent to Quentin about Caddy's pregnancy, telling him to accept it as a natural womanly shortcoming. Mr. Compson's indifference greatly upsets Quentin, who is ashamed by his father's disregard for traditional Southern ideals of honor and virtue. Mr. Compson dismisses Quentin's concerns about Caddy and tells his son not to take himself so seriously, which initiates Quentin's rapid fall toward depression and suicide. Mr. Compson dies of alcoholism shortly thereafter.

Mrs. Caroline Compson

Mrs. Compson's negligence and disregard contribute directly to the family's downfall. Constantly lost in a self-absorbed haze of hypochondria and self-pity, Mrs. Compson is absent as a mother figure to her children and has no sense of her children's needs. She even treats the mentally disabled Benjy cruelly and selfishly. Mrs. Compson foolishly lavishes

²⁰⁶ <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/soundfury/canalysis.html>

all of her favor and attention upon Jason, the one child who is incapable of reciprocating her love. Mrs. Compson's self-absorption includes a neurotic insecurity over her Bascomb family name, the honor of which is undermined by her brother Maury's adulterous behavior. Caroline ultimately makes the decision to change her youngest son's name from Maury to Benjamin because of this insecurity about her family's reputation.

Candace Compson

Caddy is perhaps the most important figure in the novel, as she represents the object of obsession for all three of her brothers. As a child, Caddy is somewhat headstrong, but very loving and affectionate. She steps in as a mother figure for Quentin and Benjy in place of the self-absorbed Mrs. Compson. Caddy's muddying of her underwear in the stream as a young girl foreshadows her later promiscuity. It also presages and symbolizes the shame that her conduct brings on the Compson family.

Caddy does feel some degree of guilt about her promiscuity because she knows it upsets Benjy so much. On the other hand, she does not seem to understand Quentin's despair over her conduct. She rejects the Southern code that has defined her family's history and that preoccupies Quentin's mind. Unlike Quentin, who is unable to escape the tragic world of the Compson household, Caddy manages to get away. Though Caddy is disowned, we sense that this rejection enables her to escape an environment in which she does not really belong.

Benjy Compson

A moaning, speechless idiot, Benjy is utterly dependent upon Caddy, his only real source of affection. Benjy cannot understand any abstract concepts such as time, cause and effect, or right and wrong—he merely absorbs visual and auditory cues from the world around him. Despite his utter inability to understand or interpret the world, however, Benjy does have an acute sensitivity to order and chaos, and he can immediately sense the presence of anything bad, wrong, or out of place. He is able to sense Quentin's suicide thousands of miles away at Harvard, and senses Caddy's promiscuity and loss of virginity. In light of this ability, Benjy is one of the only characters who truly takes notice of the Compson family's progressing decline. However, his disability renders Benjy unable to formulate any response other than moaning and crying. Benjy's impotence—and the impotence of all the remaining Compson men—is symbolized and embodied by his castration during his teenage years.

Quentin Compson

The oldest of the Compson children, Quentin feels an inordinate burden of responsibility to live up to the family's past greatness and prestige. He is a very intelligent and sensitive young man, but is paralyzed by his obsession with Caddy and his preoccupation with a very traditional Southern code of conduct and morality. This Southern code defines order and chaos within Quentin's world, and causes him to idealize nebulous, abstract concepts such as honor, virtue, and feminine purity. His strict belief in this code causes Quentin profound despair when he learns of Caddy's promiscuity. Turning to Mr. Compson for guidance, Quentin feels even worse when he learns that his father does not care about the Southern code or the shame Caddy's conduct has brought on the family. When Quentin finds that his

sister and father have disregarded the code that gives order and meaning to his life, he is driven to despondency and eventually suicide.

Quentin's Southern code also prevents him from being a man of action. The code preoccupies Quentin with blind devotion to abstract concepts that he is never able to act upon assertively or effectively. Quentin is full of vague ideas, such as the suicide pact with Caddy or the desire for revenge against Dalton Ames, but his ideas are always unspecific and inevitably end up either rejected by others or carried out ineffectively. Quentin's focus on ideas over deeds makes him a highly unreliable narrator, as it is often difficult to tell which of the actions he describes have actually occurred and which are mere fantasy.

Jason Compson IV

Jason's legacy, even from his earliest childhood, is one of malice and hatred. Jason remains distant from the other children. Like his brothers, Jason is fixated on Caddy, but his fixation is based on bitterness and a desire to get Caddy in trouble. Ironically, the loveless Jason is the only one of the Compson children who receives Mrs. Compson's affection. Jason has no capacity to accept, enjoy, or reciprocate this love, and eventually he manipulates it to steal money from Miss Quentin behind Mrs. Compson's back. Jason rejects not only familial love, but romantic love as well. He hates all women fervently and thus cannot date or marry and have children. Jason's only romantic satisfaction as an adult comes from a prostitute in Memphis.

Unlike Quentin, who is obsessed with the past, Jason thinks solely about the present and the immediate future. He constantly tries to twist circumstances in his favor, almost always at the expense of others. Jason is very clever and crafty, but never uses these talents in the spirit of kindness or generosity. Though he clearly desires personal gain, Jason has no higher goals or aspirations. He steals and hoards money in a strongbox, but not for any particular purpose other than selfishness. On the whole, Jason is extremely motivated but completely without ambition.

Jason's lack of achievement stems primarily from his relentless self-pity. Jason never forgives Caddy for the loss of the job at Herbert's bank, and he is unable to move past this setback to achieve anything worthwhile in his later life. Ironically, Jason becomes the head of the Compson household after his father's death—an indication of the low to which the once-great family has sunk.

Miss Quentin

Miss Quentin is the lone member of the newest generation of the Compson family. Many parallels arise between Miss Quentin and her mother, Caddy, but the two differ in important ways. Miss Quentin repeats Caddy's early sexual awakening and promiscuity, but, unlike Caddy, she does not feel guilty about her actions. Likewise, Miss Quentin grows up in a meaner, more confined world than Caddy does, and is constantly subject to Jason's domineering and cruelty. Not surprisingly, we see that Miss Quentin is not nearly as loving or compassionate as her mother. She is also more worldly and headstrong than Caddy. Yet Miss Quentin's eventual success in recovering her stolen money and escaping the family

implies that her worldliness and lack of compunction—very modern values—indeed work to her benefit.

Dilsey

Dilsey is the only source of stability in the Compson household. She is the only character detached enough from the Compsons' downfall to witness both the beginning and the end of this final chapter of the family history. Interestingly, Dilsey lives her life based on the same set of fundamental values—family, faith, personal honor, and so on—upon which the Compsons' original greatness was built. However, Dilsey does not allow self-absorption to corrupt her values or spirit. She is very patient and selfless—she cooks, cleans, and takes care of the Compson children in Mrs. Compson's absence, while raising her own children and grandchildren at the same time. Dilsey seems to be the only person in the household truly concerned for the Compson children's welfare and character, and she treats all of the children with love and fairness, even Benjy. The last chapter's focus on Dilsey implies a hope for renewal after the tragedies that have occurred. We sense that Dilsey is the new torchbearer of the Compson legacy, and represents the only hope for resurrecting the values of the old South in a pure and uncorrupted form²⁰⁷.

The researcher depicts from that study:

In Faulkner's concepts of his Southland, he struggles for freedom bondage he clearly believes that men should have moral awareness of their responsibilities to their fellow men.

He believes in the family heritage.

He believes in the land, claiming that the south is cursed by the ownership of the land, quotes from the Bible to uphold "Natural Law" the land is God, intended for the free and providence use of all his creatures not for private property.

So, his thought is centered around the South: its past as remembered, its contemporary reality.

After the civil war, the North prided itself on its victory in the war, its material successes and industrial achievements, the south remained captive of its past and rejected such ideas of progress.

The south is small country which had to fight a war which was impossible to win, but fought courageously and nobly and created glories despite defeat.

This south is the main subject matter in Faulkner's fiction. South in slavery, racial prejudice, and attitude towards the Negroes. Faulkner's stand on these issues is Controversial.

²⁰⁷ <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/soundfury/summary.html>

8.4 A Biographical & Critical Note on Some Prominent American Writers

William Faulkner (1897 – 1962)

Faulkner wrote poems and novels. He is famous as a novelist. His major novels are *Sartoris* (1929), *Mosquitoes* (1921), *Soldier's Pay* (1926), *The Sound and Fury* (1929), *Sanctuary*; *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August*; *Absalom, Absalom*; *Pylon*; *The Unvanquished* and *The Wild Palms* (all these last three were published between 1935 and 1939). Faulkner also wrote some short stories.

Faulkner is a difficult and obscure novelist. Readers have to read him attentively. Faulkner has experimented boldly with the technique of narrating the story. He has displayed considerable originality in this. He has also written in the stream-of-consciousness technique, and *Sound and the Fury* is a novel in the stream-of consciousness. His style is flavored with rich rhetoric; he has an astonishing lucidity. But more often his style is ornate, A critic: says, "Faulkner's prose has an archaic sound, like a hunter's horn." He blends realism and symbolism. He Uses bold idioms and strange techniques. He combines the novel of direct action with the novel of analysis. His themes are serious.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896 – 1940)

A poet and a novelist; his major novels are *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night*. When Fitzgerald died, a newspaper commented: "The Lost generation loses its prophet." He was the epitome of that restlessness and sense of tragedy which many American writers felt after the World War. There is a note of moralizing in his novels. His novels reveal a deep perception. He has recaptured in his novels the poignant feeling of youth searching wildly for a perfection that does not exist.

RESULTS

&

RECOMMENDATIONS

Results & Recommendations

Introduction:

The general objective of this thesis is to give the reader a survey of the general development in the twentieth century in some of the major genres form: the novel. Equally important is the target of training the reader to read, enjoy, comprehend, analyze, and evaluate major texts is the novel. This training is achieved by presenting critical discussion of the novel centered on its salient elements or aspects.

The thesis is based on the assumption, questioned by some politically biased people against the United States, that there is a valuable canon of American literature which is both enjoyable and worth the effort of exploration and study.

American literature of the twentieth century is particularly rich: witness the list of internationally – famous author and masterpieces. American literature started as an imitation of European, especially British literature but developed into a world literature which has a tremendous influence on the literature of many other nations.

The list of American Noble-prize winning authors is already long and growing.

A word must be said about the scope of this thesis, since its middle years, 20th century has traditionally divided into two parts: the years before WWI and the period between the First World War and the Second World War. The second period has been considered a very rich, if not the richest, in the literary history of the United States. Moreover its literature has stood the test of time and shifting tastes, which makes it a legitimate subject of study.

The period since the end of WWII has also produced a bulk of literature as well as a number of critical schools. But, being on the conservative side the literary matter, I believe that what the latter period has given us should wait before it finds its place in academic curricula.

The selections covered in this thesis hardly do justice to the first half of the century. Representing but halves would have to go way beyond a course limited to this study.

This study is based on the "major writers" approach in its presentation. With this consideration, this offers selected pieces of literary works from major and "major minor" writers.

In making selections, the level of difficulty as well as significance was kept in the mind so that non-native speakers will be able to enjoy their encounter with American literature and to take seriously.

You probably realize that the short story is one of the most recent literary types, if not the most recent. It is considered, with the novel and the novella, a sub-genre of fiction.

The novel was given this name because it was novel, that is, new. But the short story is newer. It had its actual beginnings in the nineteenth century, although many writers and critics push the beginning as far back as Aesop, the Greek writer of the sixth century B.C. about novels, I have chosen four of the best and most representative novels written in the twentieth century, the period which witnessed a very rich production of novels in America, the country which is claimed by many critics to be the home of the novel.

Now many American novels are translated into all kinds of languages all over the world. Moreover, a good number have been made into films seen in every corner of the globe. Now television is doubling the number of eager viewers avidly waiting for each episode. Actually, it is the novel, more than any genre, that helped to give American literature, and culture, the international reputation and status it enjoys today.

In this thesis the researcher classified the American history into specific periods, focusing on the literary renaissance in each period.

1. The colonial period (1607 – 1765) which is the great reservoir of material and inspiration for that of the 19th century.

Pioneers who fled into the new land came from England, France, Poland and Holland avoiding the tyranny of the king and the church oppression. Inspiring a new start in that land, looking for a new life, depending on themselves (Individuality) on establishing a new country, called later the United States of America.

2. The American literature during the 18th century witnessed: (1765 - 1829)

The Independence Declaration (1766).

The Constitution (1787).

The Revolution period (1775 - 1781).

The American Constitution embodied the human rights and democracy. The great American scholars were scientists, philosophers, thinkers, soldiers, men of politicians, economists and artists.

Such as: Hamilton, Washington, John Adams, Jefferson and Madison.

3. The 19th century: The Rise of Realism (1860 – 1914).
4. Modernism and Experimentation (1914 – 1945). Witnessed the 1920's, "roaring twenties" or the Jazz Age was a period of the drastic social glamour, and flaming youth.

Another important movement was Harlem Renaissance the Negro Movement.

1920 witnessed the stock market crash.

1930 Depression set in and so brought poverty, social unrest and despair.

1938 – 45 WWII during which America used an atomic bomb.

The best example for this period was Hemingway who wrote his novels against the evils of the war.

Hemingway's main concern focused on tackling problems of American youth in particular and youth of the whole world in general. He depicts a world of war, violence and brutality. In the second decade of the 20th century, Naturalism replaced realism, this being a by product of WWI in literature. Faulkner and Hemingway are considered to be the most important representative of American modernist fiction.

Modernism: the main idea of modernism is the belief that prior to WWI the sustaining structure of human life, whether social, political, cultural, had been destroyed or proved to be false hood. With the break down of reality, works of literature try to find a response to the breakdown. Works of literature should be redder of the order unities which are supposed to be reflection, in arts and literature of reality.

These divisions & datas are the most important findings in this thesis, because the novelists were affected with them and lived, suffered with it's consequences.

Results

It is well known that America, which is currently leading the whole world to all directions has got a very short history compared to the lengthy history to other countries elsewhere, well it is part of the new World.

This country consists of multi-nations of different origins. These people possess different cultures and various customs. In other words, those immigrants took with them their own cultures and habits where they decided to settle down for good.

In order to be able to understand this great country, and the mentality of the American individuals and their psychology, one has to figure out the American literature.

Hemingway is the best example who is capable of representing the American era during the world wars (1914 – 45). His novels and other literary works best reflect the American psyche. However, this thesis requires great efforts and scrutinized study, a thing that motivated me to carry out the work.

So far, the researcher tries in this thesis to manifest Hemingway's novel ability in addressing the themes of his novel and how he expresses his own belief about war through his characters.

Throughout the novels "A Farewell to Arms" and "For whom the Bell Tolls" Hemingway was able to make characters play their roles well to embody these themes. Both of these novels are based on the personal experiences which became the basis of these two famous novels.

The settings of "A Fare Well to Arms" occurred during WWI and the setting of "Far whom the Bell Tolls" occurred during Spanish civil war. These settings have a strong impact on the values which are presented by the characters on the two novels. In both novels the destruction and tragedies of the war have an affect on the views of the various characters and the way they behave with one another.

In addition, both of these novels are concern with the feeling of loss-this loss is directly attributable to the effect of the war.

Hemingway is very successful in these two novels in conveying his message about the massive destruction that war causes to humanity and to the human values.

The American Dream:

Socrates said, "in essence, that all learning is defining. Learning involves putting words-precise words-to old ideas, in search of truth."

Any discussion of the "American' Dream", therefore, must begin with its clear definition.

To accurately construct this definition, we need to go no further than the Declaration of Independence, "the inspiration for America's national ideals".

The term was first used by James Truslow Adams in his book "The Epic of America" which was written in 1931. He states: "the American Dream is that Dream of a land which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position".

In the United States' Declaration of Independence, people "held certain truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,' that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable right, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

This was Truslow's definition for the American's Dream. The researcher predicts that this definition has completely changed, having your own business or becoming rich and famous. The American Dream is buying a big house, driving an expensive automobile, and making a lot of money.

When people are concerned more with the attainment of things than with the maintenance of principles, it is a sign of moral decay. And it is through such decay that loss of freedom occurs.

Immigrants & The American Dream

The American Dream has been a driving influence for many immigrants to enter the United States.

During the last decade a very big numbers of immigrants had crossed the border of the United States of America to pursue the most valuable thing in life, the dream, which every American person thinks about-the American dream.

Many of those immigrants scarified their jobs, their relationships and connections, their educational levels, and their languages at their homelands to start their new life in America and succeed in. reaching their dream.

So what is this dream all about? One would probably describe it as being rich and famous, some would imply to have a lot of power; however, the personal definition of an American dream is the ability to have a personal freedom, being able to get the highest level of education, being successful in finding an appropriate job, to have a healthy and happy family, eventually to have an affordable place of living and reliable personal transportation.

All these factors make up the American dream and exist as a goal for every person who is trying to reach it.

The constitution of the United States suggests that every person who lives on American soil is free. First of all it means the freedom of choice.

Every person is able to make his own decision in order to reach some goals which are valuable in or out the country.

Is It The Same For All People ?

"American Dream" can be interpreted in many ways. It is also different according to each individual.

The "American Dream" has been changed from to time to time and will continue changing as the people living it change.

This dream is created in ones' own mind and can be changed only by the person who has created their own "American Dream".

Most of today's Americans would say that home ownership is the American Dream. Others would say that it is being your own boss, having your own business or becoming rich and famous. Others thinks that the American Dream is buying a big house, driving an expensive automobile, and making a lot of money every one has his own dream which he wants to make it true, it is not the same for all people.

American Dream or American Nightmare?

Today, the American Dream is dead. For 25 years, the majority of people in the U.S. have seen their living standards grow worse, not better. Wages for most of the population have stagnated or fallen. Getting through college has become a huge financial burden. People who were confident that their livelihoods are safe have found out they weren't and those who haven't lost a job invariably find themselves working longer and harder than ever.

The increasing cost of health care, transportation, and retirement are holding the American's economy back; a lot of Americans can't work any harder, borrow much more, or save any less.

For most of Americans, the American Dream no longer truly exist; it is now a nightmare not a dream.

The American Dream: Dead or Alive ?

The "American Dream" is one of the most commonly misunderstood ideals in American culture. The term is used loosely to mean just about anything from the acquisition of wealth, to home ownership, to moral license, all without appreciation for the original significance of the Dream.

The American Dream is dead; people may find it true in the entire world because the North American Dream is indeed a universal necessity. Yet what's happening with the North American Dream?

At it seems it is dying because people have changed there goals and dreams. They aren't satisfied with a suitable house, a good job, and an understanding spouse.

They have lost the track of what ENOUGH means, they keep asking for more, they want more money, they want to be famous, and they became materialism.

The Great Gatsby & The Fall of The American Dream

The book "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott .Fitzgerald was an 'icon of its time.' The book discusses topics that were important, controversial and interesting back in 1920's America. The novel is 'an exploration of the American Dream as it exists in a corrupt period of history.' The main themes in the book are the decay of morals and values and the frustration of a 'modern' society. The Great Gatsby describes the decay of the American Dream and the want for money and materialism. This novel also describes the gab between the rich and the poor (Gatsby and the Wilsons, West Egg and the Valley of the Ashes) by comparing the differences between the Western United States (traditional western culture) and the Eastern United States (money obsessed values). On a smaller scale this could be seen as the difference between the West Egg (the 'new' money) and the East Egg (the 'old' money). The 1920's were a time of corruption and the degradation of moral values for the United States and many other countries. World War One had just ended and people were reveling in the

materialism that came with the end of it, new mass produced commodities such as motor cars and radios were filling people's driveways and houses, money was more accessible (before the Great Depression). Cars were becoming a social symbol in the 1920s as we can see with Gatsby's five cars, one of which he gives to Nick and one of which kills Myrtle Wilson later on in the novel. Herbert Hoover (an American President) said in 1925 "We will root out poverty and put two cars in every garage." The parties that Gatsby held every week in the summer were a symbol of the carelessness of the time.

Gatsby would hide in the house while the 'guests', most of whom were not even invited, would party, eat and drink until the early hours of the morning without even meeting the guest or even knowing who he was.

People would turn up just to be seen or reported in the local newspapers "In his blue garden people came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne." This shows the carelessness of the guests. Another quote about the parties refers to the way the guests devour the endless supply of food and never give a thought as to who gave it to them. "Every Friday five crates of Oranges and Lemons arrived from a fruiterer In New York – Every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his backdoor in a pyramid of pulp less halves." This is also a symbol; it relates the 'pulp less halves' to the rather 'empty' guests, soulless people obsessed by image and wealth, a corruption of the American Dream. Another sign of the fall of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* is the way Gatsby makes his money. Gatsby gets his fortune through the illegal sale of alcohol ('bootlegging'). The sale of alcohol was prohibited in the United States in the 1920s. Gatsby came "from the Western United States where there was 'old money.'" There he met Dan Cody who taught him how to 'bootleg.' As Gatsby became richer he moved to West Egg in New York. Gatsby's house is a rather artificial place, the house was originally built to impress Daisy with his so-called wealth, and this is a sign of a corrupt way of 'winning' love through money and wealth. Gatsby's house is furnished well with old looking ornaments and (probably) second hand antiques, Gatsby's house also has a library which is full of 'uncut' literature. The conversation between Jordan and an unnamed man at one of Gatsby's parties talks about the books: "Absolutely real – have real pages and everything. I'd thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard." These books and antiques are just Gatsby's way of showing off his wealth to others, however Gatsby doesn't really care for materialism, we can tell this because his bedroom, the only room he really ever uses, is empty compared to the rest of the house. Gatsby's love life is also a sign of declining morals, and also a sign of further corruption of the American Dream.

Daisy does not tell Tom about her affair with him in chapter six. Eventually Daisy tells Tom about her affair with Jay Gatsby. The climax of the story comes when Gatsby tells Tom that Daisy never loved him. The fall of the American Dream and corruption is also evident in the position and treatment of children in the story, Daisy and Tom's daughter, Pammy, is treated as an object to show off rather than a child to love. "The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress." The child does not know her mother very well and is still very shy to go near her.

The American Dream

Most of people all around the world (except most of the Americans), thinks that the United States is the land of opportunities and dreams and being free and making a lot of money, maybe it was long time ago, but now everything changed to the worse, people must work harder and harder for living, homeless people increasing, everything is getting more expensive day after day, etc.

One has to think thousand time before deciding to immigrate.

In my opinion, the American Dream is all fake and not true, America is the land of opportunity or the land of making dreams come true, but it is a land of misfortune.

The characteristics of the American dream are: good-looking, popularity and beauty, then where does the element of hard work exist?

Man is nothing without his own ambition to make his dreams come true...

Most of people talk about the American dream that is:

Big car, big house and a lot of money.

There is no unitary definition for the American Dream. It probably has a different meaning to U.S. citizen.

For some, it is the dream of freedom and quality, for others is a dream to fulfill life or even the dream of fame and wealth.

Then America is not Garden of Eden. It's just like other countries, mans must fight to make living. Man has to depend on himself to live & to achieve his goals.

The four novels mentioned dealt with the main goals in all aspects of life. Culturally, economy, and politically.

It is useful for the Arab reader to read carefully such novels because it's benefit for him to do so.

Recommendations:

According to this study. I recommend the reader to read this thesis scrutinizely in order to be aware of transformations (shiftings) that happened for the U.S.A. from cultural and literary side and the effects of these scientists and thinkers in construction of the U.S.A. and the effect of politics on these thinkers and how do the global political, events inside America interferences on the culture of these scientists and writers and writers on their writings which serve the usual native and illuminate his brain also drew the road for him to get knowledge and understand the occurs which affect on his country and his nation. These great novelists drew the hops beyond the American native to slash open his road and to achieve his great aims. From those natives are philosopher and the grandiose on our age with all of that we can say that literature serves not only the native but also the whole community. In fact, I wish that our philosophers be at the same literal value exactly like the great international (global) novelists such as; Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck, Fitzgerald and others.

I recommend that other studies should be conducted in similar fields such as; The Impact of politics on the American poetry. And the impact of politics on the American Drama.

Therefore, further studies could be conducted to explore the factor that affected the behavior of the writers relative to the other genre of literature.

It's likely that other studies could explain the influence of policies on literature. Also, the influence of the peoples need on the writers.

If the Arab reader is interested in understanding this thesis he must be well acquainted with major short-story writers. And identify major writers and genres of 20th century American literature.

Formulate their own response to or interpretation of a literary work and demonstrate how their own culture and personal values and assumptions are reveal ant to their interpretation of the selection.

Enrich their vocabulary, comprehension and appreciation of American literature in general.

Use basic literary terminology in discussing and in writing about various aspects of each work and the meaning of the selected works in the thesis.

Relate stories, whenever possible, to the socio-historical background of the period.

Explore the idea that most worthwhile fiction reflects, interprets and / or sometimes takes a stand on issues which concern society.

Express in readable written from your own cultural perspective in relation to the stories.

Recognize major American novels and their authors.

Formulate your own views on the novels from your own cultural perspective.

The Arab reader must be acquainted to some what with literature in general and has the motivation to understand the American literature. This will not happened unless the reader has knowledge in the American culture and the American history as well.

The Arab reader will meet difficulties in understanding the events because the language is English. And such language is the second language for him. So, he must be well acquainted in vocabulary, meanings and structure.

The Arab libraries are poor in furnishing the Arab reader with American literature books, this is another difficulty the reader will face.

Political science is well related and welded with Economics. So, the reader must have ideas about the Economics science if so, it is easy for the reader to explore the impact of economics on the decision makers and on politics. And the impact of economics on the authors and writers and how economics will direct them.

In the four novels the researcher demonstrates in this thesis, most of them deal with war and peace. The evil of war, destruction, blood and death and the advantage of the peace.

The reader must be aware of such events such as: The civil war of America, WWI, WWII etc. and their effects on people, such novel done the best to deal with the evil of wars.

الخلاصة:

هذه دراسة بحث حول أثر السياسة على روايات أمريكية كلاسيكية مختارة، حيث تتوافق الدراسة مع الحدود والقيود المفروضة على تغطية هذا النوع الأدبي منذ بداية القرن العشرين إلى بداية القرن الحادي والعشرين في الولايات المتحدة باعتبارها مكاناً لأحداث متتالية تم وصفها من خلال الروايات المختارة لموضوع الدراسة. وبالتالي، يمكن القول أن الدراسة راعت الزمان والمكان على حد سواء باعتبارهما اثنين من أهم العناصر الرئيسية اللازمة لنجاح الدراسة.

علاوة على ذلك، فإن الدراسة تحدد الأهداف البحثية المحدودة بصورة منتظمة بما في ذلك:

1. تعريف القارئ بكبار الكتاب والمفكرين في الأدب الأمريكي في القرن العشرين وأثر السياسة على رواياتهم الأدبية.
2. شرح وتحليل تطور الأدب الأمريكي عبر التاريخ.
3. تعرب عن تقديرها للنصوص الأدبية التي تمثل هذا النوع من الأدب.
4. الربط قدر الإمكان بين التغيرات الاجتماعية وتطور الشكل والتقنيات والأساليب والموضوع والرؤى من الأدب الأمريكي.
5. دراسة نتائج طبيعة هذه التغيرات والتطورات على الأدب الأمريكي ذاته وذلك من خلال المفاضلة والمقارنة من حيث التشابه والاختلاف وكذلك تبيان مدى التباين أو التلاقي بين واقع الدراسات الأدبية الموضوعية وبين الرؤيا الخاصة للقارئ نفسه.

تم استعراض موضوع الدراسة بشكل واضح منذ البداية بنحو يتلاءم مع طلاب وقراء منطقة الشرق الأوسط والذين قد يستفيدون من التعرض للروايات الأمريكية الرئيسية التي تم اختيارها لهذه الدراسة. إلى جانب ذلك، لقد اهتمت هذه الدراسة بالأسلوب الترتيبي؛ فالباحث استخدم في تقديمه لهذه الروايات التسلسل الزمني لها منذ بداية القرن العشرين، والحرب العالمية الأولى وصولاً إلى إلقاء الضوء على أهمية الأعمال الأدبية في الستينات من القرن الماضي. لقد أثرى الباحث البحث بالأمثلة المختلفة والمتنوعة بالأحداث التاريخية التي انعكست بدورها على هذه الأعمال المختارة. هذه دراسة وصفية نوعية تشمل فرضيات وأسئلة ذات أهمية تشكل أساس الدراسة.

إن الاهتمام الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو مناقشة أثر السياسة عبر الفترات الزمنية المتعاقبة على بعض الروايات الأمريكية المختارة إضافة إلى أثر الاقتصاد على حياة المواطن الأمريكي في فترة ما بعد الحرب العالمية.

كما تظهر أهمية هذه الدراسة بما تشمله عن دور السياسة وانعكاسها على حياة المواطن الأمريكي من خلال روايات أمريكية مختارة ومن خلال الفترات الزمنية التي كتبت فيها تلك الروايات. لذا، فإن الطالب الذي سيقراً هذا البحث بإمكانه الاستفادة من تلك الحقائق التاريخية الوصفية المتضمنة في البحث.

إن المعلومات المشمولة في البحث قد تم جمعها بعناية من مراجع أدبية مختلفة مثل: الكتب، المجالات والأفلام، وتحليلات نقدية مختارة من الروايات والمذكرات والسير الذاتية للكتاب. إلى جانب ذلك، فقد تم الرجوع إلى مجموعة من المراجع الاجتماعية والسياسية والاقتصادية ليتم تحليل البيانات ومن ثم تصنيفها وتوليفها للعثور على أجوبة لأسئلة البحث.

وقد قام الباحث بمسح على نطاق واسع في المؤلفات ذات الصلة والاستفادة من مصادر المعرفة المختلفة ليقدم بذلك وصفاً حياً للآثار التاريخية والاجتماعية والسياسية في المجتمع الأمريكي الممثل في الروايات المختارة.

وأخيراً، فالدراسة تشمل فصلاً خاصاً حول نتائج البحث التي تؤكد التأثير المشترك بين الرواية من جهة وبين السياسة والاقتصاد والتغيرات الاجتماعية من جهة أخرى. كما يشمل الفصل ذاته توصيات لإجراء مزيد من الدراسات في نفس المنطقة في المجالات ذات الصلة من البحوث الأدبية.

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