

American Literature

A Short History

Kalyani Vallath



This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath



This PPT is made by Kaiyani vallatn



History of American Literature

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Beginnings: Pre-Colonial Era

- More than 500 tribal cultures existed in North America
- Tribes maintained their own religions
 - Worshipping gods, animals, plants, or sacred persons
- Various systems of government
 - Democracies
 - Councils of elders
 - Theocracies
- Oral Literature



A Red Indian
This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

The Thirteen Colonies

(17th and 18th centuries)

- Delaware
- Pennsylvania
- New Jersey
- Georgia
- Connecticut
- Massachusetts Bay
- Maryland
- South Carolina
- New Hampshire
- Virginia
- New York
- North Carolina
- Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Early Literature of Exploration

- The early literature of exploration made up of
 - Diaries
 - Letters
 - Travel journals
 - Ships' logbooks
 - Reports to the explorers' financial backers
- Columbus's journal printed in 1493 recounts the trip
 - The terror of the men
 - They feared meeting monsters
 - Thought they might fall off the edge of the world
- Captain John Smith's accounts gives details about the settlement at Jamestown

Two Early Works

- *A True Relation*
 - Captain John Smith
 - Semi-historical account
 - About the state of Virginia
- *The History of New England*
 - John Winthrop
 - Journal

The Colonial Period in New England

- According to Puritans good writing gave awareness of the importance of worshipping God
- Puritan style varied enormously
- Consists of
 - Metaphysical poetry
 - Homely journals
 - Religious history
- Themes
 - Life was seen as a test
 - Failure led to eternal damnation
 - Did not draw lines of distinction between the secular and religious spheres

Pilgrim Fathers

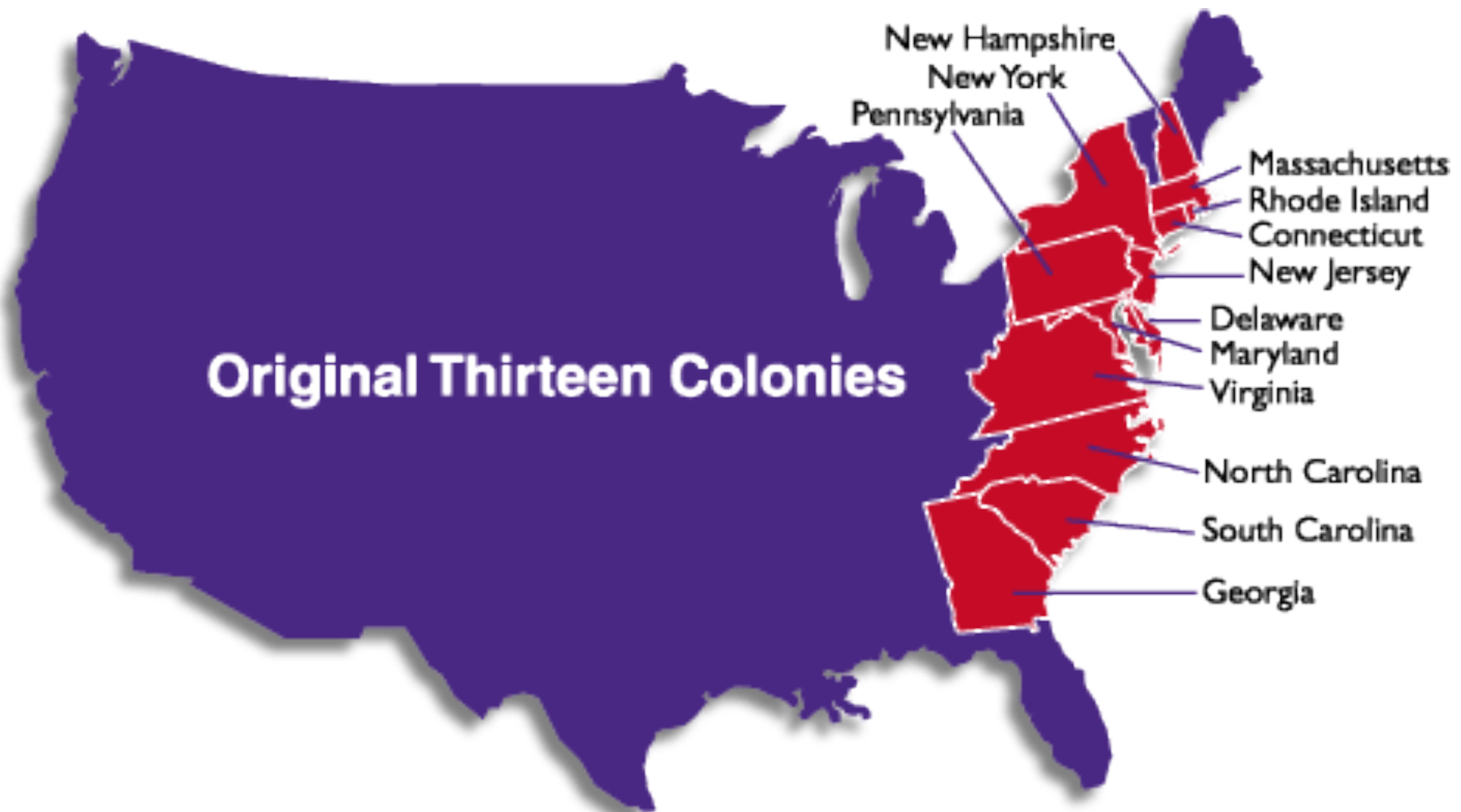
- The first Puritan colonists who settled New England exemplified the seriousness of Reformation
- They interpreted the Bible literally
- They read and acted on the text of the Second Book of Corinthians
- They were called traitors and they were often persecuted
- Finally in 1620, about a 100 pilgrims left Jacobean England in a ship called May Flower and reached the New World

Anne Bradstreet (1612-72)

- The first American to publish a book of poems
- Inspired by English metaphysical poetry
- *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650)
 - Shows the influence of Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, and other English poets as well

Salem Witch Trials

- In 1692-93, a series of trials and prosecutions of people took place in colonial Massachusetts
- They were accused of witchcraft
- Twenty people were executed
- This was the result of religious mass hysteria



This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Protests against Taxes

- In the 1760s and 1770s
- Stamp Act of 1765
- Boston Tea Party 1773
- Led to the American Revolutionary War, 1775–1783
- The Declaration of Independence was made on July 4, 1776

Founding Fathers

- George Washington
- John Adams
- Thomas Jefferson
- James Madison
- Alexander Hamilton
- James Monroe
- Benjamin Franklin



This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Literature of the Revolutionary Period

- Issues related to independence
- Dignified, plain, clear prose
- European influence in early years
- Gradually began to reflect American experiences
- Difference between American and British politics
- Benjamin Franklin
- Thomas Paine
- Thomas Jefferson's "Statute of Virginia"
- Alexander Hamilton & James Madison – Federalist Papers in support of the constitution

American Enlightenment

- The 18th-century American Enlightenment was a movement that emphasised on
 - Rationality
 - Scientific inquiry
 - Representative government
- Enlightenment thinkers and writers were devoted to the ideals of justice, liberty, and equality as the natural rights of man.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-90)

- Belonged to a working class family
- Franklin's life illustrates the impact of the Enlightenment on the life of individuals
- He read John Locke, Lord Shaftesbury, Joseph Addison, and other Enlightenment writers' works
- Extensive reading helped him to apply reason to break with tradition

- One of the Founding Fathers of the United States
- Called “the first American” for supporting the cause of colonial unity
- Published the revolutionary newspaper Pennsylvania Chronicle
- Established University of Pennsylvania; later became Governor of Pennsylvania
- Led the protests against the 1765 Stamp Act

Works

- A series of essays called “The Busy Body” followed the Addisonian style
- *Poor Richard’s Almanack* (1732)
 - His most well-known work
 - Collection of prose pieces
 - Published under pseudonym Richard Saunders
 - Contained the calendar, weather, poems, sayings and astronomical and astrological information in addition to proverbs that later became highly popular
- Invented many gadgets and instruments as well as social innovations

Thomas Paine (1737-1809)

- Born in Britain, on January 29, 1737
- Formal education only until the age of thirteen
- He met Benjamin Franklin while doing low-paid jobs
 - Benjamin Franklin convinced Paine to move to America
 - Paine emigrated to America in late 1774
- Paine became involved in American political life
- Edited *Pennsylvania Magazine*
 - Argued that the American colonists should seek complete independence, rather than merely fighting against unfair British taxation

“Common Sense” (1776)

- Political pamphlet by Thomas Paine
- Anonymously published
- Brought the rising revolutionary sentiment into sharp focus
- Placed blame for the suffering of the colonies directly on the British monarch, George III
- Led to the first successful anticolonial action in American history
- Followed with a series of pamphlets entitled *The American Crisis*
- Eventually, Paine went on to write *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*

Rights of Man (1791)

- Written during a two-year period, during which Paine participated in the French Revolution as a member of the French National Assembly
- Part 1: Dedicated to George Washington; a reply to the conservative attack on the French Revolution made by British politician Edmund Burke in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790)
- Part 2 is a discussion of the principles of government, advocating the constitutional republic that the French Revolution had sought to establish
- Opposes the idea of hereditary government

The Age of Reason (1794, 1795, 1807)

- “Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology”
- Three parts
- Pamphlet on religion
- Inspired by Freethinkers
- Intellectual Context: 18th century British Deism; freedom of conscience; demand for religious tolerance; opposition to the idea of “Original Sin”
- Objected to organized religion
- Questions the sacredness of the Bible
- Book was condemned by many as atheistic

Early National Period (1775-1824)

- Emergence of a national imaginative literature; ended with triumph of Jacksonian democracy
- *The Contrast* by Royall Tyler – 1st American Comedy; in the tradition of the English Restoration comedies
- *The North America Review* – 1st enduring American Magazine
- Washington Irving: short stories, biographies, history – “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”, “Rip Van Winkle”
- The first major American novelist James Fenimore Cooper: works about frontier life
- Slave narratives – *The Life of Frederick Douglass* & *The Life of a Slave Girl*



Washington Irving



James Fenimore Cooper

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Washington Irving (1783-1859)

- Known as the father of American short stories
- Occasionally wrote under the pseudonym 'Geoffrey Crayon'
- He understood the desire of the American people living in a raw new nation to have a sense of history
- Numerous works may be seen as his careful attempts to build the new nation's soul by recreating history and giving it living, breathing, imaginative life
- Through his works he transformed the land into a place of legends

Important Works

- *The Sketch Book of Geoffrye Crayon, Gent.*
 - Contains two important humorous short stories
 - “Rip Van Winkle”
 - It was adapted for the stage
 - Later went into the oral tradition and was gradually accepted as authentic American legend by generations of Americans
 - “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”
 - The first four lines are taken from The Castle of Indolence
- Also wrote biography of George Washington

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)

- One of the first American novelists to depict African, African American and Native American characters in his works
- Lived mostly in Cooperstown, New York
- Expelled from Yale University for bad behavior
- Served in the US Navy which influenced his works
- Started his writing career with
 - *Precaution* (1820)
 - Anonymously published
 - His high-spirited adventure stories are mostly inspired by childhood in the frontier

As a Writer

- Founded the Bread and Cheese Club
- Included painters and writers like William Cullen Bryant
- Lived in France, England, Switzerland and Italy for about seven years before settling back in Cooperstown, US, in 1833
- Was criticized as being reactionary, romantic and pedagogical in tone; Mark Twain attacked his romanticism in the essay “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses” (1895)
- Sometimes Cooper is compared to Walter Scott

The Leatherstocking Tales

- Most famous of his novels are the Leatherstocking Tales
- A series of five novels each featuring the main hero Natty Bumppo, known by European settlers as “Leatherstocking,” “The Pathfinder”, and “the trapper” and by the Native Americans as “Deerslayer,” “La Longue Carabine” and “Hawkeye”

Leatherstocking Tales

- The Deerslayer, or The First War Path (1841)
- The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757 (1826)
- The Pathfinder : The Inland Sea (1840)
- The Pioneers: The Sources of the Susquehanna (1823)
- The Prairie: A Tale (1827)

Social Background of the 19th C

- Industrial Revolution (1820-70)
- Westward expansion
 - Started when President Thomas Jefferson bought Louisiana Territory from the French government in 1803
 - Greatly aided by the building of the first Transcontinental Railroad (1863-69)
- Major waves of immigration to the US
- Political ideal of equality and democracy
- The influence of European Romanticists

Romanticism

- The Romantic movement, which originated in Germany reached America around the year 1820
- Romanticism in America coincided with
 - The period of national expansion
 - The discovery of a distinctive American voice
 - The surging idealism and passion of Romanticism nurtured the spirit of the American Renaissance and literary productions of the time



- Romantic ideas centred around
 - Art as inspiration
 - Art could best express universal truths
 - The spiritual and aesthetic dimension of nature
 - Metaphors of organic growth
- The development of the self became a major theme
 - The idea of self no longer meant selfishness
 - It is a mode of knowledge opening up the universe
 - If one's self were one with all humanity then the individual had a moral duty to reform social inequalities and relieve human suffering

- Exceptional artistic effects and techniques were developed at the time to evoke heightened psychological states
- An age of socio-political changes
 - Gold Rush and American Dream
 - Free-for-all money
 - Idea that hard work, courage and determination will lead to Success
- Two developments
 - American Renaissance
 - Civil War

American Romanticism (1828-65)

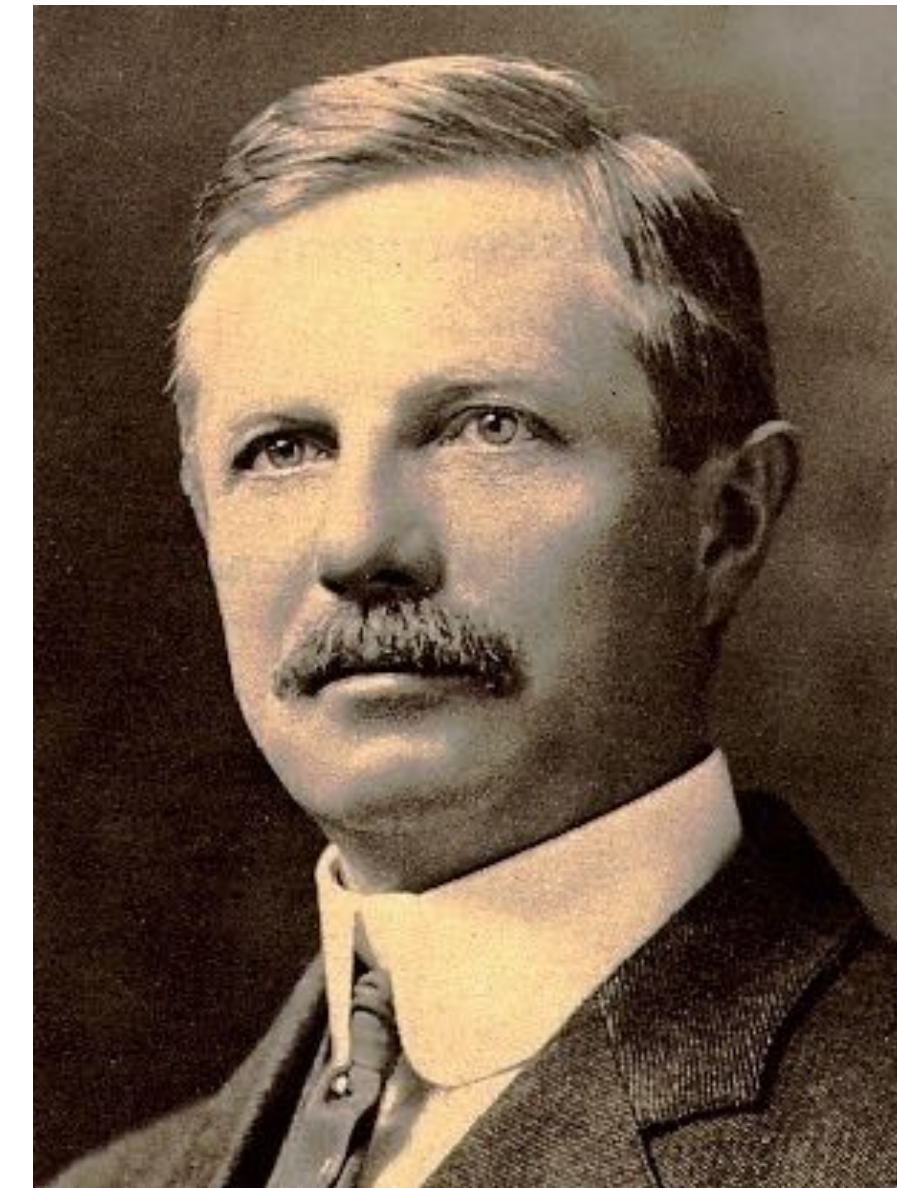
- Could be considered the real beginning of American literature
- Includes the period of American Renaissance (1850s)
- Emphasis upon the imaginative and emotional qualities of literature, a liking for the picturesque, the exotic, the sensuous, the sensational and the supernatural
- The strong tendency to exalt the individual and the common man

Elements of American Romanticism

- Qualities of the American Frontier
 - Ties with nature
 - Optimism
- Spirit of experimentation
 - In science & other institutions
- Mingling of races
 - Due to large-scale immigration
- Industrialization
 - Led to North/South divide & the issue of slavery
 - The Civil War (1861-65, chiefly over slavery)

The American Frontier

- Unsettled land outside settlements
- Free land in the West; the contraction of the region explained American development
- Historian Frederick Jackson Turner (Turner Thesis, 1893)
- Frontier movement started in Jamestown



The American Westerns

- The myths of the West were depicted in fiction and film, in the genre called the Westerns
- The most popular Hollywood genre from the early 20th century to the 1960s
- Also in fiction and television
- Centring on the life of a nomadic cowboy or gunfighter
- Set in immense plains, depicting the harshness of the wilderness
- The Great Train Robbery (1903 silent film) marks the birth of the genre

American Renaissance (1850s)

- American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (1941) by FO Matthiesen
 - The term originated in this book
- Major works of the age:
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson's Representative Men (1850; best-known texts published earlier)
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter (1850) and The House of the Seven Gables (1851)
 - Herman Melville's Moby-Dick (1851)
 - Henry David Thoreau's Walden (1854)
 - Walt Whitman's first edition of Leaves of Grass (1855)

The Transcendental Club

- Organized in 1836
- Includes
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson
 - Henry David Thoreau
 - Margaret Fuller
 - EW Channing
 - Amos Bronson Alcott

Transcendentalism: Influences

- Transcendentalism drew heavily on the idealist and otherworldly aspects of the following
 - English and German Romanticism
 - Hindu and Buddhist thought
 - The tenets of Confucius and Mencius

Concord

- Transcendentalism centred in Concord
 - A New England village 32 kilometers west of Boston
 - Concord was the first rural artist's colony
 - Thoreau was born here
 - Emerson settled here as an adult
 - American Revolutionary War had also started here in 1775
 - By the 1850s, Concord was almost like a pilgrim centre

The Dial (1840-44)

- Official magazine of Transcendentalism
- Quarterly magazine
- The first issue, edited by Margaret Fuller, published in July 1840 in Boston
- Emerson called it a 'Journal in a new spirit'
- The title was suggested by Bronson Alcott, and suggested a sundial
- Emerson succeeded Fuller as editor for the magazine's last two years.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)

- Born in Boston, Massachusetts
- Attended Boston Latin School and Harvard College
- Began a career as a Unitarian minister
- Married Ellen Tucker, the great love of his life, in 1829
 - Her death a year and a half later devastated him and took a heavy toll on his religious faith

Emerson's Ideas

- Personal, conversational style
- Caught the mood of America—optimism
- America as torch-bearers of human history
- Urged Americans to be independent thinkers
- Do not look to Europe for models
- Self-culture movement
- Individuals have access to the eternal truths of nature
- Truth resides throughout creation and is grasped intuitively, not rationally
- Oversoul, I'm part and parcel of God
- "we will walk on our own feet, we will work with our own hands, we will speak our own minds." - should "read God directly" - books only for "scholar's idle times"

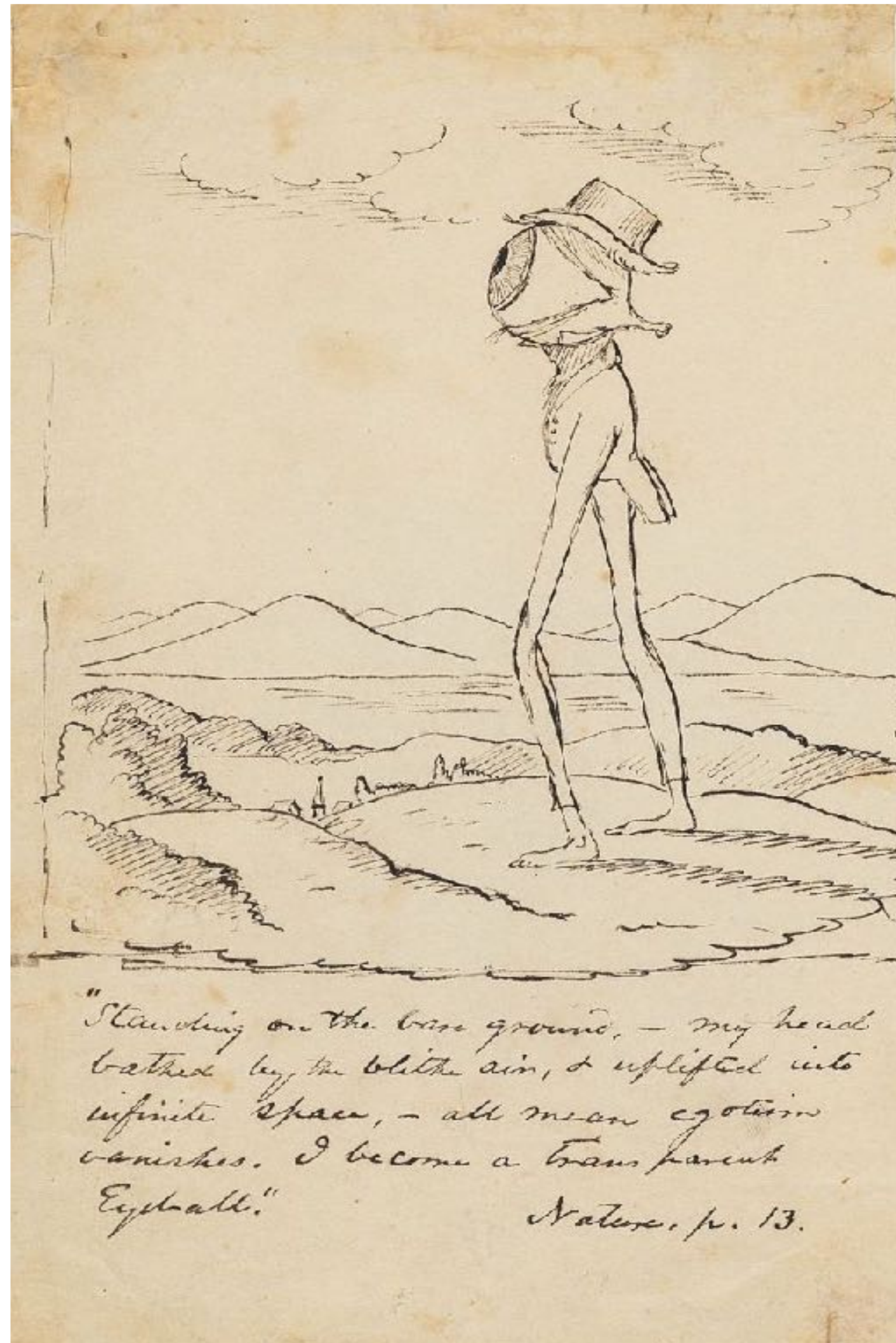
“Nature” (1836)

- Long prose essay
- Preface in the first edition is a passage from the Neoplatonic philosopher Plotinus describing the primacy of spirit and of human understanding over nature
- The Preface in the 1849 second edition is a poem by Emerson himself which emphasizes the unity of all manifestations of nature and the development of all of nature's forms toward the highest expression as embodied in man
- Nature is divided into an introduction and eight chapters

Four 'uses' of nature

- Commodity
 - Sensuous contributions of nature to mankind
- Beauty
 - Noble spiritual and intellectual elements of nature
- Language
 - Symbolic character of nature which conveys transcendental meanings
- Discipline
 - The function of nature in educating both Understanding and Reason
- From this, he develops the concept of the 'Oversoul' or 'Universal Mind'

“The Transparent Eyeball”



- A metaphor developed by Emerson
- First appeared in his essay, “Nature”
- Aligned to the idea of the self being a part and parcel of God
- Works like a camera lens, drawing out the form of Transcendentalism in nature

“Brahma” (1856)

- Influenced by Hindu philosophy of life
- Emerson was studying the work of Victor Cousin on Hindu philosophy at this time
- “If the red slayer think he slays,
- Or if the slain think he is slain,
- They know not well the subtle ways
- I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Other Poems

- “Concord Hymn” (1837)
 - He sung this at the completion of the monument commemorating the Battle of Concord
- “The Rhodora” (1847)
 - On the flower rhodora, describing its beauty in nature, incorporating his deep philosophical thoughts on nature
- “Uriel”
 - On the Archangel Uriel espousing Emerson’s philosophies
- “Snow Storm”

“The American Scholar” (1837)

- Lecture given to the Phi Beta Kappa Society
- Emerson begins with a sketch of the social fragmentation caused by the manufacturing culture that mechanizes lives and destroys the soul
- Emerson presents an idealized portrait of intellectual life rooted in the liberated individual thinker
- Instead of uncritically accepting established institutions that promote mental timidity, man should learn from Nature, history, and life as action

- The scholar should reject old ideas and think for him or herself, to become “Man Thinking”
- By doing so, the scholar would attain wholeness, which is a central concern of the essay
- Such a scholar has certain duties based on qualities like freedom, courage, openness, attentiveness, and an intense awareness of the moment
- In this essay, Emerson supports self-reliant individualism and rejects everything that blunts creative human potential

“Self-Reliance” (1841)

- Considered to be the definitive statement of Emerson’s philosophy of individualism and the finest example of his prose
- Explains Emerson’s phrase “trust thyself”
- Every individual possesses a unique genius that can only be revealed when that individual has the courage to trust his or her own thoughts, attitudes, and inclinations against public disapproval
- Follow one’s own instincts and ideas

“The Over Soul” (1841)

- Relationship between soul and ego
- Spirit of individualism and vedantism

“Politics” (1844)

- Essay taken from the collection Essays: Second Series published in 1844
- Explained Emerson’s thoughts on democracy
- Civilization can reach unfathomable places through moral force and creativity
- Came to be seen as quintessentially American

Representative Men (1850)

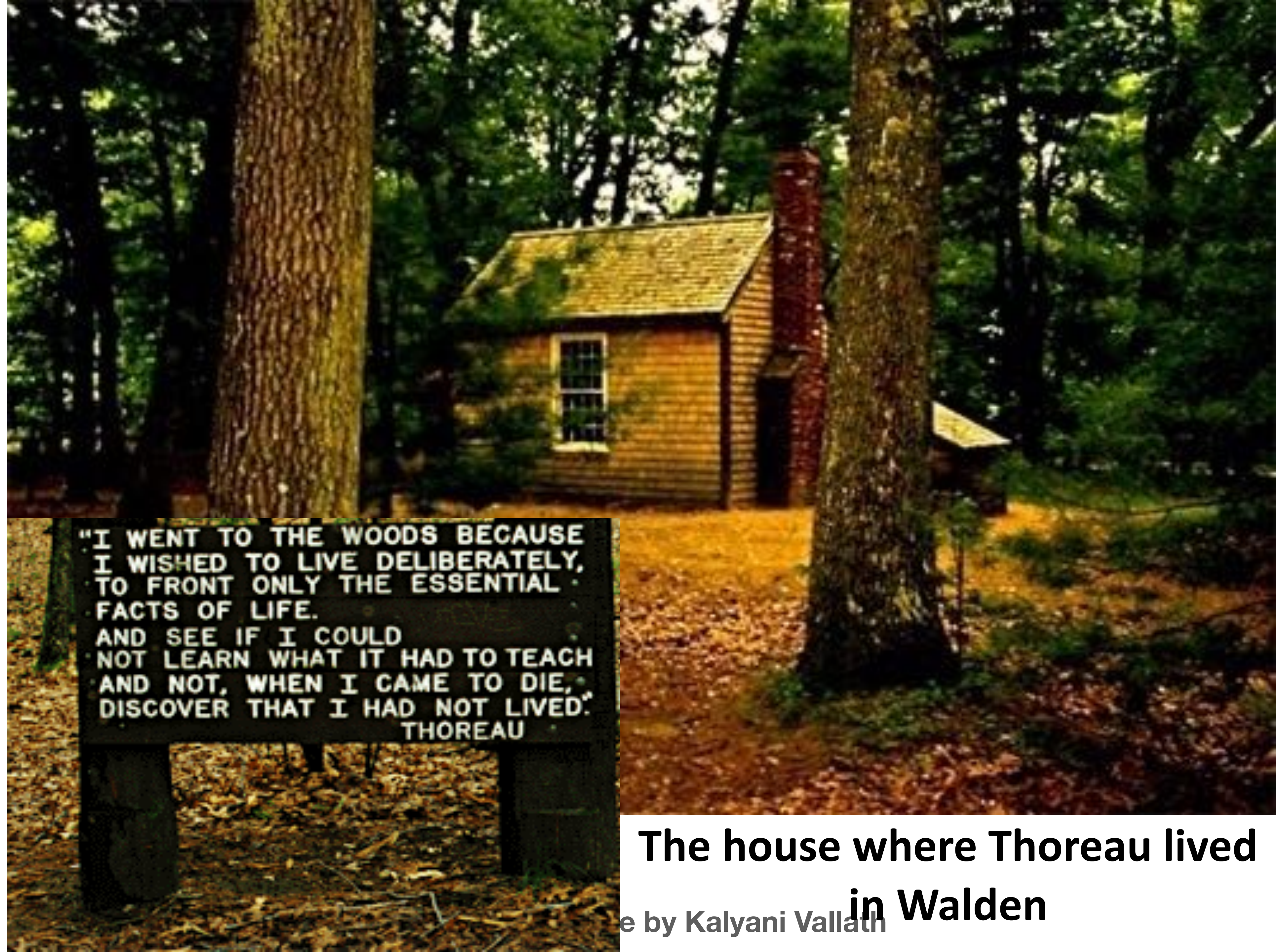
- A compilation of some of Emerson's lectures
- Discusses the role played by great men in society
 - Plato, Swedenborg, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Napoleon, Goethe
- Praised by Matthew Arnold

The Conduct of Life (1860)

- Collection of nine essays
 - “Fate,” “Power,” “Wealth,” “Culture,” “Behaviour,” “Worship,” “Beauty,” “Illusion,” etc
- Central question is “How shall I live?”
- Influenced several writers including Friedrich Nietzsche

Henry David Thoreau (1817-62)

- Born in Concord, Massachusetts
- Unorthodox manners and irreverent views
- Idealism
- A devoted Abolitionist (against slavery)
- Became an intimate friend of Emerson
- In 1845-47, Thoreau spent two years in Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts, living a simple life supported by no one
- The episode was both experimental and temporary
- Walden; or, Life in the Woods, first published in 1854



"I WENT TO THE WOODS BECAUSE
I WISHED TO LIVE DELIBERATELY,
TO FRONT ONLY THE ESSENTIAL
FACTS OF LIFE.
AND SEE IF I COULD
NOT LEARN WHAT IT HAD TO TEACH
AND NOT, WHEN I CAME TO DIE,
DISCOVER THAT I HAD NOT LIVED."
THOREAU

The house where Thoreau lived
in Walden

by Kalyani Vallath

Walden: Life in the Woods (1854)

- Divided into 18 chapters
- Records Thoreau's life from 1845-47 when he spent two years living a simple life supported by no one in Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts, which was owned by Emerson
- Importance of contemplation, solitude, closeness to nature
- Themes: Self-reliance and simplicity of life, non-conformity and self-sufficiency
- Concluding the book, Thoreau writes: "The light which puts out our eyes is darkness to us. Only that day dawns to which we are awake. There is more day to dawn. The sun is but a morning star."

“Paradise (to be) Regained” (1843)

- An essay written in the form of a review
- Themes
 - Democracy
 - Self-improvement of people
 - Distrust of humanity’s attempts to improve upon nature

“Civil-Disobedience” (1849)

- In July 1846, he was imprisoned for not paying a poll tax
 - He refused to pay it because it supported a nation endorsing slavery
- Thoreau defended himself in a lecture to the Concord Lyceum
- This lecture was later published under the title “Civil Disobedience”

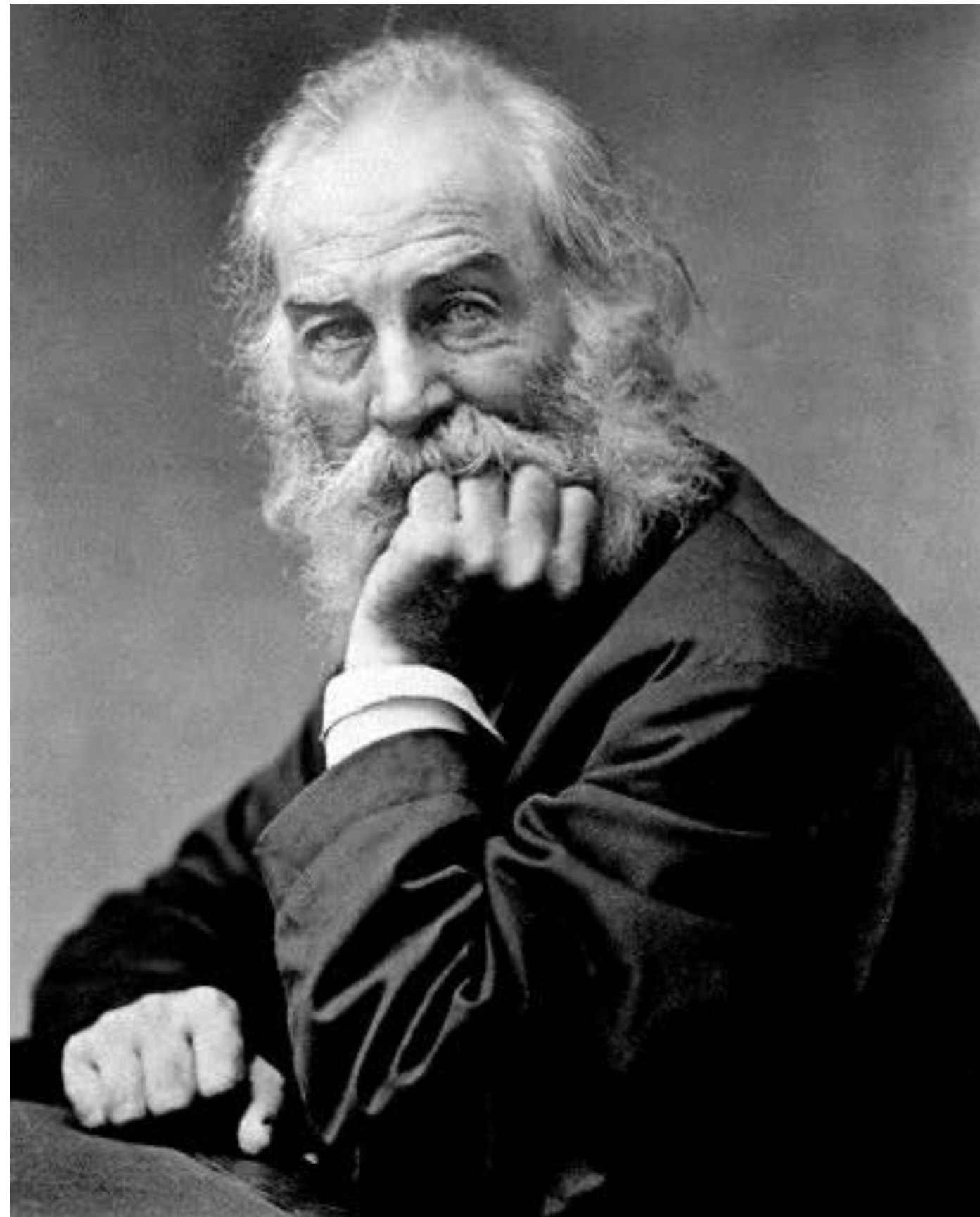
The Main Ideas

- Illustrates the idea, “That government is best which governs least”
- The individual should not permit the government to overrule
- Don’t wait passively for justice; be just yourself
- The most internationally known of Thoreau’s works
- Inspired social thinkers as Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi

“A Plea for Captain John Brown” (1859)

- Speech given at Concord, Massachusetts
- About the abolitionist John Brown who raided Harper’s Ferry Armory in 1859, which led to his execution

Walt Whitman (1819-92)



- One of the greatest of American writers
- Inspiration Emerson
- Long lines, flow of operatic singing
- Free verse
- Glorifies spiritual life grounded in the body and everyday life
- Democracy
- Individualism

Leaves of Grass (1855)

- Title is from the essay “The Poet” by RW Emerson
- The title is ironic: “leaves” means pages, and “grass” is the slang for inferior creative efforts
- First edition was published in Brooklyn on 4 July, with 12 poems
- *Leaves of Grass* was self-published.
- Inspired partly by his travels through the American frontier and by his admiration for Ralph Waldo Emerson.
- Emerson declared the first edition as “the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed.”

“Song of Myself”

- The title
 - Had no title in the 1855 edition
 - In 1856 it was called “A Poem of Walt Whitman, an American” and in 1860 it was simply termed “Walt Whitman”
 - Gave the title “Song of Myself” in 1881
- Depiction of human sexuality
- Use of powerful “I”
- Poet sings for humanity’s sake
- Themes of slavery, women’s rights, etc

“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

- Whitman wrote a series of poems after Lincoln’s assassination in 1865, at the end of the American Civil War (1861-65)
- “Lilacs” is an unconventional pastoral elegy in three parts
- First part
 - First, the poet says the last time lilacs bloomed, he saw a great star (now symbolizing Lincoln) falling in the western sky
 - Now, every spring, lilacs will fill his heart with gloom
 - The color of the lilac indicates the passion of the Crucifixion, which is comparable to Lincoln’s death
 - The poet breaks off a sprig of lilac in remembrance

The Second Part of “Lilacs”

- Second part
 - He describes the mournful journey of Lincoln’s coffin from Washington DC to Lincoln’s hometown in Springfield, Illinois
 - The poet tells the dead president, ‘I will give you my sprig of lilac’ (death is associated with fresh life) and says he mourns for all who died a ‘sane and sacred death’
 - Listening to a hermit thrush’s song, the poet describes how he would mourn for the dead
 - Unlike the classical pastoral tradition, he would decorate the tomb with pictures of ordinary people and everyday life in America

The Third Part of “Lilacs”

- Third part
 - Having gained a ‘sacred knowledge’ of death, the thrush’s song of death seems lovely and soothing
 - The poet has a vision of battlefields and corpses but realizes that the dead do not suffer any more, but only the living—their relatives—suffer
 - The coffin has now passed the poet, and has reached its resting place
 - Death’s song is ‘sinking and fainting’ yet bursting with joy
 - The poet’s personal emotional conflicts have now given him a sense of the ultimate truths of life and death, and of immortality



Lilacs

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

“Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” (1859)

- Belongs to the ‘birth of the poet’ genre
 - Typically romantic
 - Much used by Wordsworth
- “Out of the Cradle” describes the poet as a young boy watching a pair of mocking birds nesting on the Paumanok beach
- One day the female bird disappears
- The male waited for his lost mate, crying out to the wind, ‘I wait and I wait till you blow my mate to me’
- The bird’s cries touched the boy’s heart, and he seems to be able to translate what the bird is saying

The Boy Comes of Age as a Poet

- He asks nature to give him the one word 'superior to all', and the endlessly rocking waves of the sea tell him, 'death'
 - This universal backward and forward movement is fundamental to 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' also
- With that, the boy matures as a poet, who continues to be preoccupied with the endless repetitions of life and death
- The bird is a symbol of the natural world
- The sea symbolizes the cycle of birth and death
- The poem implies that death is only a natural transition to another life
- The transition from the boy to the poet is a transition from a literal experience of life to a spiritual experience

“Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”

- Originally titled ‘Sun Down Poem’
- The poet observes the crowd at the ferry and thinks of those who will make the crossing in the future
- In a hundred years, others will be seeing the same sunset, the same ebb and flow of the tides
- This scene forms part of a grand, spiritual scheme of life, in which everything has its individuality yet is part of the whole

- Despite differences in time and distance, the poet identifies with the crowd
- Whatever future generations might see, the poet has also seen
- He recalls the sights he had seen at the ferry in the past
- Underlying all these is the central symbol of the river, forever flowing, yet forever appearing the same
- He is united with other men not only in sense perceptions, but also in thoughts and feelings, in occasional darkness of the soul, in self-doubt, and in the sins of which humanity is capable

- The poet now draws ever closer to the reader
- Three rhetorical questions follow, the last of which links the past and future:
‘Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you now, for all you cannot see me?’
 - This means, the human self is part of a larger entity which is not subject to the limits of time or space
- The poet and reader now have a realization of oneness

- The final section begins with an apostrophe to the river—symbolizing time and change—urging it to continue its eternal ebb and flow
- More exclamatory apostrophes follow—to the clouds at sunset, to Manhattan and Brooklyn, to life itself
- The poem closes in a mystic tone when the poet feels the whole world within him and wishes that the myriad phenomena of the natural and human world should continue to flourish as one Soul, in the vast sea of time

Drum Taps (1865)

- 53 poems on the opening of the Civil War
- Topics
 - Purpose of war
 - Patriotism
 - Issue of slavery
 - Sufferings of soldiers
- Later 18 poems from Sequel to Drum Taps added
- This includes the famous poem 'O Captain! My Captain!' written following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln

Brahmin Poets

- Originally a humorous/pejorative reference to the Brahmins, the highest caste of Hindu society
- A group of 19th century New England writers, including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and James Russell Lowell
 - Educated in Europe; associated with Harvard University
- Dominated and influenced the American literary taste until the 1890s
- They were based in Boston, the literary capital of America in their day
 - Edited two influential Boston magazines, North American Review and the Atlantic Monthly

Features of Brahmin Poets

- Fused American and European traditions and sought to create a shared Atlantic experience
- In an age that brought forth the masterpieces of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman, Poe and Twain, they advocated a genteel, rational humanism, quite out of step with their brilliant contemporaries
- They advocated democratic ideals; were aesthetically conservative
- Upper class in background but democratic in sympathy

Fireside Poets

- Also known as the 'schoolroom' or 'household' poets
- Refers to five 19th century American poets Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, and William Cullen Bryant
- For the first time, American poetry became widely popular in Britain with the Fireside Poets

Features of Fireside Poetry

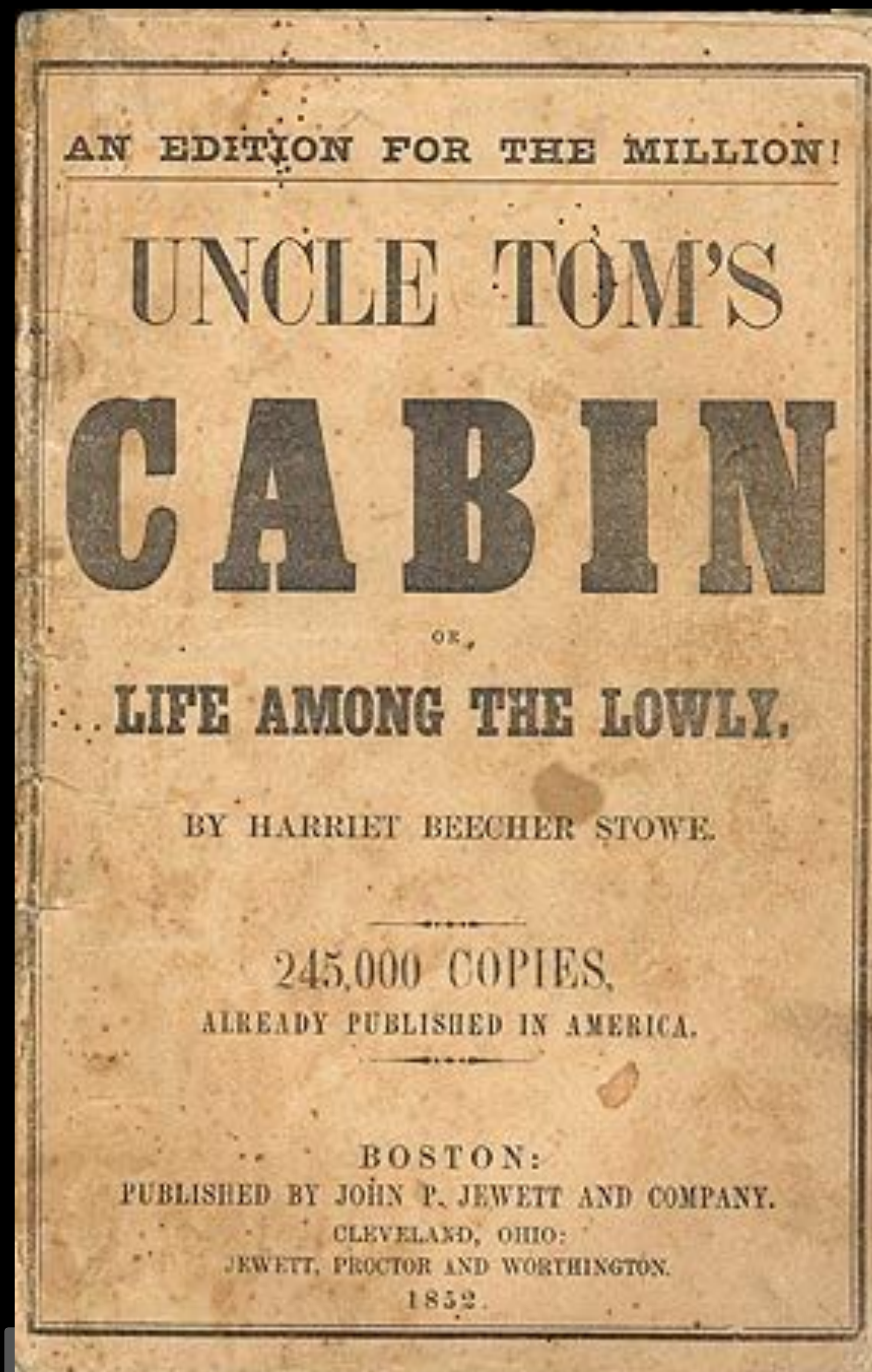
- Long narrative poems
 - Longfellow's Evangeline and The Song of Hiawatha
 - Whittier's Snowbound
 - Holmes's "Old Ironsides"
- Common features
 - Conventional use of rhyme
 - Strict metric cadence
 - Vivid descriptions of contemporary life
 - Also commented on the political issues of the day

Major Figures

- William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)
 - Thanatopsis (1817)
- H.W. Longfellow (1807-1882)
 - Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie (1847)
 - The Song of Hiawatha (1855)
 - Paul Revere's Ride (1860)

The Sentimental Novel

- Influence of Samuel Richardson
- Feelings, religious faith, moral virtue, family closeness, traditional values, marriage and motherhood
- Reform—concern for black slaves, poor...
- Uncle Tom's Cabin
 - Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Little Women
 - Louisa May Alcott



Harriet Elizabeth Beecher (1811-96)

- Family of abolitionists
- Worked as a teacher at Connecticut
- At the age of 40, published her first novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)
 - Subtitle "Life Among the Lowly"
- Lincoln said of her and the Civil War, "This is the lady who started this great war."
- Other Novels
 - The Minister's Wooing
 - Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp

Harriet Jacobs (1818-96)

- Born a slave in North Carolina
- She was taught to read and write by her mistress
- Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861)
 - Autobiography
 - Linda Brent
 - Pseudonym
- Condemned the sexual exploitation of black slave women

Harriet Wilson (1807-1870)

- Harriet Wilson was the first African-American to publish a novel in the United States
- Our Nig (1859)
 - Depicts the marriage between a white woman and a black man
 - Also depicts the difficult life of a black servant in a wealthy Christian household

Frederick Douglass (1817-95)

- The most famous African American anti-slavery leader and orator of the era
- Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave (1845)
 - The most popular slave narrative
 - The slave narrative was the first black literary prose genre in the United States
 - Helped in establishing African American identity

The Romance

- Novel distinguished from Romance
- Long fiction, excitement, adventure, dark passions, less realistic than novel
- The Last of the Mohicans (1826)
- The Scarlet Letter (1850)
- Moby-Dick (1851)
- Edgar Allan Poe (Gothic Romances)

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64)

- Born in New Hampshire
- Related to Dark Romanticism
- Melville's Moby Dick was dedicated to him

Major Novels

- Fanshawe (1828)
- The Marble Faun (1828)
- Twice-Told Tales (1837)
- The Scarlet Letter (1850)
- House of the Seven Gables (1851)
- The Blithedale Romance (1852)
 - Written in first person
- Moses from an Old Manse (short story collection)



Desire, Sin and Retribution

IAL

The Scarlet Letter (1850)

- Set between 1642-49; during the Puritan regime in Boston
- Introductory section: The Custom House
- Autobiographical sketch on Hawthorne's own experiences at the Salem Custom House
- Narrator discovers in the upstairs hall a packet with Jonathan Pue's name (an ancient surveyor), containing the scarlet letter and some old papers

The Trial Scene

- Hester Prynne, with her three-month old daughter Pearl, is led from the prison to the scaffold where she is publicly shamed for having committed adultery
 - The letter 'A' embroidered on Hester's dress
- Dimmesdale talks to Hester on the scaffold
- Chillingworth, disguised as a physician, visits Hester in prison

Hester's Life Begins

- Hester
 - Moves into a solitary cottage near the woods
 - Does embroidery for the local dignitaries
 - Helps the poor and the sick
 - Pearl grows up beautifully dressed, wild and disobedient
- Governor Bellingham & Rev. John Wilson want to let Pearl live in a 'Christian' family; but with Dimmesdale's help, Pearl is not separated from Hester
- Mistress Hibbins invites Hester to meet Black Man

The Symbol of “Pearl”

- Pearl is a living extension of the scarlet letter, of Hester’s passion and shame
 - beautiful clothes and wild temper
 - touches the scarlet letter and threw flowers on it
 - asks Hester who her father is
- Pearl’s name
 - beautiful object inside ugliness
 - contains a grain of sand
 - the clash between appearances and reality
- Without a father (family), Pearl is a ‘witch’

The Second Scaffold Scene

- Dimmesdale
 - Tormented by shame and remorse; now famous for sermons
 - Tries to confess to congregation
 - Masochism (tortures himself)
 - On the scaffold at night—imagines scarlet letter on his chest, screams, laughs
- Hester & Pearl returning from Gov Winthrop's deathbed
 - All three stand on scaffold
 - There is a giant meteor in the sky—giant A ('angel', for Winthrop)
 - Chillingworth watches them from below

The Black Man's Mark

- Seven years have gone by
- Hester's reputation for being helpful
- Her "A" is interpreted as 'Able,' not 'adultery'; compared to cross on a nun's bosom
- Hester meets Chillingworth, pleads with him to pardon Dimmesdale
- Chillingworth: "Let the black flower blossom as it may"

The Election Sermon

- People crowd to hear Dimmesdale's Election Sermon
- Chillingworth gets himself accepted on the ship on which Dimmesdale & Hester plan to escape
- Hester & Pearl stand close to the scaffold to hear D
- Dimmesdale gets the highest praise for his sermon
- He walks upto the scaffold; ask Hester & Pearl to join him
- He confesses; reveals the scarlet letter on his flesh; dies
- Hester & Pearl leave the town; Hester returns after several years; Hester never removed her scarlet letter
- No one heard of Pearl again; lived probably in Europe

Major Themes

- Sin – as with Adam and Eve – resulting in
 - expulsion and suffering, and
 - knowledge of what is human (personal growth, sympathy & understanding of others)
- The nature of evil
 - Black Man: Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, Mistress Hibbins, Pearl
 - Confusion over nature of evil reveals problems with the Puritan concept of sin
 - Evil arises from the close relation between hate & love
 - Evil is C.'s carefully plotted revenge; D's cruel denial of love to his own daughter





The House of the Seven Gables (1851)

- A Gothic romance by Hawthorne
- Based on a curse pronounced on the author's family when his great grandfather was a judge in the Salem witch trials
- In the novel, the Pyncheons are cursed by Wizard Maule when the first Colonel Pyncheon deprived him of his wealth
- The novel is about the decadent Pyncheons in the mid-19th century, and how the curse is lifted

Blithedale Romance (1852)

- Modelled on the Transcendentalists' Brook Farm community, Blithedale Romance presents a utopian community
- Hawthorne is sceptical about Transcendentalist idealism
- Protagonist and narrator Miles Coverdale seeks betterment of the world through the agrarian lifestyle
- Character Zenobia represents Margaret Fuller
- Hollingsworth, a passionate monomaniac, is reminiscent of Herman Melville

Herman Melville (1819-91)

- Born in New York
- Descendant of an old wealthy family that fell abruptly into poverty upon the death of the father
- At 19 he went to sea
 - Most of his early novels grew out of his voyages

Major Works

- Typee (1846)
 - Became famous as the man who lived among the cannibals
- White Jacket (1850)
- The Confidence Man (1857)
- Billy Budd, Sailor (1891, pub. 1924)
- Mardi (1849)
 - About his voyages
- Moby Dick, The Whale (1851)
- Pierre (1852)
 - Put an end to his career as a popular writer

Moby-Dick or The Whale (1851)

- Story of a whaling voyage narrated by Ishamel
- Captain Ahab's tragic monomania in his pursuit of a white whale
- Main issues which dominated 19th century thought in America
 - Land and sea
 - Adventure and domesticity
 - Frontiersman and citydweller
- Symbolic; tightly packed with philosophical musings
- Unfavourable criticism

The Voyage Begins

- An ordinary seaman, Ishmael, signs in for a whaling voyage in 1840s Massachusetts
- Journey begins at New Bedford, a prosperous whaling town
- Cross-over at island Nantucket; Ishmael takes up cheap lodgings in waterfront at The Spouter Inn
- Forced to share bed with South Sea islander and cannibal Queequeg
 - Fierce-looking harpooner; covered with tattoos; carrying tomahawk

Forebodings of Danger

- Ishmael and Queequeg become friends
- Ishmael visits whalemens chapel; Father Mapple's disturbing sermon on prophet Jonah (blasphemous Jonah is punished; the terrors of his soul); hears of dangers of whaling
- Two friends sign up at whaling ship, Pequod, run by notorious Captain Ahab
- Elijah, a shabby old man who haunts the docks, warns them

The Voyage Begins

- Pequod leaves on Christmas day for whaling grounds in the Pacific
- Ahab shuts himself in the cabin for several days while crew gets accustomed to the sea
- Starbuck and Stubb in command
- Ahab comes out and appearance startles Ishmael—long white scar on face; artificial leg made of whale bone

Ahab's Monomania

- Ahab tells them of his singleminded mission to find white whale, Moby-Dick, who took his leg.
- 16 dollar gold doubloon offered to whoever first spots him
- Demonic ceremony; drink to the death of the whale

The Whale and Whaling

- When not under Ahab's obsessive search, Ishmael meditates upon whaling and Moby-Dick
- Ishmael thinks Ahab fears and hates the whiteness of Moby-Dick because it recalls the nothingness that lies behind all nature

Digression on Cetology

- Ishmael recalls ship's first whale hunt and butchering of sperm whale
- Ishmael's discussion on whales (cetology)—representation; own experiences; huge, mysterious body; significance to men who hunt it
- Search for Moby Dick
- Encounter with a herd of sperm whales

The Infidel Crew

- Ahab reveals the presence of his 'infidel' (strong, ungodly) boat crew led by Fedallah, a Parsee ('dusky phantom', sinister figure)
- Ahab's obsession with Moby Dick: special harpoon from nail stubs of racing horses; tempers it in the blood of the three pagan harpooners (Queequeg-Maori, Tashtego-Indian, Daggoo-African); baptizing the weapon 'in the name of the devil'

Queequeg's Coffin

- Ishmael less prominent as a character
 - Reappears to narrate mythological history of whaling and discuss the symbolism of Jonah's story
- Queequeg terminally ill; orders coffin; survives. Coffin is then used as bed; then as life-buoy

Fedallah's Influence

- Starbuck, first mate, pleads with Ahab to turn back and return to his wife and child
- Ahab torn between the good and bad influences of Starbuck and Fedallah
- Turns to demonic advisor Fedallah

Fedallah's Prophecy

- Ahab will know neither hearse nor coffin
- Before he dies on this voyage he will see two hearses on the sea—one not made by man; other made of American wood
- Only hemp or rope can kill the captain
- So Ahab declares himself immortal on land and sea

Moby Dick is Wounded

- Moby Dick spotted; three days' chase
- Ahab's boat lost—a bad omen
- Fedallah gets caught in the ropes (line) that encircle Moby Dick and is killed (First prophecy fulfilled)
- Third day—whale turns towards the Pequod
- Ahab's harpoon in his hump
- Ahab gets caught in the line and is dragged under sea (Third prophecy)

The End

- Whale smashes Pequod and it sinks
- All crew overboard (Second prophecy)
- Whirlpool created by the sinking ship
- Ishmael floats on the edge of the action
- Ishmael floats for one day and one night on Queequeg's coffin
- Rescued by Rachel, a whaling ship



TES STUDY MATERIAL



Edgar Allan Poe (1809-49)

- Poe was orphaned at an early age
- Marriage to his first cousin Virginia Clemm when she was not yet 14
 - Has been interpreted as an attempt to find the stable family life he lacked
- Pioneer of American short story, detective fiction and science fiction
- “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” early detective story

- He believed that strangeness was an essential ingredient of beauty
- His writing is often exotic
- His stories and poems are populated with doomed, introspective aristocrats
- The bizarre setting of his stories reflect the over civilized yet disturbed psyches of his characters
- Poems are musical and strictly metrical
 - The most famous poem “The Raven” (1845)
- Belongs to Dark Romanticism, a reaction to Transcendentalism
- Developed a unique style in literary criticism
- Baudelaire translated Poe’s stories and admired him

“To Science” (1829)

- ‘To Science’ is a sonnet by Poe published as a prologue to ‘Al Aaraaf’ in Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems.
- The poet apostrophizes Science as one whose peering eyes alter all things, as a destroyer of beauty, preying upon the heart of its lover, as a vulture whose wings are ‘dull realities’.
- Poe developed the theme of the conflict of scientific thought and poetic feeling in his prose, but later, as in the prose poem Eureka, considered that the beauty of poetry depended on its representing a scientific concept of an ordered universe.

“The Raven” (1845)

- First published in New York Evening Mirror
- The poem is inspired by Dickens’ Barnaby Rudge (1841), where Barnaby Rudge is a local idiot who wanders with his pet raven, Grip
- The famous refrain of the poem is ‘Nevermore’.

The Story

- One stormy night, a tired student is visited by a raven that can speak one word, 'Nevermore'.
- The student is grieving for his lost beloved and questions the bird about meeting her in another world.
- He is driven to wilder demands by the repetition of the fatal word, until the raven becomes an immutable symbol of the student's frustration and longing.
- The poem symbolizes the mournful and never-ending memories of Poe's dead wife Virginia

- The raven has become an ominous figure and an artistic inspiration for writers like Stephen King (his novel Insomnia) and for filmmakers like Tim Burton
- You Tube
 - A haunting rendition of the poem by Christopher Walken
 - Freddie Mercury wrote a song 'Nevermore' based on the poem for his band Queen.
 - A 2012 film 'The Raven' depicting a fictionalised biography of Poe

“To Helen” (1836)

- This poem praises the nurturing power of women.
- He himself said that the poem was written for Mrs Jane Stanard, a friend's mother.
- The name was changed to ‘Helen’ to symbolize the Greek ideal of beauty.
- The famous lines ‘The glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome’ idealize the classical world.
- Helen is also called Psyche in the poem, and the poet's love for her is symbolic, for the woman herself symbolizes the poet's emotional and creative state

“The Bell” (1849)

- Onomatopoeic poem
- Mourning over loss of his wife Virginia
- Poem is in four parts
- Shows life from the nimbleness of youth to the pain of age
- Growing emotions of despair
- Passing seasons is used as a metaphor of life

“Al Aaraaf, A Palace” (1829)

- Allusive poem based on stories from the Qur'an
- Tells of the afterlife in a place called Al Aaraaf
- Inspired by Tycho Brahe's discovery of a supernova in 1572
- Poe identified this nova with Al Aaraaf, a star that was the place between paradise and hell
- Themes are ideal love, ideal beauty
- Characters are personified emotions

“El Dorado” (1849)

- Journey of a gallant knight in search of El Dorado, the mythical city of treasures
- Reaction to California Gold Rush (1849)

Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque

- Famous stories
 - “MS Found in a Bottle”
 - “The Pit and the Pendulum”
 - “The Fall of the House of Usher”
 - “The Purloined Letter”
 - “The Tell-Tale Heart”
 - “The Haunted Palace”
 - “The Oval Portrait”
 - “Tamerlane”
 - “The Murders at Rue Morgue”

“The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839)

- First published in Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine
- An unnamed narrator approaches the house of his boyhood friend, Roderick Usher
- The house has an evil and diseased atmosphere; is decaying in places but the structure itself is fairly solid
- Roderick had sent him a letter earnestly requesting his company, since he was feeling physically and emotionally ill
- In the Usher family, only one member has survived from generation to generation

Roderick's Dilapidation

- The narrator walks through the long passages to the room where Roderick is waiting
- Roderick is paler and less energetic and suffers from nerves and fear, even of his own house
- Roderick's sister, Madeline, was ill with a mysterious sickness—the loss of control of one's limbs
- The narrator spends several days with Roderick, but he cannot lift Roderick's spirit
- Roderick thinks that the house itself is unhealthy, just as the narrator had thought at the beginning

Madeline is Buried

- Soon Madeline dies, and Roderick decides to bury her temporarily in the tombs below the house
- The narrator helps Roderick put the body in the tomb, and notes that Madeline has rosy cheeks in death
- In the next few days, Roderick becomes more uneasy
- One night, the narrator cannot sleep
- Roderick knocks on his door, hysterically
- He leads the narrator to the window, from which they see a bright-looking gas surrounding the house, which the narrator thinks is a natural phenomenon

The Eventful Night

- The narrator reads a medieval romance to Roderick in order to pass the night
- As he reads, he hears noises that correspond to the descriptions in the story
- At first, he ignores these sounds but soon they are so loud that he can no longer ignore them
- Roderick had slumped over in his chair muttering that he has been hearing these sounds for days, and believes that they have buried Madeline alive and that she is trying to escape

The End

- The wind blows open the door
- They see Madeline stand there in white robes bloodied from her struggle
- She attacks Roderick as she drops dead, and Roderick also dies of fear
- The narrator flees the house
- As he escapes, the entire house cracks along the break in the frame and crumbles to the ground

“The Purloined Letter” (1844)

- Presents the detective C. Auguste Dupin
- Epigraph from Petrarch

“The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

- A Gothic short story by Poe
- Starts in medias res
- First person narrative of an unnamed narrator
- Example of an ‘unreliable narrator’
- A short film version of this story can be found in YouTube

“The Philosophy of Composition” (1846)

- Poe analyses “The Raven” in this essay in order to illustrate how he writes poetry and to prove that the death of a beautiful woman is the most poetical topic in the world.
- The essay appeared in Graham’s Magazine which Poe edited, and argues that good writing depends upon certain factors: brevity, unity of impression or unity of effect, and a logical method (as against intuition and spontaneity advocated by the British romantics).
- Poe says the climax of “The Raven” (stanza 16) was written first so that every effect in the poem should lead in that direction.

As an Anti-Transcendentalist

- Edgar Allan Poe was a Dark Romanticist who did not share the Transcendentalists' optimism and belief in human greatness
- Poe wrote a story, "Never Bet the Devil Your Head", in which he expressed his deep dislike for Transcendentalism, calling its followers 'Frogpondians' after the pond on Boston Common
- In Poe's essay 'The Philosophy of Composition' he denounces 'the excess of the suggested meaning... which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcendentalists'
- "The Raven" is also an anti-Transcendental poem with its tone of mystery, terror, darkness and evil

Emily Dickinson (1830-86)



- Called Nun of Amherst
- About 1700 short poems
- Only a few published during lifetime
- Puzzling, obscure
- Love, death, nature, immortality
- Questioning of established religion, authority

- The largest portion of her poetry concerns death and immortality
- Most of them have no titles, always quoted by their first lines
- Her short poems especially are known for their laconic brevity, directness and plainness.
- Almost perfect assonance is achieved with the use of dashes and capital letters for emphasis

“Because I could not Stop for Death”

- Also called “The Chariot”
- Death is personified in this poem as a male friend or suitor who arrives in his carriage.
- During their outing, ‘Immortality’ accompanies them as their chaperone. Their drive is slow, and they pass the familiar sights of the town.
- The speaker realizes that this is no ordinary outing when they pass the setting sun, ‘Or rather—He passed Us—.’
- Death takes the speaker to her new home, a swelling of the ground, whose roof is scarcely visible.
- Centuries have passed since this event, but the entire episode seems less than a day in length.

“My life closed twice before its close”

- Like Dickinson’s other poems, this poem has a personal and a universal level.
- On the personal level, the speaker recollects the two losses in her life (which she does not name, but is some kind of ‘parting’), which were as painful as death itself.
- She cannot imagine suffering the pain of death, which will be greater than the pain she has already suffered.
- The theme of the universal human condition of suffering

“I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died”

- The speaker says she heard a fly buzz when she died.
- Then she describes the moment of her death.
- The silence of the room was like the qualm between two phases of the storm: life and death are the two phases.
- The people beside her deathbed are quietly waiting for the final moment.
- The speaker is also getting ready to go, and wishes to let go her last possessions.
- Then instead of the King, i.e., Death, the fly comes as an intruder with a ‘stumbling buzz’, between the light and the dying speaker. Thus, instead of presenting Death as a terrifying end, it is presented as absurd and trivial, a mere transition from one state to another.

Other Poems

- “A Bird Came Down the Walk”
- “A Dimple in the Tomb”
- “A Loss of Something Ever Felt I”
- Collections
 - Wild Night
 - Final Harvest
 - A Brighter Garden

Late 19th Century

- The American Civil War 1861-65
 - Republican Abraham Lincoln elected as President in 1860
 - Civil War due to North-South divide over slavery issue breaks out in 1861
 - 1863: Battle of Gettysburg
 - 1865: Assassination of Lincoln
 - War ended in 1865 but deeper problem of race relations persisted

Impact of the Civil War

- Growth of industry and the metropolis
- The Civil War laid the groundwork for the rapid post-war economic growth and industrialization of America
- Industrialism was a result of the increase in wartime production and the development of new technologies
- Increasing industrialization led to the widening contrast of wealth and poverty
- Popular feeling of frustration and disillusionment
- Slavery ended
- Reconstruction, the plan to rebuild America after the war, began

Realistic Period (1865-1914)

- An aftermath of the savage Civil War
- American self concept was reflected in literature
- Novels by Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry James, John W. Deforest (Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty), Harold Frederic
- Realism was a reaction against Romanticism
- There arose a great interest in the realities of life, everyday existence and local class struggle
- Local colourism marked the beginning of Realism with the representation and interpretation of the local character

Naturalistic Period (1900-1914)

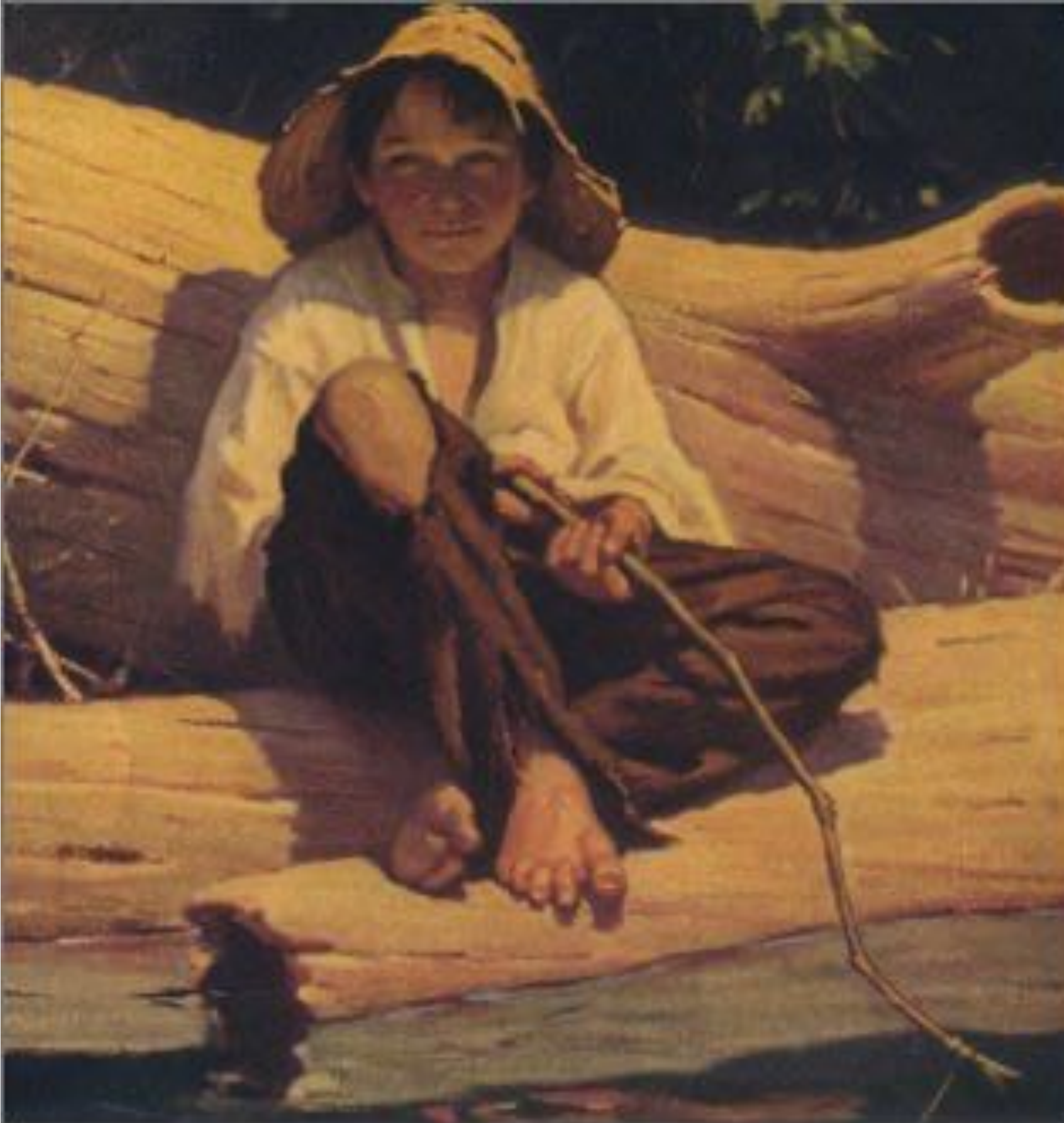
- The former writers were present but more influenced by Frank Norris, Jack London & Theodore Dreiser
- Naturalism describes a type of literature that applies scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to the study of human beings
- Unlike realism, which focuses on literary technique, naturalism implies a philosophical position
- In Emile Zola's phrase human beings are “human beasts,” and characters are “products” can be studied impartially through their relationships to their surroundings
- Described in Zola's The Experimental Novel (1880)
- Herbert Spencer was a major influence

Mark Twain (1835-1910)

- Real name Samuel Langhorne Clemens
- Considered the true father of American literature
- Lived a sea life—‘mark twain’ is the second mark in depth in seafaring
- The power he wielded over language, the use of vernacular and colloquial speech still influence readers
- His most iconic works are The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876), The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885), Life on the Mississippi (1883)
- His first short story “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” in 1865 brought him national fame

Mark Twain's Style

- Character writer
- Defined an era
- Anti-imperialist themes
- Local colour realism
- Depicted the rugged frontier life and the Southern tradition
- Explored themes of racism & slavery
- Intellectual & moral education
- Hypocrisy of civilized society
- Rough humour and social satire



PENGUIN  CLASSICS

MARK TWAIN

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn



E.W. Kemble
1884

HUCKLEBERRY FINN.



THE STORY OF "SOLLERMUN."

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876)

- Novel about a young boy Tom
- Features the Mississippi River
- Set in the fictitious St. Petersburg, inspired by Twain's hometown Hannibal in Missouri
- Summary
 - Tom lives with Aunt Polly
 - Fancies Amy Lawrence, and then Becky Thatcher who rejects him
 - Undertakes adventures with Huck Finn
 - Encounters Injun Joe, the villain
 - At the end, at McDougal's Cave, Joe dies

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)

- Called “The Great American Novel”
- Tom and Huck had found a treasure of \$12,000.
- Judge Thatcher had invested this money for them so that each boy gets a dollar a day.
- Huck moved in with Widow Douglas.

The Life of Huck

- Narrator Huck describes his life.
- Widow Douglas tries to 'civilize' Huck (new clothes, Bible, dinner bell, no smoking)
- Huck runs away; Tom brings him back, promising they will start a band of robbers.
- Widow's spinster sister Miss Watson tries to give Huck 'education' (spelling, behaviour, Hell)
- Lonely Huck sneaks away with Tom.
- Huck and Tom play the boyish game of robbers



Miss Watson



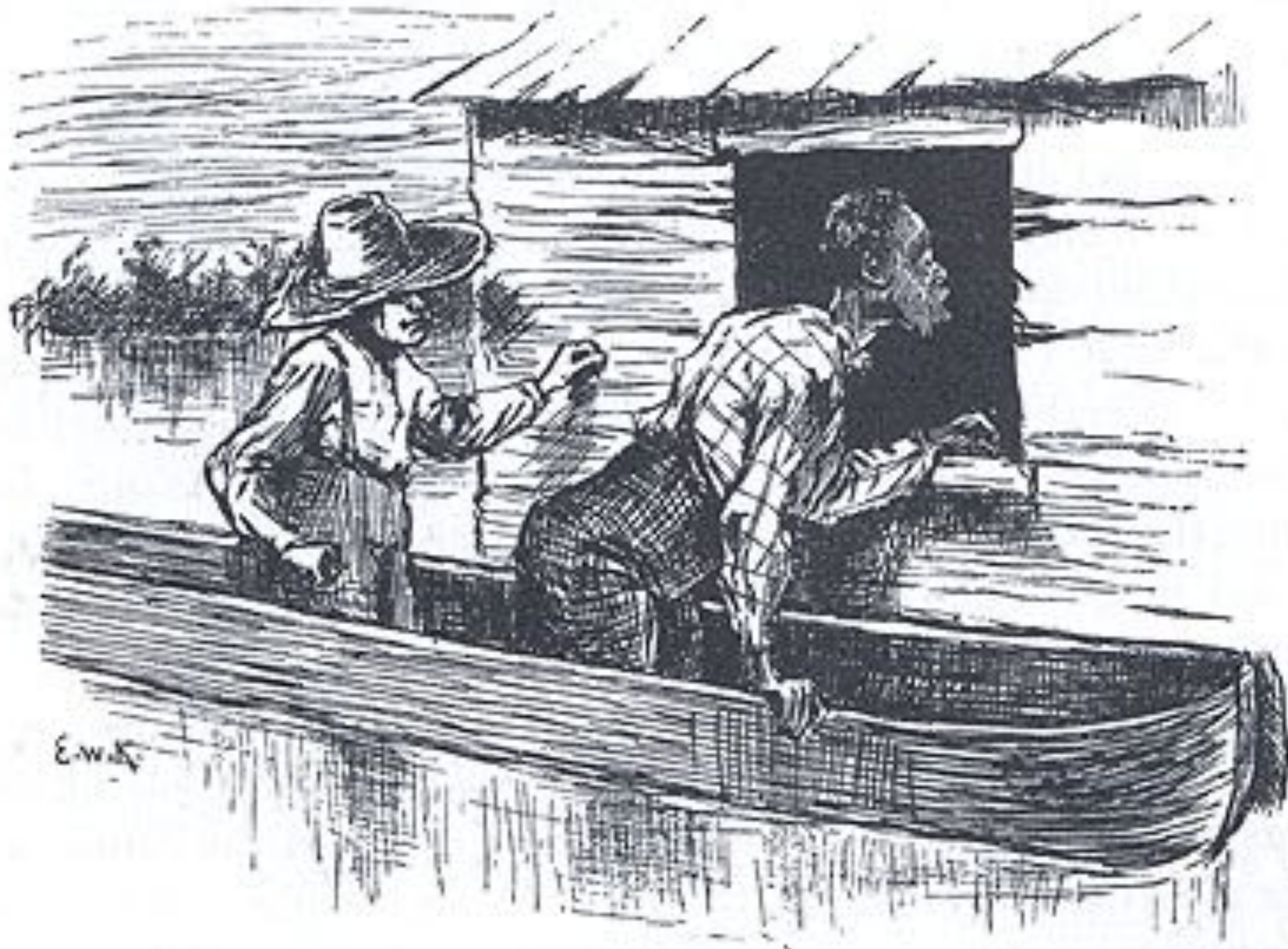
TOM SAWYER'S BAND OF ROBBERS.

- Huck's Pa
 - A filthy poor man
 - Harasses Huck for good clothes; school; for being better than his father; for being able to read.
- Pa locks up Huck in a log cabin up river; beats Huck, gets nightmares and chases him with a knife.
- Huck runs away after staging his own death
- Huck explores the island and finds a still smoking campfire. Frightened.
- The other man is Jim. He escaped when Miss Watson decided to sell him.



HUCK AND HIS FATHER.

- In the river, they find drifting logs, a raft and a house with a man shot in the back while trying to rob the house. Huck doesn't know it's Pa.
- Jim and Huck spend the next few days down the river
- They have a canoe, and a raft and have many adventures
- Find a wrecked steam boat with three robbers—one tied up by the others



JIM SEES A DEAD MAN.



"A FAIR FIT."

This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

- They get involved in the feud between the Grangerfords and the Shepherdson
- Two frauds running away from the town join them.
- Younger man tells them he is a descendant of a Duke; the older man says he is going to be King
- King and Duke practise to perform Shakespeare

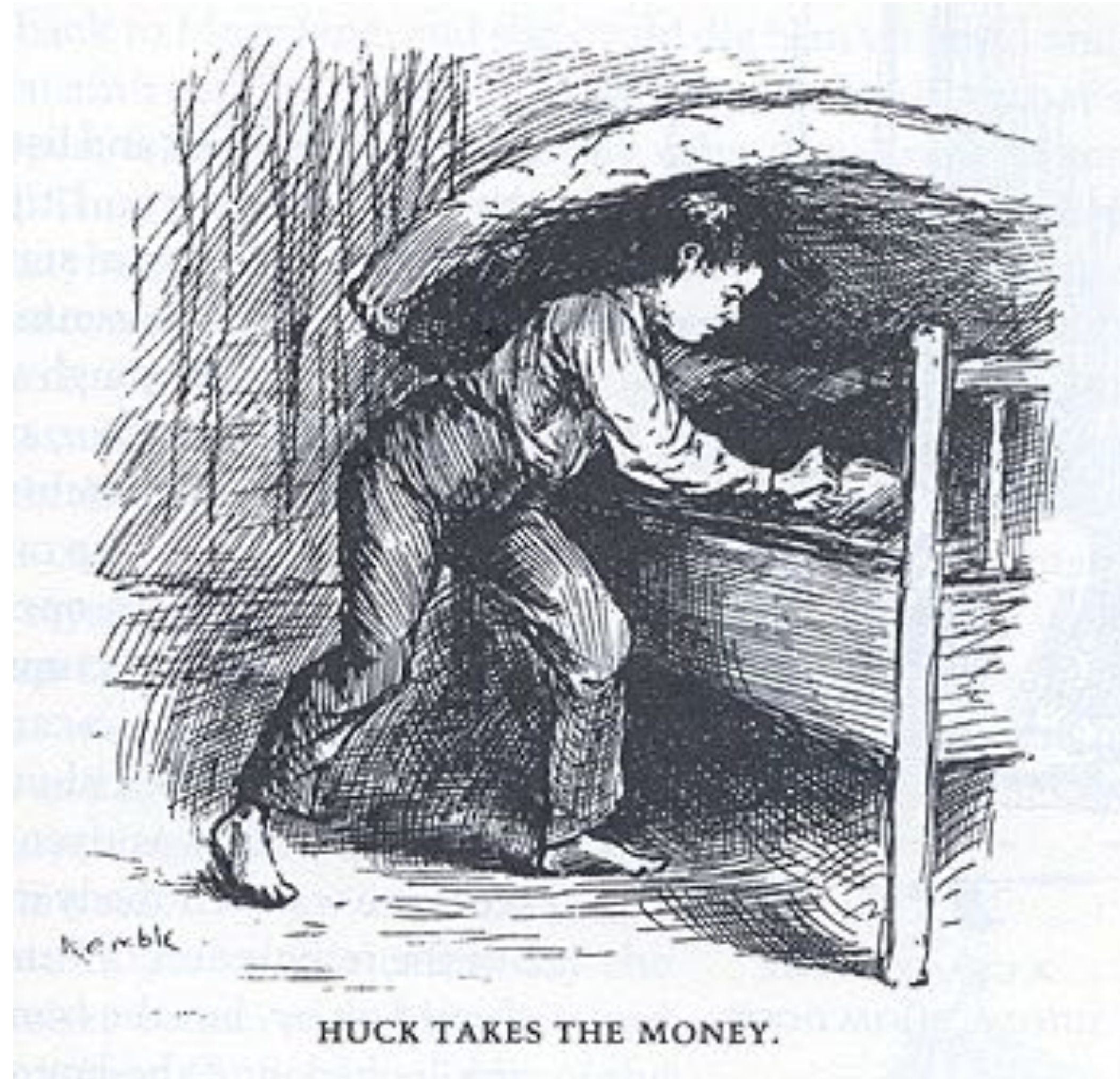
- Shakespearean play a disaster; they announce 'Royal Nonesuch' where ladies and children are not admitted
- House packed with men. King crawls on all fours, naked, covered with paint.
- The crowd laughs; knows they are cheated, but goes away.
- Second night house full.
- Third night rotten eggs, dead cats... the group sneaks away with \$465.
- Jim pines for his family 'just as a white man would.'



HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.

- Tells Huck how he came to know his daughter Elizabeth had lost her hearing.
- They hear from a fool about Peter Wilks.
- Duke and King pretend to be his brothers; Huck servant; they generously give their share of \$3,000 to Wilks's daughters (Mary Jane, Susan, Joanna).
- They are entrusted with all the money.
- The frauds sell off the slaves; auction the house

- The girls are unhappy and Huck steals the money from the frauds and hides it in the coffin.



HUCK TAKES THE MONEY.

THIS PPT IS MADE BY KAIYANI VALLATH

- Finally the treachery is discovered; the frauds escape.
- Duke and King fight over money.
- King cheats by selling Jim to the Phelps (Tom's uncle and aunt).
- Aunt Sally mistakes Huck for Tom.
- Tom arrives and pretends to be Sid Sawyer
- Tom and Huck make plans to rescue Jim imprisoned in a hut.
 - Tom's plans are elaborate, like in adventure stories. (dig a hole, case knives to dig, tin plates to write messages...)
 - Huck's simple and practical. (steal the key, unlock the door...)

- Huck, Tom and Jim manage to escape.
- Jim is a free man and will be always.
- Tom is shot in the leg and is taken to a doctor
- Later Tom tells Sally about everything.
- Aunt Polly appears and sorts out everything.
- Jim is welcomed.
- Sally wants to adopt Huck and he plans to head west.



OUT OF BONDAGE.

Major Concerns

- Conflict between civilization and "natural life"
- Mockery of Religion
- Superstition
- Slavery
- Honour
- Food
- Money

Other Works

- “Advice to Little Girls” (1865, humorous short story)
- The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today (1873, a novel)
- The Prince and the Pauper (1881)
 - Twain’s first attempt at historical fiction
- The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson (1894)
- “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offences” (essay)
- “Advice to Youth” (satirical essay)

The Gilded Age (1873)

- The Gilded Age in US history is the late 19th century (1870s – 1900)
- One of the most dynamic, contentious, and volatile periods in American history
- rapid industrialization, urbanization, the construction of great transcontinental railroads, innovations in science and technology, and the rise of big business
- The term came into use in the 1920s and 30s
- Derived from Mark Twain's novel The Gilded Age which satirized an era of serious social problems masked by a thin gold gilding

Literature of the Depression Era

- Disoriented and alienated characters
- Moral degeneration and discord in the family
- Financial troubles
- Decadent families from the South
- Failure of the American Dream
- Failure of communication
- Themes of drinking, drug taking, mental instability, death

Capitalism in America

- Transition from the 19th century to the 20th century
 - Social mobility or the rise of the middle class
 - Fall of aristocracy
- Mechanical production started
 - Workers alienated, exploited
- Improvement in the means of transportation and mass communication
- Money as well as social values become abstract
- Buying things on credit and mortgage started
- Lopsided development

The Great Depression 1930s

- Stock market crash, unbalanced concentration of wealth, inflation
- Drop in prices & industrial production, unemployment
- American Dream turns into nightmare
- Rejection of notions of progress; return to earlier ideas of purity, simplicity
- Disoriented characters
- Mussolini and Hitler; Communism
- Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams

WALL STREET JOURNAL
PUBLISHED DAILY
EXCEPT SUNDAYS
AND HOLIDAYS
Subscription Office
120 NASSAU ST. NEW YORK 1

BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE

And Complete Long Island News

LATE NEWS

WALL STREET
LISTINGS ★ ★

1928 YEAR—No. 228

★ NEW YORK CITY, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1928 ★

PRICE

10 CENTS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1928

WALL ST. IN PANIC AS STOCKS CRASH

Attempt Made to Kill Italy's Crown Prince

ASSASSIN CAUGHT IN BRUSSELS MOB; PRINCE UNHURT

Reported Father of Duke
of Savoy Wounded in
Gunmen's Attack on
Luxembourg Palace

Princess, Duple Wound, Falls Into Enemy's Arms and Knew Him

Princess, daughter of Duke of Savoy, was wounded in the attack on the Luxembourg Palace in Brussels. She was falling into the arms of a man who was known to her. The man was caught in the mob that surrounded the palace.

Princess, daughter of Duke of Savoy, was wounded in the attack on the Luxembourg Palace in Brussels. She was falling into the arms of a man who was known to her. The man was caught in the mob that surrounded the palace.

Hollywood Fire Destroys Films Worth Millions

ATTEMPT MADE ON LIFE



CARNegie CHARGE OF PAID ATHLETES HOUSES COLLEGES

Charge of Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Science that it had paid athletes to play for its teams.

Consolidated Airlines Are Sought by Chase Field in New York

Consolidated Airlines are sought by Chase Field in New York. The airlines are looking for a new base of operations.

HOOVER'S TRAIN HALTED BY AUTO PLACED ON RAILS

J. Edgar Hoover's train was halted by an auto. The train was then placed on the rails.

FEAR OF PERISHED IN LAST NIGHT'S FERRY IS MISSING

Fear of perished in last night's ferry is missing. The ferry was carrying a large number of people.

Fear of perished in last night's ferry is missing. The ferry was carrying a large number of people.

PIECE OF PLANE LINE ANTENNA'S IS FOUND AT SEA

Piece of plane line antenna is found at sea. The piece was found floating in the water.

High Duty Group Gave \$700,000 to Coolidge Drive

High Duty Group gave \$700,000 to Coolidge Drive. The group was formed to support the drive.

High Duty Group gave \$700,000 to Coolidge Drive. The group was formed to support the drive.

MURDER SOUGHT TO KEEP SEA TRIP SECRET, NID SAYS

Murder sought to keep sea trip secret, Nid says. The murder was committed to keep the trip secret.

Grand Jury Returns Verdict On Duke of Savoy Manslaughter Charge

Grand Jury returns verdict on Duke of Savoy. The verdict was returned on the manslaughter charge.

FOR MORE LONGEVITY

For more longevity. The article discusses ways to increase longevity.

FOR MORE LONGEVITY



SOMERS NAMED AS HEAD OF NEW EXCHANGE BANK

Somers named as head of new exchange bank. The bank was formed to provide a new exchange.

STOCKS CRASH IN HUSH TOSELL: BILLIONS LOST

Market, Wall Street
Crash in Hush to
Sell, Billions Lost

Market, Wall Street Crash in Hush to Sell, Billions Lost. The market crashed in a hush, resulting in billions of dollars being lost.

Market, Wall Street Crash in Hush to Sell, Billions Lost. The market crashed in a hush, resulting in billions of dollars being lost.

**JOBLESS MEN
KEEP GOING
WE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

MB
41400

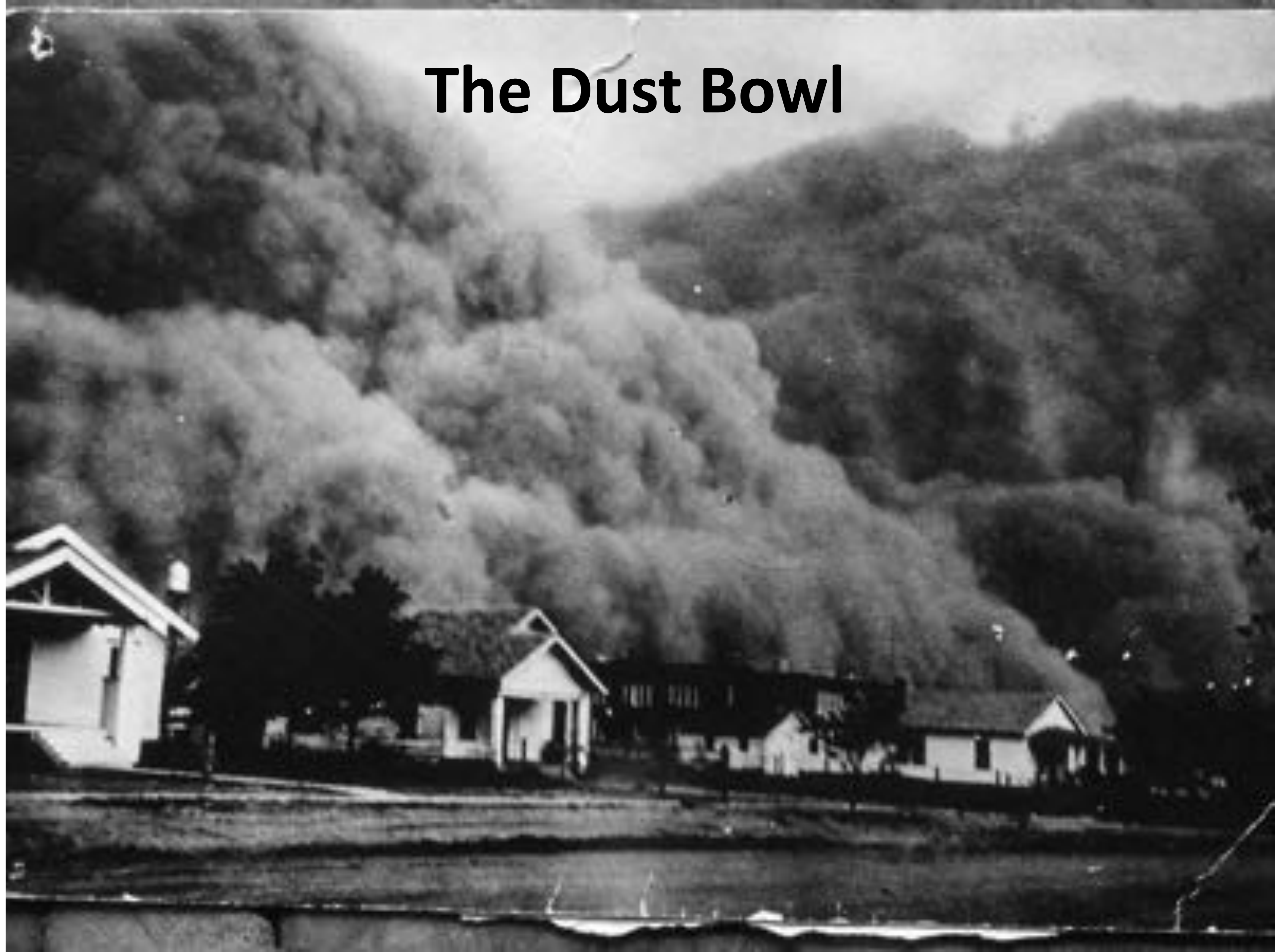




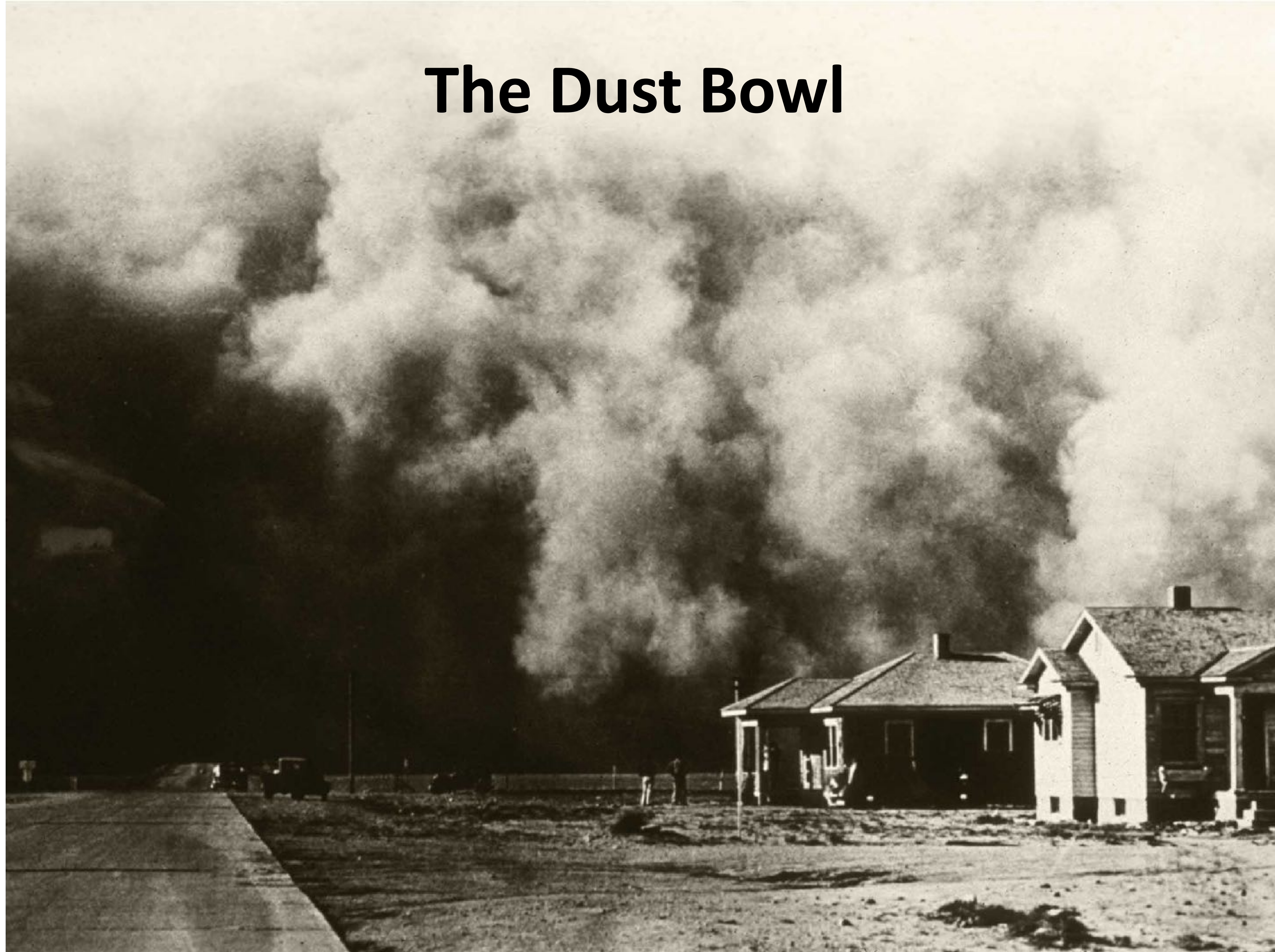
The Dust Bowl

- Also called Dirty Thirties
- Severe dust storms in the American and Canadian prairies in the 1930s
- Due to drought, wrong methods of cultivation and mechanization, there was wind erosion
- Caused terrible destruction to agriculture
- Tens of thousands of poor people had to leave their farms
 - These families from Oklahoma (who migrated to California) came to be called the “Okies”

The Dust Bowl



The Dust Bowl



The American Dream

- The Americans' dream of success
 - which should be easy and quick
 - and the result of hard work
- Inspired by
 - The Frontier
 - Gold Rush
 - Capitalism
- Related concepts
 - America is the New World promised by God
 - The ideal of the self-made man
 - Americans have the freedom to expand (to go West and explore new frontiers)
- Related signs of success
 - Car, suburban house (with a backyard), furniture and machines

The Failure of the American Dream

- Criticism of the American Dream
 - Contradictions between idealism and materialism
 - The realization that success is not so easy
 - The reality of inequality
- The Great Depression witnessed the failure of the American Dream
 - Futile obsession with happiness and success
 - Joblessness and poverty
 - Disorientation, drinking, drugs, depression, suicide

Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty* (1935)

- *Waiting for Lefty* is a one-act Agit-Prop play in eight episodes (involving seven vignettes separated by blackouts)
- The main setting is a union hall, where the members wait to take a strike vote, and the audience is part of the meeting
- The corrupt union leader Harry Fatt discourages the members from strike. Those who support the strike are mocked as Communists (called “red”)
- But the support for a strike is high, and the workers nervously await the arrival of the leader of the strike faction, Lefty Costello

The Waiting

- As they wait, members of the strike committee address the workers
 - Each tells the story of how he came to be involved in the union and convinced of the necessity for a strike.
 - These individual stories are sketched in a series of vignettes, played out in a small spotlit area of the stage.
 - Each is a story of unjust victimization, mirroring Fatt's heavy-handed attempts to control the union meeting.
- The news arrives that Lefty has been murdered, and the meeting erupts in a unanimous demand to “Strike! Strike!”

Arthur Miller (1915-2005)

- Born in Manhattan, New York, to Jewish immigrants on October 17, 1915
- In 1928, Miller's family moved to Brooklyn, which would serve as the setting for a number of his plays
- Reached youth when America was in the midst of the Great Depression
 - In response to this, his plays display a cynicism regarding wealth and conspicuous consumption
- Had a conflicted relationship with his uncle, Manny Newman, also a salesman who imagined a continuous competition between his son and Miller
- Success in Broadway came with All My Sons (1947)
- Married Marilyn Monroe in 1956; they divorced in 1961
- Politically active; in support of Communist party during the time of red scare
- Died on February 10, 2005

Miller's Literary Life

- The Man Who Had All the Luck (1944)
 - The first play of Miller to reach Broadway
 - Closed after just 4 plays
- All My Sons (1947)
- Death of a Salesman (1949)
- The Crucible (1953)
- A View From the Bridge (1955)
- Following that for the next 8 years no play was staged

Miller's Return to the New York Stage

- After the Fall (1964)
 - Semi-autobiographical
 - Based of his marriage to Marilyn Monroe
- Incident at Vichy (1964)
 - Nazi persecution of the Jews
- The Price (1968)
 - 2 brothers meet after the death of their father to arrange the of his furniture
- The Creation of the World and Other Business (1972)
 - Serio-comic rewriting of the story of Adam and Eve
- Elegy for a Lady (1982)
- Some Kind of Love Story (1982)
 - Relationship between a prostitute and a private detective

Introduction to Death of a Salesman (1949)

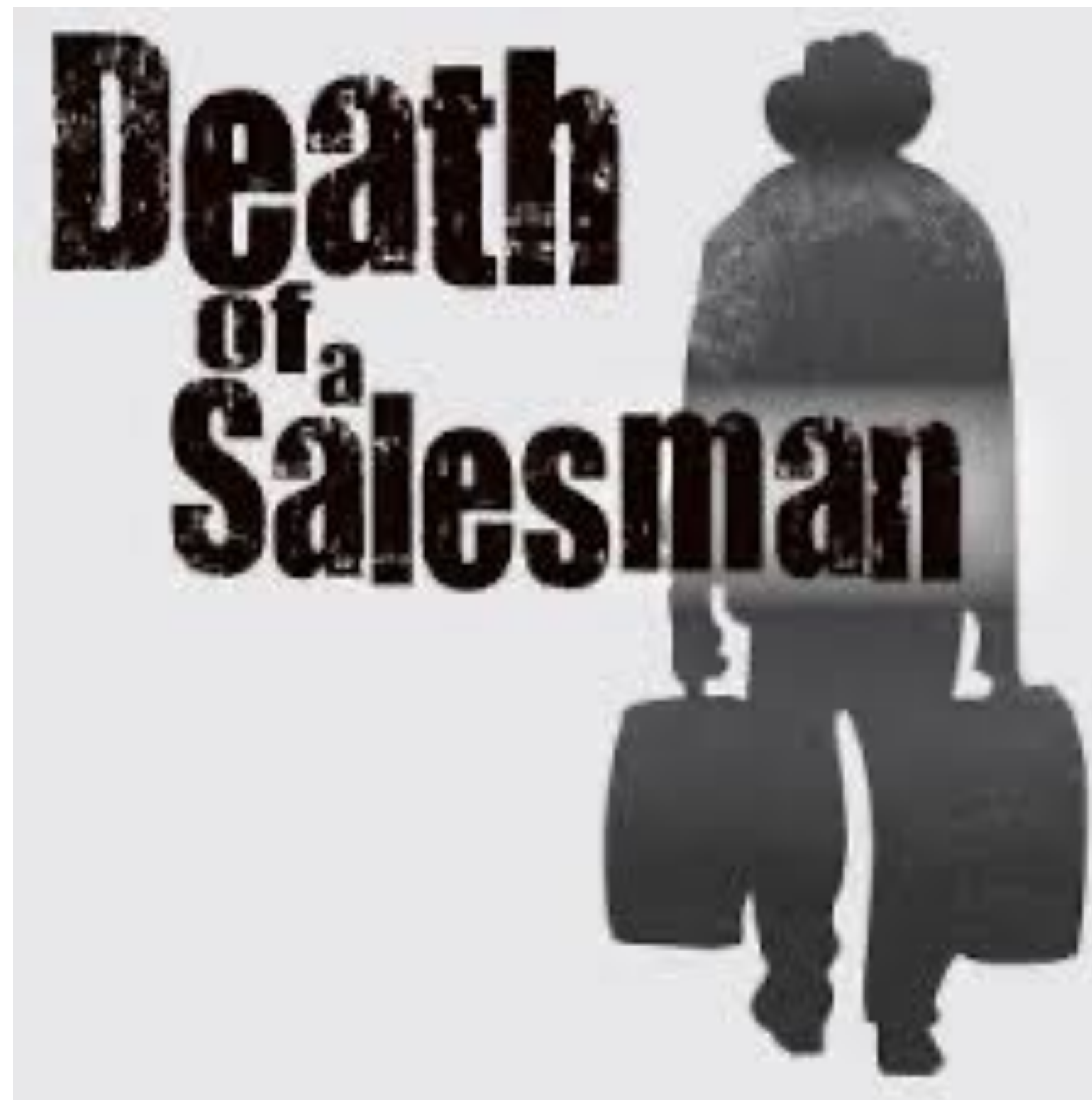
- Miller's masterpiece
- The first great American tragedy
- This play ironically employs the elements of a classical tragedy to show the tragedy not of a hero, but of a "low man"
- Setting: New York City and Boston in the late 1940s
- Major Issues:
 - American Dream
 - Father-Son Relationships
 - The common man ("Low man") as a tragic hero
- Styles: Combination of Expressionism and Realism

Awards for Death of a Salesman

- Pulitzer Prize (1949)
- New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play
- Tony Award for Best Play
- 1951 film got Academy Awards

Controversy

- Death of a Salesman was seen as un-American
- Suspected of being a Communist sympathizer
- Miller has troubles with the HUAC/McCarthy panel hearings
- In 1953 Miller was denied a passport
- Five years later, Miller convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to name his political associates, but later the conviction was overturned



TES STUDY MATERIAL

The Loman Family

- Willy Loman is a salesman in his 60s
- In the first scene
 - Willy returns home from a failed business trip
 - Tells his wife Linda that he has made little money on his commission-only salary
 - Worries over the payments due on his car and other appliances
- Willy's sons Happy and Biff
 - In their 30s
 - Happy works as an assistant to the assistant buyer at a retail store
 - Biff has been drifting from one job to the next on account of his kleptomania, and has now suddenly returned from the west
 - Biff had been a star footballer in school
 - Biff failed math and could not attend university

The Past and Present

- Willy sometimes talks to himself and hallucinates
 - He often remembers his brother Ben who became a successful businessman in Africa (probably by illicit means); and urged Willy to go with him to Alaska
 - Linda tells Biff that Willy has been secretly attempting suicide
- Willy and Biff
 - Willy wants Biff to fulfill his dream of success
 - He always blames Biff for having failed math
 - He compares Biff to Charley's son Bernard
- The two sons plan to set up a sports goods shop
 - They plan to borrow money from Biff's former employer
 - Willy is delighted and hopeful to know that

Setbacks

- Willy has been fired from his job
 - He tells Charley, his neighbour about this, but not Linda
 - He never expected this because his employer Howard Wagner was his old friend's son, and Willy had even named the boy
 - He borrows money from Charley once again
- Happy and Biff take Willy out to a dinner in a restaurant
 - Happy flirts with the girls Miss Forsythe and Letta, who are probably prostitutes
 - They disclose the truth that their business plan did not work out

Confrontation

- In the washroom of the restaurant
 - Willy's thoughts drift to the day when the teenager Biff discovered that his father was having an affair with "the Woman"
 - This caused a rift between father and son
 - Willy has been considering killing himself so that Biff could start something with the insurance money
 - Willy also wants Biff to stop hating him
- Later, at home, Biff confronts his father
 - Tells him how Willy's dream destroyed his life
 - Biff bursts into tears and kisses his father
 - Willy is happy to know that his son loves him, after all
- At night, Willy speeds away in the car when his family is in bed
 - "The music crashes down" to symbolize Willy's suicide

The Requiem

- In the requiem, Linda and Happy stand in shock after Willy's poorly attended funeral.
- Biff states that Willy had the wrong dreams
- Charley defends Willy as a victim of his profession
 - Says, "A salesman is got to dream"
- Biff invites Happy to go back out West with him
- Happy declares that he will stay in New York itself to validate Willy's death
- Linda asks Willy for forgiveness for being unable to cry
- She begins to sob, repeating "We're free. . . ."
 - Literally she might mean that after 30 years they have finally paid off the instalments on their house
- All exit, and the flute melody is heard as the curtain falls

Themes

- Appearance vs Reality
- Individual vs Society
- Father-son Relationship
- The consequences of materialism
- The failure of the American Dream

Domestic Realism in the Play

- Play centred on domestic realism
- Used elements of expressionism and symbolism to transmute the story into tragedy
- Willy represents the common illusion of the whole society
 - Withdraws from his present disappointments into memories of the past
 - In the same way the society is after illusions rather than reality

All My Sons (1947)

- Based on a true story from a newspaper report
- Influence of Ibsen's The Wild Duck
 - Two business partners; one is forced to take moral and legal responsibility for the other
- Criticism of American Dream

The Crucible (1953)

- Set against Salem witch trials
 - In 1692, in the extremely religious Puritan village of Salem in Massachusetts, certain girls who fell victims to hallucinations and seizures were accused of witchcraft
 - These girls accused other villagers, leading to a mass hysteria
 - By the end of the year, nineteen people (and two dogs) had been convicted and hanged for witchcraft
- Written during the 1930s anti-communist “witch-trials” of Senator Joseph McCarthy
- Beyond these historical references, Miller’s play is a powerful and timeless depiction of how intolerance and hysteria can intersect and tear a community apart

McCarthyism

- A highly controversial and scandalous episode in American political and cultural history
- In the 1950s, US Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy from the state of Wisconsin initiated a period of high drama by accusing many prominent members in American politics, culture and arts of holding pro-communist beliefs
- A high-level committee was formed to expose such people in prominent positions
 - This resulted in a witch hunt against many innocent people
 - Many writers and artists were blacklisted

McCarthyism

- The period reflects on the Red Scare phenomenon
 - The fear and insecurity of the Western countries towards the rise of communist Soviet Union as a global power and its increasing geographical expansion to the west by way of its satellite states in Eastern Europe
- The era had a deep imprint on the fields of literature and arts
 - It brought to the forefront the concerns of alleged disloyalty and anti-American views prevalent among many prominent progressive writers, actors and directors
- Arthur Miller's play The Crucible is a thinly-veiled expose of the culture of paranoia of the McCarthy era

The Man Who Had All the Luck (2002)

- Centers on David Beeves a young self taught Midwestern automobile mechanic
- Follows three and a half years of the protagonist's life
- Discovers he is blessed with what appears to be almost supernatural good fortune that allows him to overcome every seemingly insurmountable obstacle that crosses his path while those around him fall in defeat

Other Plays

- The American Clock (1980)
 - Portrays 1930s America during the Great Depression
- The Last Yankee (1993)
 - A play in two parts, which is set in a mental institution
 - Focuses on the relationships of two couples, Leroy and Patricia Hamilton, married many years with seven children, and John and Karen Frick, a childless couple

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)

- Born Thomas Lanier Williams in Columbus , Mississippi on March 26, 1911
- Later moved to New Orleans, a place which is portrayed in much of his writing
- Won the Pulitzer Prize for drama twice, for the plays A Street Car Named Desire, and the Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
- His plays have been adapted to film more frequently and artfully than of any other American playwright

Domestic Realism of Williams

- Focused on social misfits
 - Explored the private pains and passions of lonely individuals
 - Task of living in the world is unendurable
- His personal life and experiences have been the direct subject matter for his dramas.
- He uses his experiences so as to universalize them through the means of the stage
- Used subtly poetic, rhythmic and emotional language
 - Called his style “poetic naturalism”
 - Referring to the poetic edge present in his style of dramatic realism

- Williams called his style “poetic naturalism” —referring to the poetic edge present in his style of dramatic realism
- His personal life and experiences have been the direct subject matter for his dramas.
- He uses his experiences so as to universalize them through the means of the stage
- His plays seemed preoccupied with the extremes of human brutality and sexual behavior: Williams himself often commented on the violence in his own work, which to him seemed part of the human condition

The Glass Menagerie (1944)

- Memory play set in St Louis during the Great Depression
- Innovative techniques
 - Onstage screen on which words and images relevant to the action are projected
 - Powerful use of music
- Tom Wingfield, a merchant sailor, talks directly to the audience about the play; then he becomes the character in the play
- Only three more characters: Amanda, Laura and Jim



TES STUDY MATERIAL

Tom and his father

- Tom
 - Aspiring poet
 - Works in shoe warehouse
 - Escapes in liquor, movies, literature
- His father, Mr Wingfield
 - Worked in the telephone company
 - Fell in love with long distances and abandoned the family years ago
 - All they heard from him was a postcard from Mexico
 - His picture hangs prominently in the drawing room

The Women

- Amanda
 - Originally from a genteel Southern family
 - Tells nostalgic stories of her youth and of her 17 suitors
 - Obsessed with her daughter Laura getting a gentleman caller
 - Sells magazine subscriptions to make money
- Laura
 - Invalid; wears a brace on leg
 - Extremely shy
 - Was enrolled in a business college, but drops out and wandered about alone; Amanda has just discovered this
- Keeps a collection of glass animals on the mantelpiece, some of which Tom accidentally breaks during an argument

Jim O'Connor

- Tom's friend from the warehouse who comes for dinner
- Devoted to professional achievement
- Laura had a crush on him in high school
- Tom confides in him that he has used the money for the electric bill to join merchant marine; he wants adventure
- Laura is shy and refuses to eat dinner with the others
- Amanda wears a flamboyant dress from her youth
- After dinner, lights go out because of unpaid bill and candles are lit

Jim O'Connor

- Jim's warmth helps Laura give up her shyness
- Laura recalls that he used to call her Blue Roses (she had pleurosis)
- Jim praises her uniqueness and tells her not to be shy
- Laura shows him her favourite unicorn
- They dance; unicorn falls & loses its horn – becomes a normal horse
- Jim kisses her and apologizes; he is engaged

The Ending

- Laura is like the unicorn that lost its peculiarity which set it apart from other horses
 - Jim's attention has made her a normal girl
- She gives Jim the broken unicorn as a souvenir
- Amanda accuses Tom after Jim leaves
- Tom watches the women from the fire escape (on to which he frequently steps throughout the play)
 - Not long after, he lost his job
 - Leaves family
- But unable to leave behind his guilty memories: true escape is impossible

A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)

- Blanche DuBois
 - A Southern beauty from Laurel, Mississippi
 - Schoolteacher out of job because of bad nerves
 - Arrives in New Orleans with a trunk
 - To stay with her sister Stella, married to Stanley Kowalski
 - Says she first took a streetcar named Desire, then one named Cemeteries and reached Elysian Fields
 - Apparently financially broke but has an upper-class condescending attitude
 - Says their ancestral home Belle Reve is lost (actually in mortgage)
- Drinks heavily in secret; always takes bath; shuns bright light to hide her age and “real” self

The “Ideal” Couple

- Stella Kowalski
 - Submissive and doting wife of Stanley; pregnant
 - Lives in 2-room apartment in a noisy neighbourhood
 - Steve and Eunice are neighbours
 - Back wall of apartment becomes transparent and street scenes become visible
- Stanley Kowalski
 - Polish descent (hates being called a Polack; says he is 100% American)
 - Auto-parts dealer
 - Hates Blanche’s aristocratic blood (which Stella has given up for him) and attitude
- Controls and possesses Stella completely; makes overtly sexual gestures to her, like throwing her a packet of meat

Stanley's Violence to Stella

- Stanley brings home his friends; they drink and play poker
 - During the game, Blanche gets intimate with Mitch (who lives with a dying mother)
 - Stanley gets angry; throws out the radio Blanche had turned on; slaps a protesting Stella who takes refuge with Eunice
 - Immediately afterwards he is remorseful, bellows for Stella in the street, and they are reunited in an embrace
- The next day Stella tells a horrified Blanche that Stanley has always been violent and that it is just his bad habit
- Blanche wants Stella to leave him, and says they could take the help of Shep Huntleigh, Blanche's former suitor, a millionaire
- For Stella, their physical relationship makes up for everything

Blanche's Double Standards

- Stanley overhears Blanche describe him as brutish
- When Stella sees Stanley, she runs to him and embraces him
- Stanley confronts Blanche about her disreputable past
 - Blanche denies it; feels terribly shaken
- Blanche has a date with Mitch
 - While she waits for Mitch, she flirts with a teenager newspaper collector and kisses him passionately
 - Reveals to Mitch her past
 - Her young husband Allan Grey had shot himself when she confronted him about his affair with an older man
 - Polka music (Varsouviana) is heard whenever she mentions her husband
- Doesn't allow Mitch to get physically close to her

Birthday party bungled

- A month later – Blanche's birthday
 - Stela decorates house for a party
 - Blanche is taking a bath
 - Stanley tells Stella of Blanche's numerous sexual liaisons at a disreputable hotel after her husband's death
 - Stella is horrified that Stanley has told Mitch also in order to prevent him from marrying Blanche
 - Mitch doesn't join them for dinner
 - Stanley gives Blanche a ticket to return to Laurel
 - Stella is disturbed by Stanley's cruelty
- Stella goes into labour just then

Mitch confronts Blanche

- Blanche is feeling nervous and drinks; Varsouviana music plays in her head throughout
- Mitch arrives and tells her he has heard stories of her immoral past from different people
 - Blanche breaks down and admits that after her husband's death, she turned to strangers for love and companionship
- A blind Mexican woman comes just then, selling funeral flowers
 - Blanche is shocked that she is selling funeral flowers
- Mitch tells her he can't marry her because she can't live in the same house as his mother
- Mitch tries to have sex with her
 - This is what Blanche had refused him till then
 - She calls out "Fire" and he leaves

The Rape

- Stanley arrives and finds Blanche dressed up
- She says
 - She is leaving with Shep Huntleigh who had sent her a telegram
 - She sent Mitch away when he told her what he had heard from Stanley, and Mitch returned with roses and apologies
- Stanley exposes her lies and advances on her menacingly
- The back wall of the apartment suddenly becomes transparent
 - The sidewalk is seen, where a drunkard pursues a prostitute
 - A police whistle is heard and they disappear.
 - The Negro woman, an acquaintance of Eunice, comes around the corner searching through the prostitute's purse
- Then Stanley rapes her

Blanche is sent away

- Weeks later, Stella is home with her baby
- Stella is crying and packing Blanche's bag, and Eunice helps
- Blanche is being sent away to an asylum
- Blanche comes out of the bath; thinks she is going with Shep
- She is hysterical when
 - She hears Stanley playing poker with his friends
 - She sees the doctor & nurse who have come to take her
- The men try to subdue her
 - Mitch tries to protest and is in tears
- The doctor gently leads Blanche out and she says, "Whoever you are – I have always depended on the kindness of strangers"
- Stella watches with her baby in her hand
 - Stanley lovingly caresses her
- The men resume their game

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955)

- Southern family
- Loveless marriage of Brick (aging football hero, indifferent to family fortune, drunkard) and Maggie (the Cat)
 - Haven't slept together for a long time
 - Maggie jealous of Brick's football buddy, Skipper
- Main action centres on their interaction with Brick's family, the wealthy Pollitts, over a family gathering
 - Issues bottled up inside the characters find a vent
- Brick's family
 - Big Daddy's birthday is celebrated
 - It is revealed to him and Big Mama that he has cancer
- Brick's brother Gooper and his wife Mae
 - Maggie fears that they would inherit Big Daddy's estate

Other Plays

- The Rose Tattoo (1951): Tells the story of an Italian-American widow in Louisiana who has allowed herself to withdraw from the world after her husband's death, and expects her daughter to do the same
- Camino Real (1953): Developed from Williams's one act play, Ten Blocks on the Camino Real
- The play takes its title from its setting, alluded to El Camino Real, a dead-end place in a Spanish-speaking town surrounded by desert with sporadic transportation to the outside world
- Williams described it as “nothing more nor less than my conception of the time and the world I live in”

William Faulkner (1897-1962)

- Born William Cuthbert Falkner in New Albany, Mississippi in 1897.
- Very colourful, old-money southern family.
- His great grandfather “The Colonel,” active in government and a successful novelist.
- His grandfather was a well-to-do lawyer who owned a railroad and a bank.
- Parents moved to Oxford when Faulkner was 5.

- Faulkner dropped out of high school, largely self-educated.
- Never finished a degree, but liked to give people the impression he was a natural genius.
- Voracious reader
- Too short to fight in WWI; as Britisher joined the Royal Canadian Air Force.
- Changed the spelling of his name.
- War ended before he could fly a single mission.
- Returned to Oxford with the story that he had fought in the trenches.

- Odd jobs including, most famously, the postmaster at the Ole Miss post office.
- Early 1920s began to write poetry seriously and published his first book of poetry in 1924.
- His first novel, *Soldier's Pay* (1926), was written based in part of his RAF experience.
- Walking tour from Paris to Rome, then returned to Oxford.
- Focus on Mississippi as his subject matter.
- Married Estelle, sweetheart of his youth.

- From 1929-1932 he published *The Sound and the Fury*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, and *Sanctuary* (his first best seller).
- In 1932 he went to Hollywood to work as screenplay writer
- His second great period of literary activity occurred between 1936-1942, when he published *Absalom, Absalom!*, *The Unvanquished*, *The Hamlet*, and *Go Down, Moses*.
- Nobel Prize in Literature in 1949.
- Died 1962.

Yoknapatawpha County

- The story of Eden transplanted to Mississippi: a beautiful place that is corrupted by sin and the subsequent fall that results.
- By the time *Absalom* opens, in September 1909, the destruction caused by this fall—represented by the Civil War—is already more than 40 years old.



- According to Faulkner, Yoknapatawpha means “water flowing slow through the flatland”

MATERIAL

Light in August (1932)

- Southern Gothic
- Two strangers arrive separately at Jefferson in Yoknapawpha
 - Lena Grove: pregnant white woman looking for the father of her unborn child
 - Joe Christmas: Passes as a white man; has a secret black ancestry

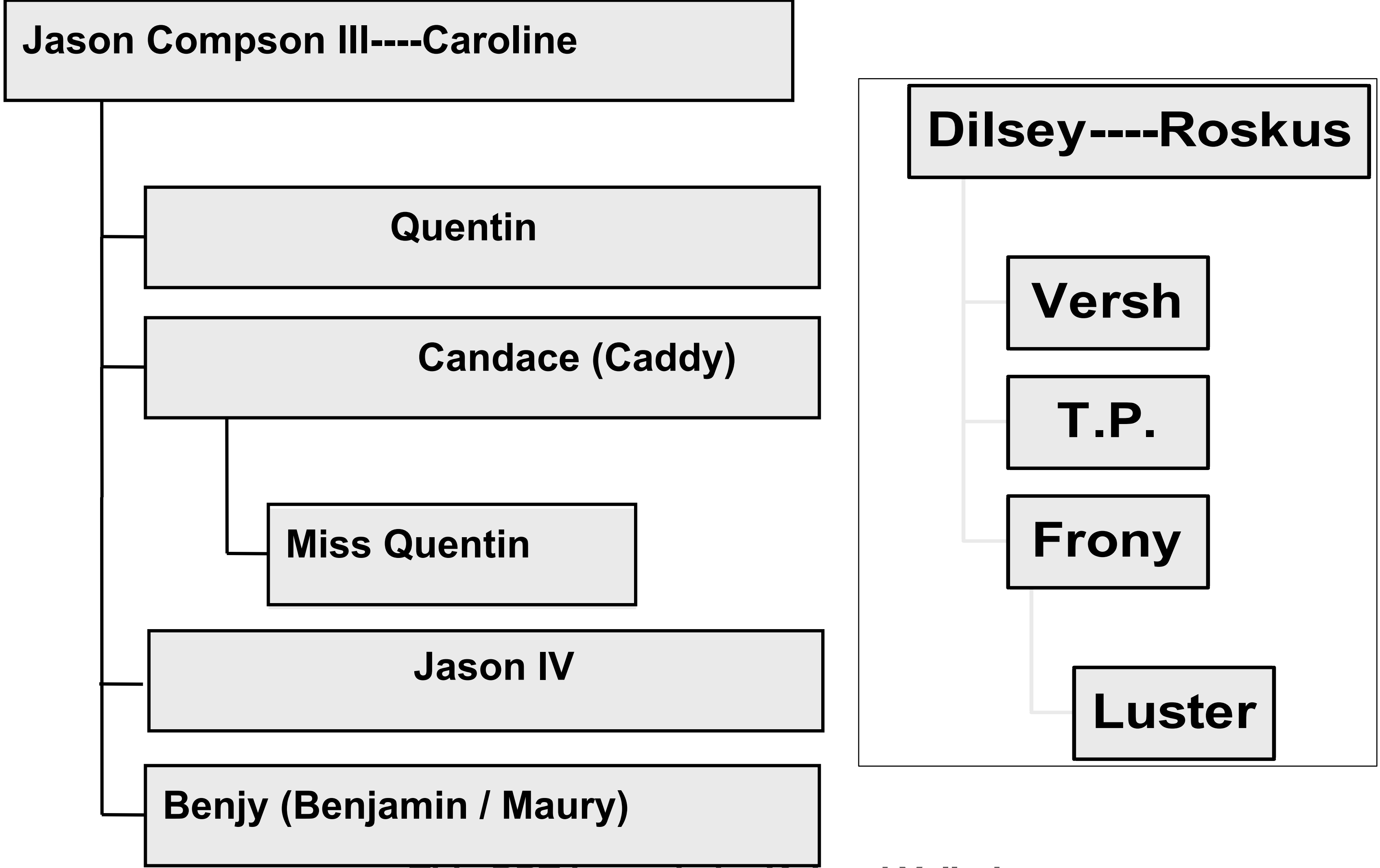
Absalom! Absalom! (1936)

- Southern Gothic
- Life of three families, especially Thomas Sutpen
 - Sutpen comes to Mississippi to become rich
- Story told in flashbacks, mainly by Quentin Compson to his roommate Shreve; also memories of Quentin's father and grandfather
- Shows the rise and fall of Southern plantation culture, and the weaknesses of an idealistic South

The Sound and the Fury (1929)

- Set in Jefferson, Mississippi in the fictional Yoknapawpha
- The Compsons
 - Decadent Southern aristocratic family
- 4 sections narrated by Benjy, Quentin, Jason, unnamed narrator
- From stream-of-consciousness to omniscient third person narration
- Central character Caddy; never appears in real time
- Chronology disrupted
 - Chronological order: Quentin, Jason, Benjy, unnamed narrator

The Sound and the Fury



Benjy's section: April 7, 1928

- Mentally-retarded 33-year-old
- Caretakers: Versh, TP, Luster
- Passions are fire, golf course which the family sold, Caddy
- Caddy in childhood smells like trees; Benjy cries when she grows older and loses that smell along with her innocence
- Remembers
 - Grandmother Damuddy's death; while children play outside, Caddy sits in the river; later when she climbs a tree to look into the house, the others see her muddy drawers
 - His name changed from Maury when his disability was discovered
 - Caddy's marriage and divorce
 - Benjy's castration which was done when he attacked a girl
- Sees Miss Quentin (Caddy's daughter) sneak out of her room and run away

Quentin's section: June 2, 1910

- Eldest son who goes to Harvard
 - Family sold golf course to make money for this
 - Obsessed with
 - Southern ideal of chivalry and Caddy's virginity and purity
- Two streams
 - The last day he spends at Harvard
 - His memories of Caddy
 - Pregnant, Caddy married Herbert Head whom Quentin despised
 - Herbert sent Caddy and her daughter home when he found out that the child is not his

Quentin

- Disturbed by Caddy's sexual promiscuity & illegitimate pregnancy
- Tells father he committed incest with Caddy so that he can share her guilt and punishment and take responsibility for her sin

Quentin's Day

- Gets ready meticulously this morning
- Cuts classes
- Gives broken alarm clock for repair
- Washes suit when it gets dirty
- Posts two letters
- An Italian girl follows him about
 - He makes a futile attempt to care for her by finding her home
 - Cannot communicate with her
 - Calls her “sister”
- Buys two irons; ties them to his legs and drowns himself
- Unreliable narrator, whose narrative style is rambling, without chronology, grammar, spelling, or punctuation
- Shows his deteriorating state of mind

Jason's Section: April 6, 1928

- Jason
 - The third child of the family, after Quentin and Caddy
 - Favourite of their hypochondriac mother, Caroline
 - He manages the family's finances
 - Cynical and bitter; blames Caddy for all his troubles
 - Blackmails Caddy into making him the guardian of her daughter, also called Quentin, and steals the cheques Caddy pays for her
- Jason spends the day chasing Quentin who, like her mother, is promiscuous and has run away with a circus worker
- Brings her back, locks her in her room, from where she would later run away
- First of the narratives told in a linear fashion

Fourth Section: April 8, 1928

- Dilsey's activities on Easter Sunday
 - Powerful matriarch of the black family servants
 - Strong religious faith; she takes her family to a coloured church
 - Looks outward, unlike the Compsons who look inward, and whose deterioration she has witnessed
- The family discover that Quentin has run away with all of Jason's savings
- Jason once again sets off to find her
- Luster drives Benjy as usual to the cemetery
 - Benjy howls hysterically when Luster deviates from the set routine
- Jason slaps Luster and turns the carriage the usual way, and Benjy is quiet; his eyes are "empty and blue and serene again"

Appendix

- Complete family history
- Caddy is in Paris during the German occupation of France
- The librarian of Yoknapatawpha wants to save her
 - Shows Jason her picture in a magazine and Jason denies that it is Caddy
- Shows Dilsey the picture and she pretends to be unable to see it, because she understands that Caddy neither wants nor needs to be saved from the Germans, because nothing else remains for her

Other Works

- If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem (1939): Originally published under the title Wild Palms, which is the title of the one of the two interwoven stories which constitute the novel
- Wild Palms- a love story focuses on the distinct relationship between Harry and Charlotte
- Old Palms- a river story is the story of a convict who, while being forced to help victims of a flood, rescues a pregnant woman

Sartoris (1929)

- First of Faulkner's novels set in Yoknapatawpha county
- Portrays the decay of the Mississippi aristocracy following the social upheaval of the American civil war
- Explores the effects of time on the characters

Other Works

- Snopes Trilogy
 - Trilogy includes The Hamlet (1940), The Town (1957) and The Mansion (1959)
- Sanctuary
 - Describes the rape and abduction of a well-bred Mississippi college girl, Temple Drake, during the prohibition era

John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

- Born on 27 February 1902 in Salinas, California
- Attended Stanford University
- Works often dealt with social and economic causes
- His fiction combines realism and romance , but not always harmoniously
- Served as a war correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune during World War II
- Got the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1962
- Died of heart disease on December 20, 1968

Works

- Cup of Gold (1929)
 - A romantic novel based on the career of Sir Henry Morgan, the buccaneer
- Tortilla Flat (1935)
 - Humorous depiction of the lives of paisanos (a group of countrymen who are drunkards and vagabonds) in Monterey, California
- The Pearl (1948)
 - Short parable about a Mexican fisherman who finds a great pearl that brings evil to his family
- The Winter of Our Discontent (1961)
 - Depicts the moral collapse of a descendent of an old New England family, under the pressures of the mid 20th century

Works

- Dustbowl Trilogy
 - In Dubious Battle (1936) : Tells the story of a fruit pickers' strike in California which is both aided and damaged by the help of "the Party"
 - Of Mice and Men (1937)
 - The Grapes of Wrath (1939)
- East of Eden (1952): Long family saga set in the Salinas Valley
 - Uses the theme of Cain and Abel
 - Symbolic and realistic account of man's struggles between good and evil
- The Reign of Pippin IV (1957): Light-hearted comedy about a 20th century French king

The Grapes of Wrath (1939)

- Set in the Great Depression
- Describes a family of sharecroppers, the Joads
 - Driven from their land in Oklahoma due to the Dust Bowl (dust storms)
 - Going to California in search of jobs, land, dignity and future
- Themes of exploitation and oppression of workers, workers' trade unions

Of Mice and Men (1937)

- Title taken from Burns' "To a Mouse"
- Two travelling ranch workers, George Milton and Lennie Small
 - Lennie is a man of great strength, but mentally retarded
 - Move from place to place, trying to make money
 - Their shared (and failed) dream is to settle down in their own farm
 - Set in 1930s America, during The Great Depression
 - Themes of racism, loneliness, mental illness, and the struggle for personal independence
- Lennie accidentally kills a woman
- George saves Lennie from misery
 - Shoots him at the back of his head
- This is an act of love

Edward Albee (1928-2016)

- American representative of the Theatre of the Absurd
- Unsympathetic examination of the modern condition
- Major plays
 - The Zoo Story
 - The Sandbox
 - The American Dream
 - Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
 - The Goat, or Who's Sylvia?
 - Lolita (adaptation of Nabokov novel)

The Zoo Story (1959)

- One-act play originally titled “Peter and Jerry”
- A park bench in New York city’s Central Park
- Peter
 - Middle-aged publishing executive
 - Has a wife, two daughters, two cats and two parakeets
 - Reading a book
- Jerry
 - Isolated, disheartened man
 - Desperate to have meaningful conversation with someone
- Sits down beside Peter, talks to him about his visit to the zoo, tells him stories of Jerry and the Dog, etc

Peter gets a shock

- Peter finally says he has to go home.
- Jerry asks him to stay longer and starts tickling him until Peter starts laughing hysterically
- Still talking about the animals in the zoo, Jerry tries to push him off the bench, saying it is Jerry's bench
- Peter gets angry
- Jerry takes out a knife, then tosses it at Peter's feet as if it is a cue for him to take it
- Peter takes the knife and holds it at Jerry
- Jerry runs at Peter and impales himself on the knife
- Peter is horrified and moves away with the knife inside Jerry
- Jerry is dying, thanks Peter, and asks him to leave before some one comes.
- As a terrified Peter watches, Jerry dies

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (1962)

- Set in the campus of a New England university
- Title is a pun on a song from Disney's Three Little Pigs
- Three acts: Fun and Games; Walpurgisnacht; The Exorcism

Two Couples

- George and Martha
 - Middle-aged couple
 - Associate Professor of History and daughter of the college president
 - Invite younger couple Nick and Honey, whom they met at a party
- Nick and Honey
 - Nick is the newly appointed professor of biology (Martha thinks he teaches maths)
 - Honey is a mousy (drab and unattractive) woman

Abuses

- George and Martha are bitter and frustrated; drunk
- They start verbal and later physical abuse of each other, and of Nick and Honey also
- Attack each other's pretensions
- Play “games” that become violent and dangerous
- Nick and Honey are fascinated and embarrassed
- Honey frequently runs to the bathroom to vomit
- Nick tells George of Honey's “hysterical pregnancy” (feigned pregnancy in order to get married to him)
- George tells Nick about his classmate who accidentally killed his mother, then his father
- The men argue & insult each other over the topic of having children

Exorcism

- George and Martha drive the guests home, still arguing
- Meanwhile, Martha acts seductively to Nick
- George plans to tell Martha that their son has died
 - George brings some flowers, calling out in Spanish, “Flowers for the dead”
 - Both George and Martha talk about their son
 - During this, George recites the Latin mass for the dead
 - George says earlier that day someone brought a telegram saying their son was dead.
 - The description of the son matches his classmate who killed both his parents
 - Martha screams, “You can’t do that” and collapses
 - It is clear that the couple never had a son
 - Nick and Honey leave

The Meaning of the Title

- The play ends with George singing, “Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?” to Martha, whereupon she replies, “I am, George...I am.”
- The song means "Who is afraid to live without illusion?"
- The illusion of their son sustains George and Martha's tempestuous marriage
- Ultimately, George takes it upon himself to “kill” that illusion when Martha brings it too far into reality

Elmer Rice (1892-1957)

- New York dramatist, producer and novelist
- Graduated from the New York Law School , but soon abandoned this profession for writing
- Treated the evils of Nazism , the poverty of the Great Depression and racism in his plays
- Minority Report (1936) is his autobiography
- His novels include A Voyage to Purilia (1930) Imperial City (1937) and The Show Must Go On (1949)
- The Living Theatre (1959): Collection of essays on the theatre as a social institution

Plays

- On Trial (1914): Murder mystery employing the technique of the motion picture flashbacks to present the recollections of witnesses at a trial
- The Adding Machine (1923): Adapted techniques from German Expressionist theatre to depict the dehumanization of man in the 20th century
 - Play focuses on Mr. Zero, an accountant at a large, faceless company. After 25 years at his job, he discovers that he will be replaced by an adding machine.

More Plays

- The Street Scene (1929): Won Pulitzer Prize
- We, the People (1933)
- Judgment Day (1934)
- Between Two Worlds (1934)
- American Landscape (1938)
- Flight to the West (1941)
- A New Life (1943)

Some Modern(ist) Poets

William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

- An experimenter, an innovator, a revolutionary figure in American poetry
- Following Pound, he was one of the principal poets of the Imagist movement
- Later, he began to increasingly disagree with the values put forth by Pound and Eliot
 - He felt they were too attached to European culture and traditions
- Williams sought to invent an entirely fresh and singularly American poetic centered on the everyday circumstances of life and the lives of common people
- Influenced the Beat poets by the accessibility of his language

“The Red Wheel Barrow”

- His most famous poem, perhaps
- so much depends
- upon
- a red wheel
- barrow
- glazed with rain
- water
- beside the white
- chickens.

An Analysis

- Unusual view of an ordinary object
- The poem is composed of one sentence broken up at various intervals
 - An ordinary sentence transformed into poetry
 - With the use of careful word choice, attention to language, and unusual stanza breaks
 - Words used as a painter uses line and colour
- A “still life” poem

Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

- Pennsylvania- born poet
- Educated at Harvard and at New York University Law School
- His poems range from descriptive and dramatic lyrics to meditative and discursive discourse
- First book of poems, Harmonium (1923) : exhibited the influence of the English Romantics and French Symbolists
- Got Pulitzer Prize in 1955
- Harold Bloom, whose writings on Stevens include Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate, called him "the best and most representative American poet of our time."
- Died on August 2, 1955

“Sunday Morning”

- Argument: religious piety should be replaced by a fully lived life
- The poem presents an argument between
 - A woman, who feels guilty about not going to church on (probably Easter) Sunday and enjoying “coffee and oranges in a sunny chair” instead, and
 - Another voice, presumably that of the poet, which tries to persuade her to give up her attachment to dead things and dead ideas
- The focus alternates from what is happening in her mind, and his answers to her

The Woman Turns to Nature

- At the end of the poem, the voice of the poet and that of the woman come together in acceptance of an alternate form of worship
- Decay and death are inevitable, and an appreciation of that mutability enriches present experience
- The woman turns to the natural world, with its “old chaos of the sun” and its understanding of days and nights, beginning and ends

“Anecdote of the Jar”

- The poem reflects Stevens’s preoccupation with appearances or surfaces
- The poem’s twelve lines describe the placement of a jar on a hill in Tennessee; once placed, the jar reorders the landscape
- The description suggests the distortions of the landscape in the curved sides of a plain glass jar
- The new order is only that, a new order; it is not beauty
- Like many of his other poems, this poem suggests the changes wrought by the imagination upon reality

“The Emperor of Ice-Cream”

- This poem is set up as a counterpoint between a scene of a funeral and images of enjoyment
- The first lines suggest a wild sensual celebration, yet the temporary quality of it is suggested
- One should accept life in its transience and enjoy its vivid delights
- The second section presents a dead woman who, although she was poor, still managed to adorn her impoverished life
- She embroidered figures on her plain sheets, giving them life and color
- The sheets she embroidered should be her epitaph
- The poem suggests: Let each one take pleasure in the world in a manner that suits his or her ability to enjoy, because there is no other world. The final line echoes, “The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream.”

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

- Born in 1874, in San Francisco
- His father died when Frost was eleven years old
- Then he moved with his mother and younger sister to Lawrence, Massachusetts
- In 1895, he married Elinor Miriam White, and the couple moved to England
- Frost became friends with contemporary poets like Edward Thomas, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, and Ezra Pound

Poetry Collections

- Early poetry collections
 - A Boy's Will, 1913
 - North of Boston, 1914
- In 1915, returned to the US
- By the 1920s, he was the most celebrated poet in America
- More collections brought fame and four Pulitzer Prizes
 - New Hampshire, 1923
 - A Further Range, 1936
 - Steeple Bush, 1947
 - In the Clearing, 1962

Features of Poetry

- A poet of traditional verse forms and metrics
- Poetry principally associated with the life and landscape of New England
- Description of ordinary events in a rural setting
- Remained steadfastly aloof from the poetic movements and fashions of his time
- His poetry shows a searching and dark meditations on universal themes
- Modern elements
 - Adherence to language as it is actually spoken
 - Psychological complexity of characters
 - Layers of ambiguity and irony

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

- A traveler pauses late one snowy evening to admire the woods by which he passes
- He reflects that the owner of the woods, who lives in the village, will not see him stopping to “watch his woods fill up with snow”
- The speaker interrupts his reflections by imagining that his “little horse must think it queer” to stop without a farmhouse nearby on the “darkest evening of the year”
- Then, the speaker expands this conceit, suggesting that anxiety over this unexpected action causes the horse to shake his harness bells “To ask if there is some mistake.”
- By way of contrast, the speaker notes that “the only other sound’s the sweep/ Of easy wind and downy flake.”

“Miles to go before I sleep”

- By the poem’s end, one senses that there is more to these woods than meets the eye
- Finally, the speaker acknowledges that the “woods are lovely, dark and deep.”
- He seems reluctant, however, to pursue this insight more deeply, since he immediately observes that he has “promises to keep,/ And miles to go before [he] sleep[s].”
- The central focus of the poem is not the woods but the inward drama of the speaker as he reflects about and understands—or fails to understand—why he stops and why he finds the woods so captivating.

“The Road Not Taken”

- The traveler comes to a fork in a road through a “yellow wood”; wishes he could somehow manage to “travel both” routes; he rejects that aspiration as impractical
- The road he selects is “the one less traveled by,” suggesting the decision of an individualist, someone little inclined to follow the crowd.
- Almost immediately, however, he seems to contradict his own judgment: “Though as for that the passing there/ Had worn them really about the same.”

More Contradictions

- He decides to save the first, (perhaps) more travelled route for another day
- Then he confesses that he does not think it probable that he will return
 - This implies that this seemingly casual and inconsequential choice is really likely to be a crucial choice of life
- In the final stanza, the traveller says that he will be “telling this with a sigh,” which may connote regret
- His choice, in any event, “has made all the difference.”
- The traveller laments that the need to make a choice leaves many possibilities unfulfilled.

“Mending Wall”

- The poem is about two kinds of barriers—physical and emotional
- A stone wall separates the speaker’s property from his neighbour’s
- The two men meet in spring to walk the wall and jointly make repairs
- The speaker thinks the wall is unnecessary
 - Their apple and pine trees will not cross the boundary
- He says at the beginning of the poem: “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall.”
 - He wants to believe that there is a conscious force in nature that deliberately breaks down the stone wall on his property

Good Fences

- But the neighbor believes: “Good fences make good neighbors.”
- The speaker mischievously urges the neighbor to look beyond the old-fashioned folly of his adage; but the neighbor is unmoved
- The speaker thinks his neighbor is moving in the “darkness” of his outmoded mentality
- However, there is a “wall” in the speaker’s own mind, which prevents him from understanding his neighbor
- This is probably why he ends the poem by repeating the saying, “Good fences make good neighbors.”

“Birches”

- The speaker’s attention is first caught by a cluster of birch trees that were bowed by ice storms
- The sight reminds him of his boyhood sport of swinging on birch trees, a sport requiring poise and good judgment
- The adult speaker envies his childhood talent in playing the game of escaping from earth
- But he knows that such a game is not a permanent escape from earth and that part of the fun is in “coming back” to the earth which is “the right place for love.”

“After Apple-Picking”

- Written in the relatively young age of 39, the poem shows an old man's feelings
- After a hard day at picking apples, the speaker is exhausted and drowsy
- He describes vividly how he has tired of the harvest he had himself desired
 - Harvest not only of apples but of human efforts
- He feels sleepy now, and wonders if it is ordinary human sleep, or a sleep like the hibernation of the woodchuck, or even death

“Home Burial”

- Intensely dramatic poem on the death of a child, the collapse of a marriage & the limits of communication
- The child is buried in a family plot and the wife cannot overcome her grief
- She feels her husband is not grieving for the loss & a bitter quarrel ensues
- The husband and wife grieve in two different ways
- The wife, unable to understand his failure to express grief vocally, accuses him of indifference to their loss
- The husband considers this a groundless charge, and tries clumsily to assure her
- They fail to understand each other
- Finally she threatens to leave, while he threatens, “I’ll follow and bring you back by force. I will!”
- Frost himself knew the pain of the death of his children

“Fire and Ice”

- Extremely compact lyric
- The speaker considers the ancient debate over whether the world will end in fire or in ice
- At first the speaker thinks it will end in fire; and then says ice would offer an equally great end
- He speaks as if he doesn't really fear the kinds of destruction he imagines
- The poem begins by seeming to raise a serious issue, but then it ends by making light of its whole basic premise
- Instead of offering us profound wisdom on a weighty metaphysical dilemma, the speaker offers us a wry joke

The Decades record up to naturalism

- In 20th century America, each decade was referred to by a nickname that indicated its major features
 - 1890s - The Gay 90s
 - 1900s - The Aughties or Noughties
 - 1910s - (nothing)
 - 1920s - The Roaring 20s
 - 1930s - The Turbulent 30s, or The Threadbare 30s, or Dirty 30s
 - 1940s - The Flying 40s, sometimes The Fightin' 40s
 - 1950s - The Fabulous (Fab) 50s, or The Nifty 50s, Baby boom era
 - 1960s - The Swingin' 60s, sometimes The Psychedelic 60s
 - 1970s - The Disco Era ("accept no imitation"), The 'Me' Decade
 - 1980s - The Decade of Decadence, Greedy 80s, Egregious 80s
 - 1990s - The Naughty 90s

The Early 20th Century

- The century opened with
 - Influence of realism and naturalism
 - Freedom of subject matter
- Experimentation followed
 - Influence of Modernism
- Disillusionment with war (Roaring Twenties or Jazz Age)
 - Social, artistic, and cultural dynamism
 - Restless, defiant mood
 - Lost generation
- The Great Depression (1930s)

Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951)

- American novelist, short stories, poet, playwright
- The first writer from the United States (and the first from the Americas) to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature
- He was awkward, gangly, sensitive and bad at sports. He also had very bad acne and was teased mercilessly for his looks.
- Wrote satires of modern life, criticizing American capitalism and materialism in the interwar period
- Also, his novels were sympathetic views of middle-class American life in the 1920s
- Was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1926 for his novel, *Arrowsmith*. He was the first person who would not accept it.

Babbitt (1922)

- Satirical novel about American culture and society
- Protagonist George F. Babbitt as a successful middle-aged real estate man
- The first seven chapters follow Babbitt's life over the course of a single day
- Has a failed goal of becoming a lawyer
- Gradually, Babbitt realizes his dissatisfaction with “The American Dream”

Babbitt (1922)

- Babbitt starts a nonconformist life: he jumps into liberal politics; conducts an extramarital affair; goes on various vacations; and hangs out with would-be Bohemians and flappers. But each effort ends up disillusioning him to the concept of rebellion.
- Thus critiques the emptiness of middle class life and the social pressure toward conformity.
- Unorthodox writing style
- The controversy provoked by Babbitt was influential in the decision to award the Nobel Prize in Literature to Lewis in 1930

Arrowsmith (1925)

- Story of Martin Arrowsmith, a bright and scientifically minded young man
- He makes his way from a small town in the Midwest to the upper echelons of the scientific community
- Provides social commentary on the culture of science and the state and prospects of medicine in the US
- The book's climax deals with Arrowsmith's discovery of a bacteriophage that destroys bacteria and his experiences as he faces an outbreak of bubonic plague on a fictional Caribbean island.

Arrowsmith (1925)

- His scientific principles demand that he avoid mass use of the phage on the Island. Rigorous scientific understanding of the phage is more important than any lives on the Island lost due to lack of treatment.
- After his wife and all the other people who came with him from the institute to the island die of plague, he reluctantly abandons rigorous science and begins to treat everyone on the island with the phage.
- He considers his actions on the island to have been a complete betrayal of science and his principles.

Arrowsmith (1925)

- Describes many aspects of medical training, medical practice, scientific research, scientific fraud, medical ethics, public health, and of personal/professional conflicts that are still relevant today
- Won the Pulitzer, which Lewis declined
- Inspired several generations of pre-medical and medical students

Other Novels

- Ann Vickers (1933)
- It Can't Happen Here (1935)
- The Prodigal Parents (1938)
- Gideon Planish (1943)
- Cass Timberlane (1945)
- Kingsblood Royal (1947)
- The God-Seeker (1949)
- World So Wide (1951)

Edith Wharton (1862-1937)

- Novelist, short story writer
- Novels
 - Depict New York and employ dramatic irony
- Also, 85 short stories and design books (she was a garden designer)
- Travelled in Europe
- Close friend of Henry James
 - Her novel *The Age of Innocence* parallels James' *The Portrait of a Lady*
- *The Age of Innocence* (1920) won the Pulitzer Prize
 - She was the first woman to win the Prize

The Age of Innocence (1920)

- In New York, Newland Archer, gentleman lawyer, is betrothed to May Welland, and falls in love with her cousin Countess Ellen, who has come from Europe
- Newland and May marry; but he is unhappy and desires to possess Ellen
- Ellen is about to return to Europe and Newland wishes to follow her, which is when he comes to know that May is pregnant (which was also the reason for Ellen's decision to leave)
- Then Newland decides to stay with May for the sake of the child
 - Just as Isabel would probably stay with Osmond for the sake of Pansy

Naturalism

- An offshoot of the Realist Movement
- Depicts social conditions, heredity, and environment as inescapable forces in shaping human character
- Major practitioners
 - Stephen Crane
 - Theodore Dreiser
 - Jack London
 - Frank Norris

Stephen Crane (1871-1900)

- Born in Newark, New Jersey to highly religious Methodist parents
- Innovative writer associated with Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism
- To invest his work with the authenticity of experience, Crane often went to extreme levels to live through situations in his novels
- His first novel *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) considered the first American Naturalist work

The Red Badge of Courage (1895)

- His most popular work set against the events of the Civil War Battle of Chancellorsville (May 1863)
- Ironically, this work was not based on experience but pure imagination
- Initially more successful in England than in the US
- Realistic (not idealistic) depictions of war
 - Focus on the individual psychology of a single soldier, Private Henry Fleming, during his first experience of battle
 - In a universe utterly indifferent to human existence
- This got him assignments as a foreign correspondent for newspapers (travelled to Greece, Cuba and Puerto Rico)

“The Open Boat” (1897)

- Crane’s famous short-story
- Based on Crane’s real-life experience as a castaway from a shipwreck, being stranded in a dinghy on the Atlantic Ocean, en route to Cuba as a correspondent
- Examines the symbolic implications of fighting for one’s life amidst forces that are uncaring about one’s survival
- Characters like the injured captain, the cook, and Billie the oiler are based in reality, but Crane turns them into archetypes of humanity

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945)

- Born into a German American family
- Novelist and journalist of the Naturalist school
- Became a communist in later years
- His novels explore the new social problems that had arisen in a rapidly industrializing America
- Two best-known novels
 - Sister Carrie (1900)
 - An American Tragedy (1925)
 - Both made into Hollywood films

Sister Carrie (1900)

- Based on the life of Dreiser's sister Emma
- The story of Carrie Meeber
 - Starts a relationship with Charles Drouet
 - His friend Hurstwood steals her from him and makes her his mistress
 - While Hurstwood declines financially, Carrie rises as an actress on Broadway and leaves Hurstwood
 - Despite her wealth and success, she remains unhappy
- The tale is told unapologetically and became controversial for its unconventional morality

An American Tragedy (1925)

- The book is based on a notorious criminal case
- Clyde Griffiths is the protagonist
 - Restless in his poor religious family
 - Dreams of escape and material success
 - Takes up low-status jobs and a carefree lifestyle until he meets his wealthy uncle Samuel Griffiths, the owner of a shirt-collar factory in the fictional Lyncurgus, New York
- Clyde is not permitted into the Griffiths' upper class circles and is lonely

Clyde's Tragedy

- Clyde has an affair with Roberta Alden, an innocent farm girl, and gets her pregnant
- Meanwhile he meets the elegant Sondra Finchley, daughter of a Lycurgus factory owner, and hopes to marry her
- Clyde devises and carries out a plan to murder Roberta in a boating accident, having seen a news report of such a case
- After a sensational trial, he is executed by electric chair

Jack London (1876-1916)

- Illegitimate son of a rebellious daughter of an aristocratic family and a travelling astrologer
- Led a rough life, including one of a tramp
- Novelist, journalist, social activist
- His most famous novels
 - The Call of the Wild and White Fang
 - Both set in the Klondike Gold Rush in Canada's Yukon Territory in the late 19th century

The Call of the Wild (1903)

- Buck is the protagonist
 - A powerful half St. Bernard and half sheepdog
 - Has to leave his comfortable life when he is kidnapped and sent to the Klondike region
 - Sees cruelty around him; begins to adjust to life as a sled dog
- Buck recovers the instincts of his wild ancestors
 - Learns to fight, scavenge for food, and sleep beneath the snow on winter nights
 - Kills his rival Spitz and becomes the lead dog

Buck's New Life

- Buck gets a new master Thornton to whom he is devoted
- He also feels a growing attraction to the wild, as if he is being called away from civilization and into the wilderness
- While the men search for gold, Buck befriends wolves and hunts bears and moose
- One day, Yeehat Indians attack and kill Thornton
- Buck kills several Indians, and then goes off into the wild, where he becomes the leader of a pack of wolves
- He becomes a legendary figure, a Ghost Dog, fathering countless cubs and inspiring fear in the Yeehats
- Every year he returns to the place where Thornton died, to mourn his master before returning to his life in the wild

Upton Sinclair (1878-1968)

- Wrote close to one hundred books in many genres
- Advocated the spirit of socialism
- Famous for his classic muckraking novel, The Jungle (1906)
 - Muckraking refers to investigative journalism exposing corruption
- The Jungle exposed conditions in the US meat packing industry, causing a public uproar

Harlem Renaissance

- 1920s—creative passion in Harlem, the black community near New York
- From Alaine Locke's anthology *The New Negro*
- Richard Wright (*Native Son*—racial inequality)
- Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*)

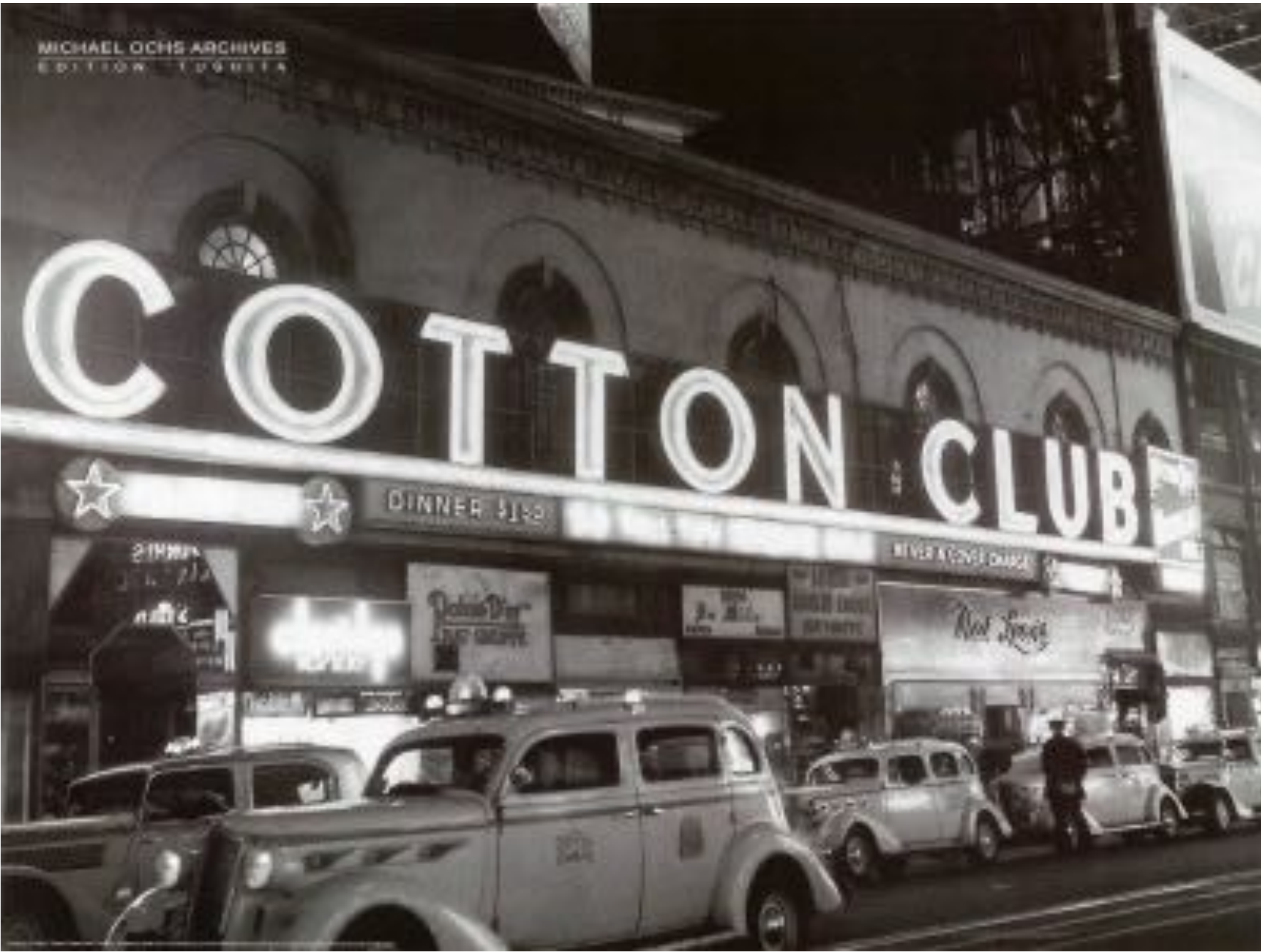


Harlem Renaissance

- Racial pride, need for a new black identity
- Challenge of stereotypes through literature, art and music
- Authors who got international fame:
 - Jean Toomer
 - Jessie Fauset
 - Claude McKay
 - Zora Neale Hurston
 - James Weldon Johnson
 - Alain Locke
 - Eric D. Walrond
 - Langston Hughes

Harlem Renaissance

- A variety of cultural elements and styles flourished
 - A Pan-African perspective
 - A coming together of “high-culture” & “low-culture”
 - The “low” styles in music included many kinds from the traditional form of music to the blues and jazz
 - Traditional and new experimental forms: in literature modernism in poetry and music, jazz
 - Hence Harlem artists came into conflict with conservatives in the black intelligentsia









World Wars

- WWI—Modernism in Europe
- Revolt from realism, stylistic innovations (O'Neill)
- Imagism—Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, HD
- Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens
- South—Fugitives—Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, RP Warren (rejected northern, urban commercial values; related to New Criticism)
- William Carlos Williams, ee cummings (typographical novelty)

καὶ αὖτις Σικελίᾳ, καὶ ἐν Αἰτωλίᾳσι βραΐζον
ἄλκι, καὶ μέλιν' ᾄδ' ἐν Δωρίᾳ.

Εὐριπίδης, *Ηλένη*.

"And she also was of Sicily and was gay in
the valleys of Aëta, and knew the Doric
singing."

DES IMAGISTES

AN ANTHOLOGY



NEW YORK
ALBERT AND CHARLES BONI
39 FIFTH AVENUE
1914

Imagism

- Association of avant-garde English and American poets in the early twentieth century
- Who wrote free verse and were devoted to “clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images”
- The association of poets was originally formed at the University of Pennsylvania

Major figures

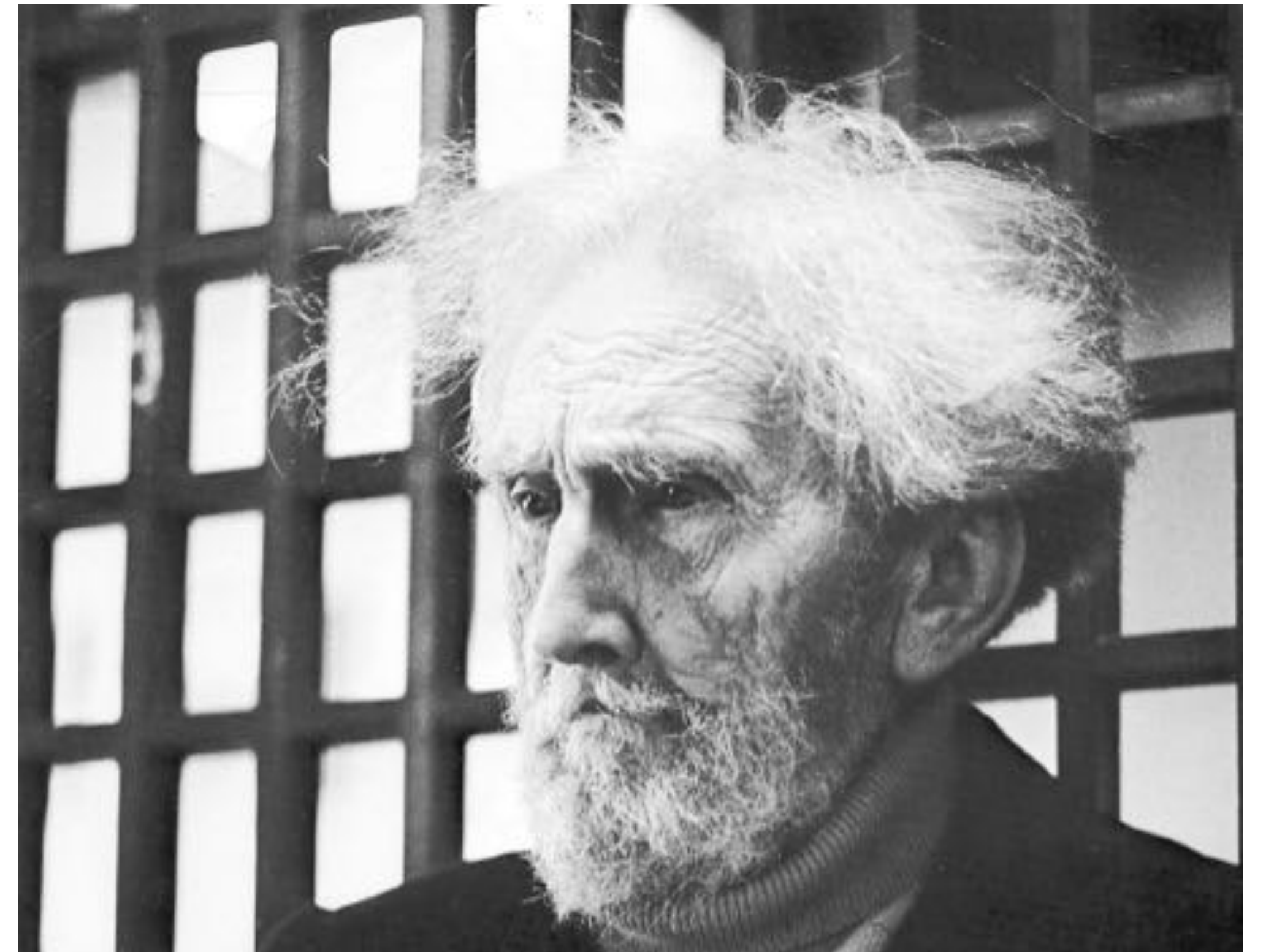
- Ezra Pound
- Amy Lowell
- H.D.
- Richard Aldington
- William Carlos Williams
- James Joyce
- F.S. Flint
- D.H. Lawrence
- John Gould Fletcher

Pound's definition

- “An ‘image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.”

Imagism

- Use of concrete language and figures of speech, modern subject matter, metrical freedom, and avoidance of romantic or mystical themes, aiming at clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images.
- Grew out of the Symbolist Movement in 1912 and was initially led by Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, and others.



Imagism

- Began in 1912
- Three Imagist poetic principles (outlined in A Retrospect):
 - direct treatment of the “thing”
 - exclusion of superfluous
 - the rhythm of the musical phrase rather than the sequence of a metronome (a mechanical device that produces regular, metrical ticks)

In a Station of the Metro

- The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
- Petals on a wet, black bough.
- Started with 30 lines; ended with 14 words
- Typifies the movement's focus
 - Economy of language
 - Imagery
 - Experimentation

Gertrude Stein (1874-1946)

- Novelist, poet, playwright
- Rejected the narrative, linear, and temporal conventions of 19th century literature
- Was a fervent collector of Modernist art
- The Stein home in Paris was a renowned gathering place on Saturday evenings for both expatriate American artists and writers including Pablo Picasso, James Joyce and Ezra Pound
- Stein's memoir of her Paris years, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, written in the voice of Toklas, her life partner



Stein's Writing

- In literature, Gertrude Stein developed an analogue to modern art
- A resident of Paris and an art collector, Stein once explained that she and Picasso were doing the same thing, he in art and she in writing
- Using simple, concrete words, she developed an abstract, experimental prose poetry
- The childlike quality of Stein's simple vocabulary recalls the bright, primary colours of modern art, while her repetitions echo the repeated shapes of abstract visual compositions
- By dislocating grammar and punctuation, she achieved new 'abstract' meanings

“A rose is a rose is a rose”

- The sentence “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” was written by Gertrude Stein as part of the 1913 poem “Sacred Emily”, which appeared in the 1922 book *Geography and Plays*
- In that poem, the first “Rose” is the name of a person
- Stein later used variations on the sentence in other writings, and “A rose is a rose is a rose” is probably her most famous quote, often interpreted as meaning “things are what they are”

An Interpretation

- Gertrude Stein's repetitive language can be said to refer to the changing quality of language in time and history
- She herself said to an audience at Oxford University that the statement referred to the fact that when the Romantics used the word "rose" it had a direct relationship to an actual rose
- For later periods in literature this would no longer be true
- The eras following romanticism, notably the modern era, use the word rose to refer to the actual rose as well as the archetypical elements of the romantic era

Lost Generation

- A generation of writers who came of age during the war and established their literary reputation in the 1920s characterized by post-WWI disillusionment
- The term stems from a remark made by Gertrude Stein to Ernest Hemingway, 'You are all a lost generation'
- Hemingway used it as an epigraph to *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), a novel that captures the attitudes of a hard-drinking, fast-living set of disillusioned young expatriates in postwar Paris
- The generation was 'lost' in the sense that it was spiritually alienated
- This generation included writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, T. S. Eliot, John Dos Passos, etc

"You are all a lost generation."

—Gertrude Stein in conversation

"One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever . . . The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose . . . The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. . . . All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again."

—Ecclesiastes

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

- Novelist and journalist known for his economical and understated style
- His father was an outdoorsman who loved hunting and fishing – interests Hemingway shared
- Also heard tales of his seafaring great-grandfather
- Rejected for regular military service in World War I because of a weak left eye, he became a Red Cross ambulance driver in Italy during the war
- While recuperating from serious wounds in a Red Cross hospital in Milan, he fell in love with nurse Agnes von Kurowsky, who later rejected him
 - Experience retold in A Farewell to Arms

Diverse Experiences

- In Paris, Hemingway established contact with expatriate writers
- Wrote Nick Adams stories
- In 1923, Hemingway made the first of five trips to Pamplona, Spain, for the bullfights
 - Experience retold in *The Sun Also Rises*
- In 1932, Hemingway went on a two-month fishing expedition from Florida to Havana and began marlin fishing
 - Experience retold in *The Old Man and the Sea*

Later Years

- Later, he went on to Africa for a safari
 - Experience retold in Green Hills of Africa
- In 1937, he went to Spain as a war correspondent covering the Spanish Civil War
 - Experience retold in For Whom the Bell Tolls
- Served the US navy in the II World War
 - Experience retold in Across the River and Into the Trees
- The Old Man and the Sea won Pulitzer Prize in 1953
- Hemingway got the Nobel Prize in 1954
- Illness drove him to suicide at the age of 60

Hemingway Hero

- Realistic
- Confronts basic questions of life & death
- no escape is possible except a dishonorable one
- physical and mental courage
- meets Fate with stoic dignity
- Pragmatism and values of frontier



The Sun Also Rises (1926)

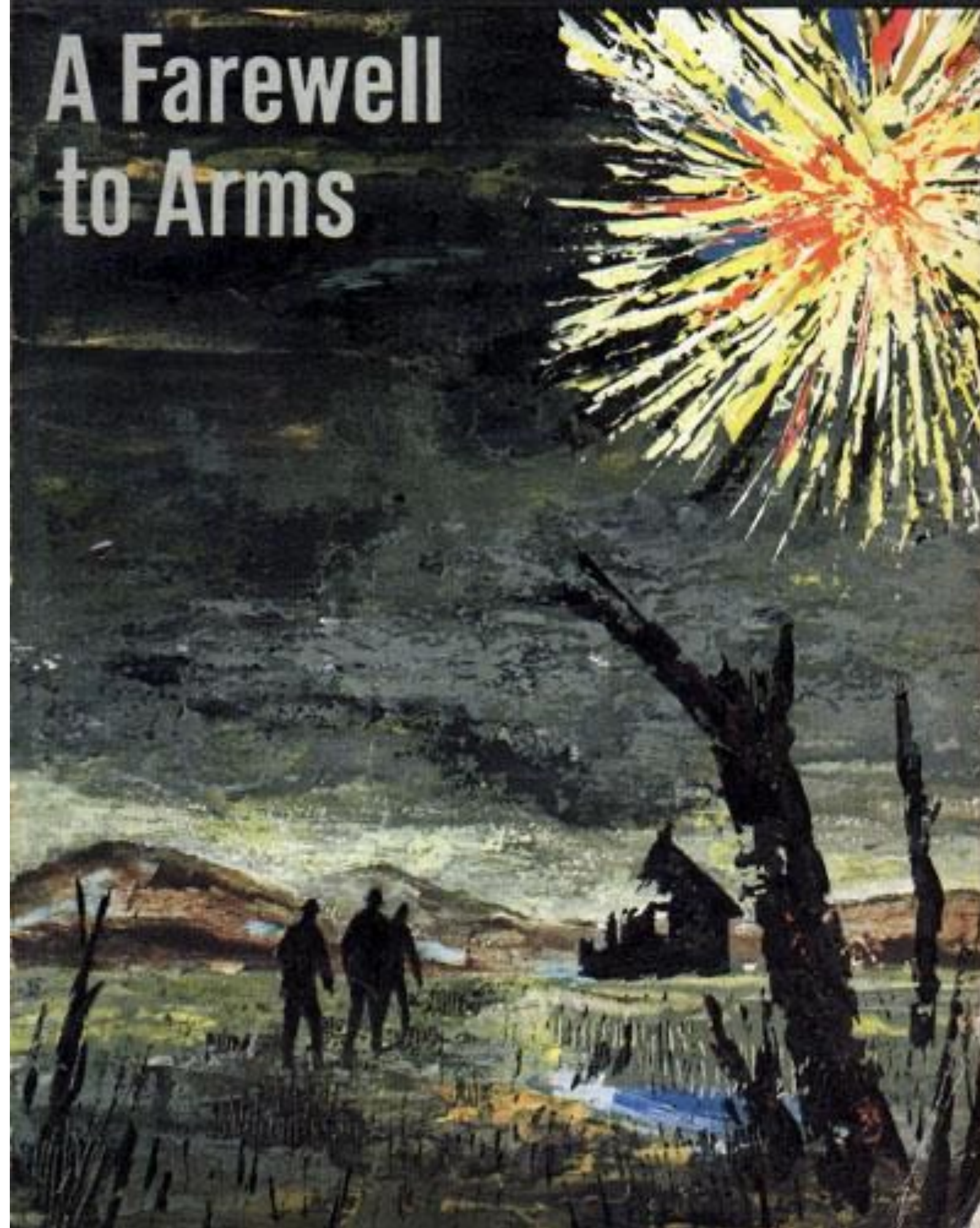
- The Sun Also Rises is a thinly veiled autobiographical account of Hemingway's literary life in Paris and his trip to Spain in 1925
- It is a Roman à clef – a novel about real life, overlaid with a façade of fiction
- The Sun Also Rises opens with the narrator, Jake Barnes, delivering a brief biographical sketch of his friend, Robert Cohn

A Farewell to Arms (1929)

- Lieutenant Frederic Henry
 - Young American ambulance driver serving in the Italian army during World War I
- Winter; Henry tours Italy
- Henry meets Catherine Barkley
 - Henry's friend Rinaldi interested in her
- Catherine and Henry involve in a game of seduction—like bridge (long blonde hair)
 - Catherine grieves the recent death of her fiancé
 - Henry is left detached and numb by war

ERNEST
HEMINGWAY

A Farewell
to Arms



Henry Meets Catherine

- Henry wounded; in pain, but stoic and unemotional
- Hospital in Milan
- Doctors want six months before surgery
- Bold surgeon Dr. Valentini agrees to operate immediately
- Henry under Catherine's care
- Relationship intensifies—love powerful, real
- Fellow patients and people of Milan are described

Catherine is Pregnant

- Leg heals; 3 weeks' convalescence leave before joining front
- Henry plans a trip with Catherine; she is pregnant
 - Catherine worried; Henry happy: “A coward dies a thousand deaths, the brave but one
- Henry diagnosed with jaundice
- Miss Van Campen, superintendent, accuses Henry
 - Of excessive drinking
 - Of avoiding duty

Henry Attempts to Desert War

- Henry is in the warfront
- Italians losing daily
- Germans breaking through Italian forces
- Henry escapes with ambulance drivers, two engineering sergeants and two young girls
 - Difficult and dangerous journey
- Henry caught by battle police
 - Dives into river
 - Boards train to Milan

Reunion and Separation

- Henry reunites with Catherine in the town of Stresa
 - Escape to Switzerland
 - All night in a tiny borrowed boat
- Beautiful, peaceful life at Montreux
- Spring. Move to Lausanne, closer to hospital
- Catherine's delivery painful and complicated
 - Stillborn baby boy
 - Catherine dies of haemorrhage
- Henry stays beside her
 - Cannot say goodbye
 - Walks back in the rain

Features

- Boldly declarative style
 - Departure from the sweet Victorian-influenced style of the times
- Main Themes
 - The Grim Reality of War
 - Ambivalent reactions
 - Terrible destruction
 - Doubtful of the glory of war
 - The Relationship between Love and Pain
 - Love is a refuge from the pain of war and destruction, but is itself a pain

The Iceberg Principle

- The iceberg principle means that Hemingway omits words and sentences in his narration to make the readers come up with their own view of it
- This occurs in several parts of the novel, especially in the last scene, when, after Catherine's death, the protagonist Henry walks back to his hotel in the rain. Hemingway doesn't suggest what lies in store for Frederic Henry after he leaves his dead lover in the hospital.
- Essentially, the iceberg principle states that by omitting certain parts of a story, a writer actually strengthens that story

For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940)

- The experiences of American college professor Robert Jordan, who has volunteered to fight for the Loyalist cause in the Spanish Civil War
- His initial idealism is quickly tempered by the realities of war
- Yet his courage enables him to remain devoted to the cause, even as he faces death

A stylized graphic of a bridge with a truss structure, rendered in black lines. It is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping a dark green background and a light orange background.

Novel

 War Literature

For Whom the Bell Tolls

Author
Ernest Hemingway

Year Published
1940

Original Language
English

Robert Jordan's Task

- The novel's action takes place between Saturday afternoon and Tuesday noon during the last week of May, 1937
- The main narrative follows three days in the life of its main character, Robert Jordan, an American fighting with Spanish Loyalists against Franco's fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War
- Robert Jordan is assigned the dangerous and difficult task of blowing up a Fascist-controlled bridge as part of a larger Republican offensive

Jordan's Fight

- He is supported by a band of partisan guerillas headed by Pablo and his wife, Pilar
- The once brave Pablo has lost his belief and courage as a result of witnessing the atrocities of the fascists
- Jordan also gets the support of another underground group led by El Sordo
- They finally realize that they should have cancelled the attack, but it is too late
- Jordan successfully blasts the bridge, but is wounded, and forces the others to leave him
- He refuses an offer from another fighter to be shot and lies in agony, hoping to kill an enemy officer and a few soldiers before being captured and executed

The Old Man and the Sea (1952)

- This little novel opens with the sentence, “He was an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish.”
- This story of Cuban fisherman Santiago is a parable of man’s struggle with the natural world and of his noble courage and endurance
- After being luckless for 84 days, Santiago sets out on the 85th day, and returns three days later with a huge marlin
- The sharks had eaten away all the flesh of the marlin, but Santiago had refused to be defeated, and brought its skeleton proudly to the shore



F Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

- Jazz Age novelist and short story writer
- Born to an aristocratic father and a provincial, working-class mother
- Fitzgerald was ambivalent toward the notion of the American dream: for him, it was at once vulgar and dazzlingly promising

The Great Gatsby (1925)

- In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald presents the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby, told from the first-person narrative of Nick Carraway
- Jay Gatz is a farmer's son-turned racketeer, whose ill-gotten wealth is acquired solely to gain acceptance into the sophisticated, moneyed world of the woman he loves, Daisy Fay Buchanan
- His romantic illusions about the power of money to buy respectability and the love of Daisy are ironically interwoven with episodes that depict the callousness and moral irresponsibility of the affluent American society of the 1920s



As a Roaring Twenties Novel

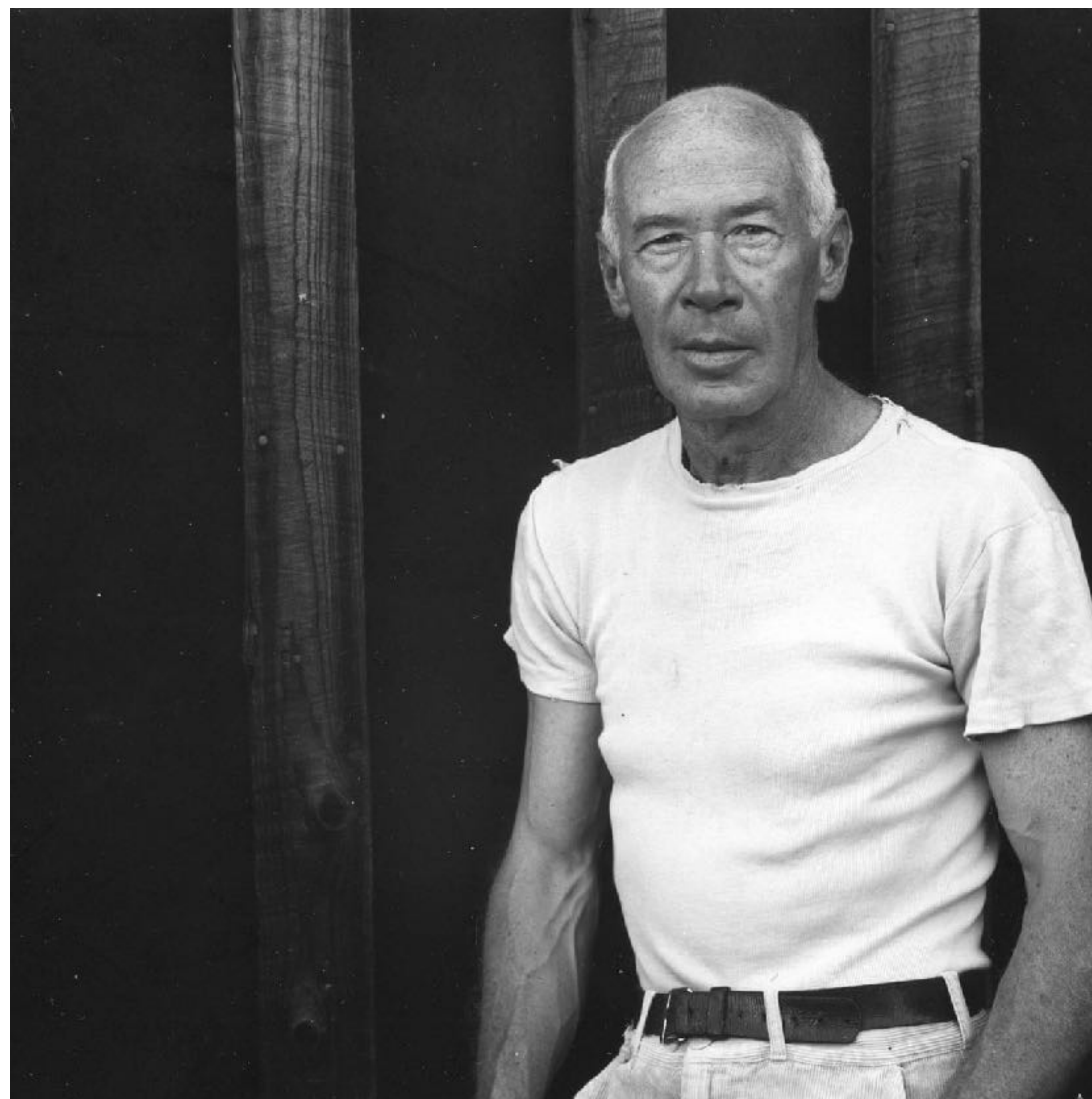
- The Roaring Twenties denote the high culture and economic prosperity of the 1920s in New York City, and European metropolises
- America experienced a cultural and lifestyle revolution
 - In the economic arena, the stock market boomed, the rich spent money on fabulous parties and expensive acquisitions, the automobile became a symbol of glamour, and profits were made, both legally and illegally
 - The whirlwind pace of this post-World War I era is captured in Fitzgerald's character, Jay Gatsby, whose tragic quest and violent death foretell the collapse of that era and the onset of disillusionment with the Great Depression and the failure of the American dream

Major Works

- This Side of Paradise (1920)
- “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” (1920)
- “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button” (1922)
- The Beautiful and Damned (1922)
- The Diamond as Big as the Ritz (1922)
- “Winter Dreams” (1922)
- The Great Gatsby (1925)
- “Babylon Revisited” (1931)
- Tender Is the Night (1934)

Henry Miller (1891-1980)

- Born in Brooklyn, New York on December 26, 1891
- Works are essentially autobiographical, express his intense individualism, his love of freedom and his enthusiastic search for intellectual and aesthetic adventure
- By 1930s he migrated to Europe and settled in Paris
- In 1940, Miller returned to America, settling on California's Pacific Coast, offered comedic and often critical views of the United States in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* (1945), *Remember to Remember* (1947) and *Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch* (1958)
- Died of circulatory problems on June 7, 1980, at the age of 88



Works

- Tropic of Cancer (1934)
 - Semi-autobiographical account of his experiences in Paris
- Tropic of Capricorn (1939)
 - Prequel to Tropic of Cancer
- The Colossus of Maroussi (1941)
 - Unconventional travel account on the spirit of Greece emphasizing sites not people
- The trilogy, The Rosy Crucifixion (1965)—the struggles of an American writer trying to find success

Miller's Style

- Fictional novels based on his own life
- Incorporated philosophy, explicit language, sex, and mysticism into his work
- Style similar to stream-of-consciousness
- Characters speak or act with vulgar impulses

Tropic of Cancer (1934)

- First published in Paris in 1934
- The first of an autobiographical trilogy, followed by Black Spring (1936) and Tropic of Capricorn (1939)
- Set in France (primarily Paris) during the late 1920s and early 1930s
- Centers on Miller's life as a struggling writer
- Style combines autobiography and fiction; first-person non-linear narration
- Some chapters have a narrative style; others stream-of-consciousness
- Reference to Miller's actual friends, colleagues, and workplaces

Tropic of Cancer (1934)

- Dealt explicitly with his sexual adventures and challenged established sexual morality; depths of depravity and heights of spiritual ecstasy; banned in the US; notoriety as the first immoralist in American literature
- Obscenity Trial along with Lady Chatterley's Lover and Fanny Hill; in 1961 the US ban on Henry Miller's novels was finally lifted. It was a historic court ruling because it changed American censorship standards. It brought in a new era of freedom and frankness in modern literature.

Tropic of Capricorn (1934)

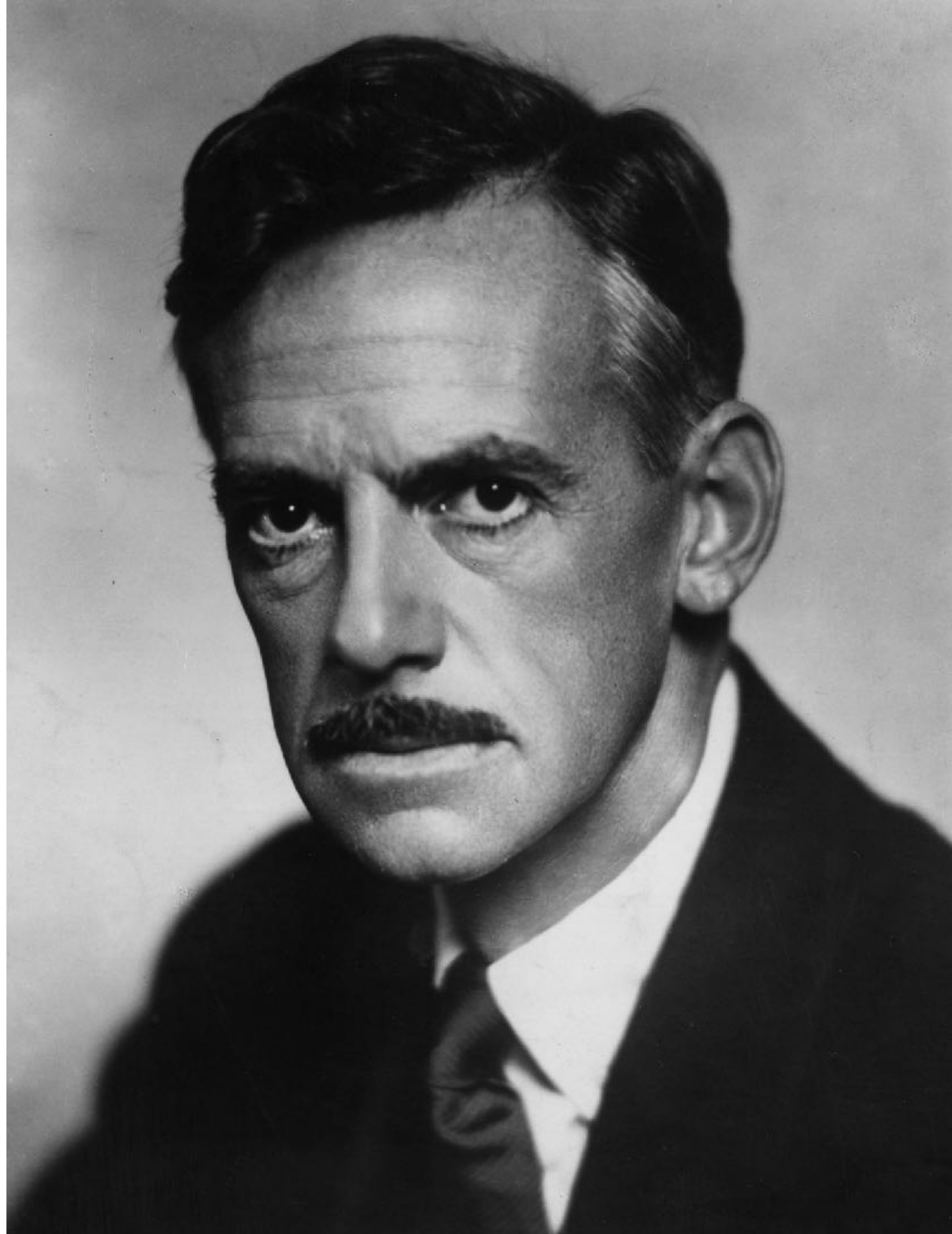
- Semi-autobiographical novel
- Not chronological, jumping between events of Miller's life
 - His adolescent adventures in Brooklyn in the 1900s
 - Recollections of his first love Una Gifford
 - A love affair with his nearly-30-year-old piano teacher when he was 15
 - His unhappy marriage to his first wife Beatrice
 - His years working at Western Union (called The Cosmodemonic Telegraph Company in the book) in Manhattan in the 1920s
 - His fateful meeting with his second wife June (known in the book as Mara), who he credits with changing his life and making him into a writer
 - The Rosy Crucifixion continues the story of June over the course of nearly 1,500 pages, and also described the process of Miller finding his voice as a writer, until eventually he sets off for Paris, where the activities depicted in Tropic of Cancer begin

Realism in Drama

- New York City is the theatrical capital of America
- Broadway was synonymous with the American theatre
- After the World Wars increase in the number of plays of domestic realism
- Writers exemplary for domestic realism
 - Eugene O'Neill
 - Arthur Miller
 - Tennessee Williams

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953)

- Born into a family of Irish immigrants who had migrated to the US
- Before Eugene O'Neill, American theatre consisted of melodrama and farce
- O'Neill was one of the first American playwrights to
 - Take drama seriously as an aesthetic and intellectual form
 - Use American vernacular on stage
 - To focus on marginalized characters
 - Introduce psychological and social realism to the American stage (influenced by Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg)
- Also employed other techniques such as expressionism and naturalism, and employed comedy, tragedy and myth
- Only playwright to have won the Pulitzer Prize four times



Beyond the Horizon (1918)

- Set in a farm in Connecticut, northeast USA
- Robert, is an intellectual bored with his agricultural upbringing
- His elder brother Andrew is entirely practical and a hardworker
- Andrew is about to marry Ruth, and Robert plans to go to sea to discover life beyond the horizon
- Robert reveals to Ruth that he loves her only to find that Ruth loves him too
- Andrew leaves the farm to pursue Robert's dream, and Robert and Ruth marry

A Twist in the Tale

- Ruth now realizes that she actually loved Andrew, and tells Robert how he makes her feel stupid and spends lots of time reading rather than working in the farm
- Robert is devastated, but Andrew doesn't want Ruth back
- O'Neill thus problematizes love and happiness

Expressionism and O'Neill

- O'Neill experimented with Expressionism under the inspiration of the Swedish playwright August Strindberg (1849-1912)
 - Strindberg's *A Dream Play* and *The Ghost Sonata* explore complex states of mind, rejecting conventional realism and imitating instead the fluid structure of human consciousness
- *Emperor Jones* (1920)
- *The Hairy Ape* (1922)
- To some extent in *Strange Interlude* (1928)
 - focuses on the interior monologue of its main character, Nina Leeds

Expressionism in Emperor Jones

- The drumbeat to indicate Brutus Jones's heartbeat
- Jones's "little formless fears"
- Jones's obsessive memories in the visions of Jeff and the prison experience
- racial memories through which Jones relives black history, and at the end of which he is helpless in the dark forest
- Fear is depicted as a state of mind in order to capture the tormented soul of a race

Brutus Jones

- Brutus Jones had worked as a porter on a Pullman train in the US.
- He had gone to prison for killing a man named Jeff over a craps game (a game of dice).
- Escaping prison, Jones had come to the Caribbean island two years ago
- There he found the Cockney Englishman Smithers cheating the black natives in his trade.
- Jones joined Smithers, then eclipsed Smithers and named himself Emperor



This PPT is made by Kalyani Vallath

Brutus feels invincible

- At the beginning of the play, the natives are preparing to revolt
- Emperor Jones feels secure in the face of the native revolt because he has already planned his escape in advance
 - He has money stashed in a foreign bank account, has an escape route through the woods mapped out in his mind, and even has food buried at the edge of the forest.
- He has also convinced the natives that he has magical powers and can be killed only by a silver bullet.
 - Jones has even made for himself a good luck charm out of what he thinks is the only silver on the island.
- However, as he runs through the dense forest at night, he cannot find the buried food; he loses his way; and is tormented by the “Little Formless Fears” and his own hallucinations

Brutus's Hallucinations

- “Little Formless Fears that look like black, shapeless grubworms “about the size of a creeping child”.
- The figure of Jeff throwing dice mechanically.
- Black prisoners in striped suits working with picks and shovels, guarded by a white prison guard.
- An auction scene where African slaves are bought and sold.
- A slave ship carrying black slaves to the New World.
- An African witch-doctor (shaman) dancing and chanting, indicating that Jones must be sacrificed to the crocodile river god
- Each of these hallucinations disappears when Jones fires at it, exhausting his bullets one by one

The Hairy Ape (1922)

- First produced on March 9, 1922, by the Provincetown Players, a theatrical group that he co-founded
- Appealed to many labor groups and unions due to its strong condemnation of the dehumanizing effects of industrialisation

Yank as “Thinker” in The Hairy Ape

- Yank is continuously compared to a beast, he is also described as a “highly developed individual”
- Before Mildred enters the stokehole Yank finds thinking ridiculous and unnecessary
- Thought only becomes necessary for Yank after he encounters Mildred in the stokehole.
- Mildred and her class present a new threat that Yank cannot eliminate or get rid of by physical might. Yank is forced to think how he can defend himself.
- Later, in the prison also he is seated in the position of Rodin’s statue.
- Yank’s inability to think reveals his regression to a lower animal form, and also renders him unable to adapt to or defend himself in the world beyond the ship

Class Conflict in The Hairy Ape

- Yank's job as a coal stoker highlights his lower class status, as against the upper class to which Mildred Douglas belongs
- Yank is fierce, crude and powerful like animals. Mildred is the pale, feeble and spoiled daughter of the owner of Nazareth Steel
- In the beginning of the play, Yank seems proud to be a fireman. He defends the ship as his home and insists that he is part of the engines. Mildred's reaction to Yank as a "filthy beast" awakens in Yank a class awareness.
- Mildred and Yank share similar complaints about class.
 - Mildred describes herself as the "waste product" of her father's steel company. She yearns to find passion—to touch "life" beyond her cushioned, bourgeois world.
- Yank, on the other hand, has experienced too much of the "life" Mildred describes. He now desires to topple the class structure

Yank and the Gorilla

- After Mildred's insult, Yank becomes class conscious and hates the rich
- In a frenzy, he misbehaves with church-goers at Fifth Avenue, for which he is thrown into prison for a month.
- After being released, he tries to join the Industrial Workers of the World group, but is thrown out from their office for showing violence.
- The next day, Yank looks in on the monkey house at the Zoo.
- The ape sits on his haunches and resembles Rodin's "The Thinker".
- Yank talks admiringly to the gorilla and tells the ape that they are alike, as they are both caged and taunted. Yank calls him brother.



Yank's Quest Ends

- Yank releases the gorilla from his cage and attempts to shake his hand
- The gorilla crushes Yank with his massive arms and tosses him into his cage.
- Yank dies in the gorilla's cage as a chorus of monkeys is heard from surrounding cages.
- Thus, Yank's quest to "belong" ends in disaster

O'Neill and Greek Tragedy: *Mourning Becomes Electra*

- Adapts the Greek tragic myth of Oresteia to nineteenth-century New England at the end of the Civil War.
- Depicts the tragic decline of a prominent New England family named the Mannons
- Written in France, during O'Neill's prolonged stay outside the US
- Lavinia is the counterpart of Electra in the play
- Trilogy of plays: *Homecoming*, *The Hunted* and *The Haunted*

O'Neill and Greek Tragedy: Desire Under the Elms

- A naturalistic play in a rural New England setting
- Draws from Euripides' Hippolytus and Jean Racine's Phèdre
- Puritan Ephraim Cabot is a widower who abandons his New England farm to his three sons, who hate him but share his greed
- Eben, the youngest and brightest son, buys out his half-brothers' shares of the farm with money stolen from his father.
- The two elder brothers head off to California to seek their fortune.

Ephraim's Wife

- Later, Ephraim brings home a new wife, the beautiful and headstrong Abbie, who falls in love with Eben.
- Abbie bears Eben's child, but lets Ephraim believe that the child is his.
- Ephraim is oblivious as his neighbours openly mock him as a cuckold.
- Madly in love with Eben and fearful it would become an obstacle to their relationship, Abbie kills the infant.
- An enraged and distraught Eben turns Abbie over to the sheriff, but not before admitting to himself the depths of his love for her and thus confessing his own role in the infanticide

The Iceman Cometh (1946)

- Harry Hope's village bar: a group of regular customers share their "pipe dreams" (unattainable fanciful dreams) about "tomorrow"
- These empty dreams keep the men going.
- Only Larry Slade, a sixty-year-old Irishman who was once a Syndicalist-Anarchist, has buried his pipe dreams, has retired to a philosophical detachment, and is awaiting death (the Iceman).
- The group is expecting Hickey, a salesman, to turn up in time for Harry's birthday party and brighten up everything in the bar.

Hickey Arrives

- Hickey arrives as a changed man. He urges them to get rid of their pipe dreams. Hickey's murder of their pipe dreams will bring ruin to the bar, thus Hickey's coming is the coming of the "Iceman" (Death)
- Hickey's hope of getting rid of pipe dreams is another pipe dream
- Hickey had led a wayward life, and has now murdered his wife, in order to save her from her pipe dream of reforming him.
- Hickey turns himself over the police and hopes to get the electric chair

Long Day's Journey Into Night (1957)

- The play opens in the Tyrone family in 1912
- Mary Tyrone, James Tyrone's wife, has just returned home after receiving treatment in a sanatorium for morphine addiction that has lasted over two decades.
- She is still on morphine in each scene of the play, and her use increases steadily as the day wears on.

Another Disaster

- Another medical disaster that is revealed in the course of the play is that Mary's younger son Edmund has tuberculosis.
- Edmund is an intellectual and romantic dreamer, and like his father and brother Jamie, partly alcoholic.
- These two revelations make up much of the play's plot.
- The Tyrone family closely parallels O'Neill's family; Mary represents O'Neill's mother, and Eugene O'Neill, like Edmund had contracted tuberculosis

The Post-War Scene

- American literature attained a new maturity and diversity in the 1920s and '30s
- Significant works by several major figures from those decades were published after 1945
- Faulkner, Hemingway, and Steinbeck in fiction
- Frost, Eliot, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, E.E. Cummings and William Carlos Williams in poetry
- Long Day's Journey into Night
 - Appeared posthumously in 1956
 - Eugene O'Neill's

- Robert Penn Warren published influential fiction, poetry, and criticism before and after WW II
 - All the King's Men
 - Won the 1947 Pulitzer Prize
- In the 1960s, Henry Miller's fiction was influential
 - Frank exploration of sexuality
 - Loose, picaresque, quasi-autobiographical form

The 1960's

- John F. Kennedy becomes President and is assassinated
- Space exploration begins
- American astronauts landed on the moon in 1969
- Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) warned that our earth would die of pollution and chemicals
- Black demonstrations for equality started
 - Martin Luther King Jr. made the speech, "I have a Dream" (1963); assassinated in 1968
 - The first Civil Rights bill was passed to stop racial discrimination
- The rise of popular culture and Beatle mania
- A wholesale re-evaluation of the conventional structures of society

Vietnam War (1964-1975)

- A prolonged struggle between
 - Nationalist forces attempting to unify the country of Vietnam under a communist government and
 - The United States (with the aid of the South Vietnamese) attempting to prevent the spread of communism
- The US government had no public support in America for the war
- 58,000 American lives were lost
- 350,000 casualties
- Resulted in between one and two million Vietnamese deaths
- The most unpopular war of the 20th century

Subcultures

- Subcultures and Counterculture Movements
 - Based on socializing and wild behaviour
 - Centred on political orientations
 - Rebellion and protest against the Establishment
- The “Swinging Sixties” saw the rise and fall of subcultures
 - The Beat Generation or Beatniks
 - Rockers
 - Bikers
 - Hippies
 - Yippies
 - The Disco culture

The Punk

- Centers on punk rock music
- Includes a diverse array of ideologies, fashions and forms of expression in visual art, dance, literature and film
- Features
 - Anti-establishment views
 - The promotion of individual freedom

Civil Rights Movement

- 1963
 - Noted for racial unrest and civil rights demonstrations
- March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28, 1963
- One of the largest political rallies for human rights in United States history
- A quarter of a million black and white people gathered at the nation's capital to demonstrate for “freedom now”

Black Power Movement (1968-80)

- Grew out of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's
- Black Power
 - 1954
 - A book by Richard Wright
- “Black Power” had many political goals
 - From defense against racial oppression
 - To the establishment of social institutions and a self-sufficient economy
- The phrase “Black is beautiful” became popular
- Amiri Baraka founded the related Black Arts Movement

Other Resistance Movements

- Chicano Movement
 - An extension of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement which began in the 1940s
- American Indian Movement
- Second Wave feminism
 - Following the First Wave of the late 19th-20th centuries
 - Focused on issues like sexuality, family, workplace, reproductive rights, legally sanctioned inequalities
- Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement
 - Sought social acceptance and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people
- German Student Movement
- May 1968 student strikes in France crushed by de Gaulle government

Post-War Literature

- Depicted the tension, horror, meaninglessness of contemporary American life
- Rise of the literatures of the ethnic minorities like Asian Americans and Latino-Americans
- Emergence of postmodern writers who employed
 - The techniques of digression
 - Narrative fragmentation
 - Elaborate symbolism
- Popular Fiction (also called Genre Fiction) became prominent

Beat Generation

- A literary and counterculture movement of the 1950's
- Initially associated with New York
- Gained popularity when the members started public reading in the coffee houses and colleges of San Francisco
- Had tremendous influence and cultural status in postwar America
- Questioned the rampant materialism of the society
- Dissatisfaction with consumer culture
- Saw capitalism as destructive to the human spirit and antithetical to social equality
- Rejected the taboos against sexuality as unhealthy
- Literature was bold, straightforward, and expressive
- Some critics dismissed the Beat Generation's literature as provocative and indecent

The Beat Writers

- The founders of Beat Generation
 - Jack Kerouac
 - Allen Ginsberg
- They met at Columbia University in the early 1940s
- Kerouac coined the term “Beat Generation”
- Other Members
 - Lucien Carr
 - John Clellon Holmes
 - Gregory Corso
 - Neal Cassidy
 - William S. Burroughs

Characteristic Features

- They were from the educated middle-class, but were anti-establishment and anti-academy
- Their work showed Romantic, surrealist and absurdist tendencies
- Admired Thoreau and his Walden
- Rejected the objective and formalist modernism of TS Eliot
- The poet-publisher Ferlinghetti's City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco was their hub

Allen Ginsberg (1926-97)

- Born into a Jewish family
- Vigorously opposed militarism, economic materialism and sexual repression
- Took part in non-violent political protests
- In 1948, in an apartment in Harlem, he had the “Blake vision”
 - For several days heard the voice of William Blake reading his own poems
- Had political and literary connections in India
- Later left San Francisco and lived in Paris and London
- A practicing Buddhist, he also embraced Krishnaism and chanted Hare Krishna mantra in his performances
- Health failed due to hectic schedule

Ginsberg and His Works

- For him poetry was a catalyst to visionary states of mind
- He was committed in presenting the discontinuities of consciousness
- Major Works
 - Kaddish (1961)
 - Accounts of personal grief
 - “ Love Poem on a Theme by Whitman” (1956)
 - About passionate sexual encounter
 - “ The Reply” (1956)
 - Experience of drugs
 - “ Don’t Grow Old”
 - Death of his father

Howl (1956)

- The publication of Ginsberg's Howl in 1956 was a turning point in the history of American literature
- Appeared in Howl and Other Poems, along with "America," "Sunflower Sutra," "A Supermarket in California", etc
- Opening line: "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked...."
- Long lines based on breath (breath-length form)
- Intended to be read aloud, almost chanted
- A return to an oral tradition that had long been neglected
- Written without restrictions in a tumbling, hallucinatory style
- Employs a syntactic subversion of meaning called parataxis
- Frank treatment of sexuality, especially homosexuality, led to an obscenity trial, which Ginsberg won

Jack Kerouac (1922-69)

- French-Canadian born in Massachussetts
- Football and jazz were passions in his youth
- Met Allen Ginsberg and William S Burroughs at New York
- Late 1940s: wrote his first novel The Town and the City
- Wrote several novels in furious spurts (in 2 or 3 days) after this
- Began road trips which led to his classic novel On the Road
- His works deal with
 - Catholic spirituality as well as Buddhism
 - Jazz
 - Sexuality
 - Drugs
 - Poverty
 - Travel

On the Road (1957)

- A manifesto for the Beat Generation
- Story of two young men
 - Sal Paradise and Dean Moriarty
 - They travel the American continent seeking thrilling experiences
- The novel is a thinly veiled account of Kerouac's own life in the late 1940s
- Roman à clef
 - Many key figures in the Beat movement represented by characters in the book
 - Kerouac himself appears as the narrator Sal Paradise
 - His friend Neal Cassidy appears as Moriarty

The Duluoz Legend

- The common term for the vast array of his travel writings, which comprise one vast book
- Jack Duluoz is Kerouac's fictional alter-ego
- Doctor Sax
- The Dharma Bums (1958)
 - Autobiographical story based on his life years after the events of On the Road
- Mexico City Blues (a poem inspired by jazz)
- The Subterraneans (1958)
- The Sea is My Brother
- Big Sur

William S Burroughs (1914-97)

- Born in St. Louis
- Renowned novelist
 - Called the Godfather of Punk
 - Famous for the account of drug culture
- Major musical influence
 - Call Me Burroughs
 - 1965
 - First music album
- His anarchic stance in literature was crucial for the development of many 20th century subcultures
 - Beats
 - Hippies
 - Punks

Major Works

- And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks (2008)
 - Novel published posthumously
 - Collaboration of Burroughs and Kerouac
 - About the murder of Kammerer by Lucien Carr
- Junkie: Confessions of an Unredeemed Drug Addict
 - 1958
 - Published under the pseudonym William Lee
 - First novel
 - Ends with the stated ambition of finding a drug called Yage
- The Soft Machine (1961)
- Nova Express (1964)

Later Works

- Queer (1985)
 - Describes his experience in South America, where he had gone to evade justice after the Kammerer murder
- The Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead (1971)
- Exterminator! (1973)

Naked Lunch (1959)

- Non-linear style
 - A series of loosely connected incidents which can be read in any order
- William Lee
 - The narrator
 - The alter ego of Burroughs
- Travels from the US to Mexico to Tangier in Morocco to the dreamlike Interzone
- In the introduction to the novel Burroughs credited Kerouac with the title
- The book was banned in the US and underwent an obscenity trial

Confessional Poetry

- An intensely subjective poetic style
- Emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s
- Associated with poets such as Robert Lowell, W.D. Snodgrass, and Lowell's students Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton
- Lowell's book Life Studies
 - A highly personal account of his life and familial ties
 - Had a significant impact on American poetry
- These poets reveal intimate aspects of their private lives
- They often write in the first person using straightforward and sometimes explicit language
- Depicted taboo themes such as sex, troubled marriages, and mental illness

Robert Lowell (1917-77)

- Born into an old and prominent family in Boston
- Attended Harvard College and studied poetry under John Crowe Ransom in Kenyon College
- Studied with Robert Penn Warren and Cleanth Brooks at Louisiana State University
- Received a Pulitzer Prize in 1947, at the age of thirty
- His early poetry was rigorously formal and powerfully handled metre and rhyme (under the influence of New Criticism)
- Depicted the anguish and corruption in modern life
- Opposed II World War and Vietnam War, for which he was imprisoned
- Also suffered from marital and psychological problems
- In the mid-1950s, began to write more directly from personal experience; adhered less to traditional metre and form

Major Works

- Land of Unlikeness (1944)
- Lord Weary's Castle (1946)
 - Won a Pulitzer Prize
- The Mills of the Kavanaughs (1951)
- For the Union Dead (1964)
- Notebook (1969)
- Life Studies (1959)

Life Studies (1959)

- Exerted tremendous influence on modern poetry
- Includes his most famous poems, such as
 - “On a Mad Negro Soldier Confined at Munich”
 - “Man and Wife”
 - “Commander Lowell”
- His poem for Elizabeth Bishop, “Skunk Hour” written in response to her poem, “The Armadillo”

“Skunk Hour”

- The speaker reflects on a coastal town in Maine
- He describes an elderly, wealthy woman who is quite alone in her older years
- Then he describes what has gone wrong with the place
 - The millionaire who lived there for the summer is gone
 - The town decorator seems depressed and poor
 - The whole place is looking depressing
- Then the focus shifts to the speaker
- He remembers a drive he took through the town one night
- He is feeling depressed and kind of crazy
- What he observes now is affected by how he is feeling, and as the poem progresses it gets pretty bleak
- The title means a disgusting hour / phase of life

Anne Sexton (1928-1974)

- Suffered from depression and mental breakdown throughout her life
- Started writing at the suggestion of her therapist
- Focused on the psychological aspect of poetry
- Had a successful writing career
- Won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967 for Live or Die
- Committed suicide at the age of 46

Sexton's Writing

- Sexton's confessional poetry is more autobiographical than Plath's
- Sexton's poems appeal powerfully to the emotions
- Thrust taboo subjects into close focus
 - Often introduce female topics such as childbearing, the female body, or marriage seen from a woman's point of view

Some Poetry Collections

- 45 Mercy Street (1976)
- All My Pretty Ones (1962)
- Live or Die (1966)
- The Awful Rowing Toward God (1975)
- The Book of Folly (1973)
- The Death Notebooks (1974)
- To Bedlam and Part Way Back (1960)
- Transformations (1971)

Adrienne Rich (1929-2012)

- Major figure of postwar American poetry
- Feminist poet
- Also a compelling prose writer
- Career spanned seven decades
- Early verse was formally exact and modest
- Later poems are radical and confrontational
 - Themes: women's role in society, racism, and the Vietnam war

Major Collections

- Diving into the Wreck: Poems 1971-1972 (1973, poetry)
 - A collection of exploratory and often angry poems
 - Won the National Book Award in 1974
 - Rich accepted the award with fellow-nominees Audre Lorde and Alice Walker on behalf of all women
- A Human Eye: Essays on Art in Society (2009, essays)

“Diving into the Wreck”

- The speaker is a diver, looking for the wreck of a ship beneath the ocean
- She puts on scuba gear, and describes the process of descending to the wreck
- First she tells us about the trip down the ladder into the water, and then the amazing feeling of entering the ocean
- Then the speaker arrives at the wreck
- The speaker first flashes a light on the wreck, and then begins to explore, searching through the body of a ship
- We see the abandoned, waterlogged objects that fill the wreck
- Then we know she is talking about something more than the wreck...

An Analysis

- The speaker-diver becomes a mermaid as well as a merman, a new creature
- The speaker of the poem has become everyone: “We are, I am, you are”
- We all become wreck divers
- We all become victims and survivors of disaster, all recovering, searching, and exploring

Other Poetry Collections

- Tonight No Poetry Will Serve (2010)
- Telephone Ringing in the Labyrinth (2006)
- The School Among the Ruins (2004)
- Fox (2001)
- Midnight Salvage (1999)
- Dark Fields of the Republic (1995)
- An Atlas of the Difficult World (1991)
- Time's Power (1989)
- The Fact of a Doorframe (1984)
- The Dream of a Common Language (1978)

Non-fiction

- Arts of the Possible: Essays and Conversations (2001)
- What is Found There: Notebooks on Poetry and Politics (1993)
- Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution (1986)
 - The title Of Woman Born recalls the line from Macbeth that makes Macbeth foolishly believe he is safe: "...for none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth"

Of Woman Born (1986)

- Examines motherhood as experience and institution
- Made motherhood an essential concern of feminism
- Begins with excerpts from Rich's journal
- She reflects on her love for her children and other emotions
- She describes moments in which she questioned her ability and desire to be a mother
- Even her own children recognize the impossibility of constant love and attention
- Still, society places on mothers the unreasonable demand that they provide perfect, constant love

Women are not just mothers

- Provides a historical overview of motherhood from primitive societies to patriarchal civilization
- Motherhood is only one aspect of a woman's being
 - Rather than being defined as mothers, or by their status as childless, women should be defined in terms of themselves, as all humans should be

“Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (1980)

- Essay by Adrienne Rich published in her book Blood, Bread, and Poetry (1986)
- Heterosexuality is a violent political institution making way for the “male right of physical, economical, and emotional access” to women
- Portrays lesbianism as an extension of feminism
 - Urges women to direct their energies towards other women rather than men

Heterosexuality

- Compulsory heterosexuality denies women their own sexuality and comfortability in exploring their bodies and those of others
- Heterosexuality serves to imply that only a man can sexually satisfy a woman (by delivering a vaginal orgasm)
- The denial of sexuality for women is a means to control and suppress any transition, creativeness, and economic advancement of women
- All women should separate themselves from men and engage in some form of lesbian relationship
- Part of the lesbian experience is an act of resistance

Lesbianism

- Calls for a greater understanding of lesbian experience, and believes that once such an understanding is obtained, women will be able to experience the “erotic” in female terms
- Objects to the term lesbianism as stigmatized and clinical; instead, proposes two separate terms
 - Lesbian existence denotes the fact of the historical presence of lesbians and how we continuously create the meaning of that existence
 - Lesbian continuum refers to the woman-identified experiences in each woman’s life and throughout history; thus lesbianism is more than the genital sexual experience of one woman with another woman

Sylvia Plath (1932-63)

- Born in Boston, Massachusetts
- Her father, Otto Plath, was a professor of both German and biology, with a focus on the study of bees
- Her mother was his student, Aurelia Schober
- When Sylvia was eight years old, her father died as a result of complications from diabetes
- His authoritarian attitudes and his death drastically defined her relationships and her poems

Early Life

- As a girl, kept a journal and wrote poetry
- Ambitious to succeed
- Exceptional student in school and college
- Bouts of depression and suicidal tendency in her undergraduate years
- She had bipolar disorder, or manic depression, a very serious illness for which there were no genuinely effective medications
- Met and married Ted Hughes in 1956
- In Massachusetts, Robert Lowell was her teacher

Two Collections

- Colossus (1960)
 - First collection of poems; the only one in her lifetime
 - First published in England
- Gave birth to two children in England
- In 1962, Ted Hughes left Plath for another woman
- In a deep depression and an intense burst of creativity, Plath wrote most of the poems that comprised her most famous book, Ariel (1965)
- The same year she committed suicide by inhaling gas from a kitchen oven

Posthumous Publications

- Hughes published three other volumes of her work posthumously
 - Crossing the Water (1971)
 - Winter Trees (1972)
 - The Collected Poems (1981)
 - This was the recipient of the 1982 Pulitzer Prize
 - She was the first poet to win a Pulitzer Prize after death
- The Bell Jar (1963) is her only novel
- Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams: Short Stories, Prose, and Diary Excerpts (1977)

The Bell Jar (1963)

- Her only published novel, one month before she died
- Semi-autobiographical
- Published under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas
- Her mother wished to block its publication
- Protagonist is Esther Greenwood
- Discusses her experiences of mental breakdown and recovery
- Unconventional coming-of-age story

“Daddy”

- Written in October 1962, four months before her suicide
- One of her “Holocaust poems,” along with “Lady Lazarus” and “Mary’s Song”
- A violent, harsh attack on the dead father
- Ironically affectionate title
- The love-hate relationship with her father is a dominant theme in Plath’s poetry
- The speaker has to try to exorcise the power which her father held over her as a child
- Uses harsh, insistent rhyme to evoke this meaning
- There is one repeated rhyme, an “oo” sound that becomes a cry of pain

Summary of the Poem

- A series of metaphors present the relationship between father and daughter in graphically negative terms
 - He's like a black shoe that she's had to live in
 - Like a statue that stretches across the United States
 - Like God
 - Like a Nazi
 - Like a Swastika
 - Like a vampire
- The father was unreachable when alive; she could not talk to him
 - “The tongue stuck in my jaw,” the speaker says.
 - “It stuck in a barb wire snare./ Ich, ich, ich, ich.”
 - The repetition of the German word for “I” expresses that she could not articulate herself and establish her individuality

Summary of the Poem

- Unable to find and escape him simultaneously, she tried a kind of magic: She married a man like her father and separated from him, thus “killing” both the husband and the father
- When she believes that she has broken his spell, she announces victoriously, mingling images of telephone and grave
 - The black telephone’s off at the root,/
 - the voices just can’t worm through”...

The Ending

- The end of the poem is a triumphant assertion of rejection and freedom
 - “Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I’m through.”
 - This is the final condemnation
 - Not only is the speaker's father dead, slain like a vampire, predatory and erotic, but the villagers never liked him either
- “Daddy” is about individual freedom and its relation to self-knowledge and courage

“Lady Lazarus”

- Complicated, dark poem
- Scathing use of Holocaust imagery
- The 30-year-old poet has just returned from the edge of death after a suicide attempt and speaks of it as rebirth
- She describes two more previous suicide attempts, one when she had been 10, and the other when she had been 20
- The poem is a demonstration of the female artist's struggle for autonomy in a patriarchal society
- The female speaker desires revenge against male domination, which turns against all men

Summary of the Poem

- The narrator begins by saying she has “done it again”
- Every ten years, she manages to attempt suicide
- She considers herself a walking miracle with bright skin, her right foot a “paperweight,” and her face as fine and featureless as a “Jew linen”
- She addresses an unspecified enemy, asking him to peel the napkin from her face, and inquiring whether he is terrified by the features he sees there
- She assures him that her “sour breath” will vanish in a day

Summary Contd.

- She asserts that her flesh will soon be restored to her face after having been sacrificed to the grave, and that she will then be a smiling, 30 year-old woman
- She will ultimately be able to die nine times, like a cat, and has just completed her third death
- She will die once each decade
- After each death, a “peanut-crunching crowd” voyeuristically shoves in to see her body unwrapped
- They are viewing her as they view an object
- She shows the crowd she had remained unchanged
- The crowd is compared to the complacent Germans who watched the Jews thrown into concentration camps

Summary Contd.

- The first death occurred when she was ten, accidentally
- The second death was intentional – she did not want to return from it and was as “shut as a seashell”
- The people had to call and call in order to bring her back, and had to pick the worms off her corpse like sticky pearl
- She asserts that “Dying / Is an art, like everything else,” a performance, and that she does it very well
- Each time, “it feels real,” and is easy for her
- It is the dramatic return that is difficult, to the same place and body, to the crowd crying “A miracle!”
- She says people should pay to view her scars, hear her heart, or to get from her a word, a touch, a bit of blood, or a piece of her hair or clothes

The Ending

- Finally, she addresses the reader as “Herr Dockter” and “Herr Enemy,” sneering that she is valuable, his “pure gold baby”
- Here the reader is
 - Made complicit in the passive voyeurism of the crowd
 - Compared to the Germans who ignored the Holocaust
 - Part of a patriarchal society that consumes the female
- She says she does not underestimate his concern
- But is bothered by how he picks through her ashes
- She insists there is nothing there but soap a wedding ring, and a gold filling
- She warns “Herr God, Herr Lucifer” to beware of her because she is going to rise out of the ash and “eat men like air”

“The Colossus”

- An early poem about her father
 - Does not examine the psychologically disturbing relationship of father and daughter as deeply as “Daddy” does
- Addressed to an unspecified listener probably her father
- Exists as a huge statue
- The speaker says she can never put the listener back together
- Coarse animal noises come from his “great lips,” and she wonders if he considers himself an oracle
 - A “mouthpiece of the dead” or “some god”
- She has climbed the statue and worked for thirty years to remove the silt from his throat and to clean and mend the skull-plates and eyes of the statue

Summary

- Above her and the statue is “blue sky out of the Oresteia”
 - She is like Electra in Oresteia, who tries to come to terms with the death of her father
 - Like Electra, she feels an incest-awe for her father
- As she eats her lunch, the speaker notes the terrible ruin the statue is in
 - It takes more than a lightning to create such a wreck
- During night the speaker crouches in the statue’s left ear to avoid the wind counting red and plum-coloured stars

The poem ends thus:

- The sun rises under the pillar of your tongue.
- My hours are married to shadow.
- No longer do I listen for the scrape of a keel
- On the blank stones of the landing.

What does the ending mean?

- The ending suggests that the speaker is content to be in the ear of the statue
- Even if this might mean giving up her individuality, she does not desire any change or rescue, denoted by the sound of the boat
- She has no existence separate from the colossus of her father

The Title, Colossus

- In Greek, colossus means a statue that represents a deceased person
 - Evokes the individual's presence as well as his absence
- The poem also alludes to one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the Colossus of Rhodes that was destroyed by an earthquake
- By connecting her father to one of the world's great wonders, she acknowledges his power
 - Yet he is in ruins and cannot speak for there is silt in his throat and animal sounds are what he can produce
 - Thus, the speaker acknowledges the monumentality of her father in her life despite his weaknesses

“Mirror”

- A mirror describes its existence and its owner, who grows older as the mirror watches
- The mirror first describes itself as “silver and exact”
- It forms no judgments, instead merely reflecting what it sees
- The mirror is not cruel, “only truthful”
- It considers itself a four-cornered eye of a god, which sees everything for what it is
- Most of the time, the mirror looks across the empty room and meditates on the pink wall across
- It has looked at that wall for so long that the wall is now part of the mirror
- The image of the wall is interrupted only by people who enter to look at themselves and by the darkness of the night

Summary of the Poem

- The mirror is like a lake
- When a woman looks into it, she tries to understand who she really is
- Sometimes, the woman prefers to look at herself in candlelight or moonlight, but these are “liars” because they mask her true appearance
- Only the mirror gives her faithful reflection
- Because of this honesty, the woman is upset
- Yet, she visits the mirror again and again, every morning
- Over the years, the woman has “drowned a young girl” in the mirror, and now sees in her reflection an old woman growing older by the day
- This old woman rises toward her out of the mirror like “a terrible fish.”

Jewish American Writers

- The 1950s is the “golden age” of Jewish American literature
- All prominent American writers were Jewish and they got several awards
- Saul Bellow’s *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) opened thus: “I am an American, Chicago born”
 - This announced that Jews were as much a part of American society as anyone else
- Major Figures
 - Saul Bellow, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, Grace Paley
 - JD Salinger, Norman Mailer and Joseph Heller are Jewish, but included in postmodern writers

Themes in Jewish American Writing

- Holocaust is not a major theme
- Existential alienation and the quest for home
- The need to overcome the limitations of the individual (self-transcendence)
- The quest for moral guidance
- Desire for empathetic understanding in a hostile world

Saul Bellow (1915-2005)

- Born in Quebec
- Raised in Humboldt Park in Chicago
- Also lived in New York City
- Travelled widely
 - These cities feature in his novels
- Winner of the 1976 Nobel Prize in literature
- Only writer to win the National Book Award for Fiction thrice
- Novels are often comic
- Protagonists are philosophical
- Major theme is the disorienting nature of modern civilization

Two Early Novels

- Dangling Man (1944)
 - Diary form
 - Set in Chicago
 - Joseph is an unemployed young man; the novel discusses his relationships with his wife and friends, and his frustrations with life
- The Victim (1947)
 - Set in New York City
 - The middle-aged Jewish protagonist, Leventhal
 - Tormented by an old acquaintance who holds him responsible for his failure in life
 - Comes to terms with his own family problems
- Kafkaesque meditations exploring modern day existential problems

The Adventures of Augie March (1953)

- Bildungsroman as well as picaresque novel
- Story of Augie, an innocent rascal, in conflict with his world
 - Poor boy growing up in Chicago during the Depression
 - Dozens of memorable characters
 - Augie travels through Mexico and Europe and attains self-discovery
 - Unlike his literary predecessor Huckleberry Finn, Augie has an absence of purpose, direction, faith, or even determination to escape; he dangles
 - After many “adventures,” Augie realizes that he has truly discovered what it is to be American
- The opening line –“I am an American, Chicago born”

Other Works

- Seize The Day (1956)
- Henderson The Rain King (1959)
- Herzog (1964)
 - Became the first American to win the International Literary Prize (1965)
- Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories (1968)
- Mr. Sammler's Planet (1970)
- Humboldt's Gift (1975)
- To Jerusalem and Back: A Personal Account (1976; non-fiction)
- Has also written plays

Herzog (1964)

- Portrait of a middle-aged man searching for meaning and selfhood in the anxiety ridden America of the 1960s
- Novel is a series of fragmented reflections
- Revealed in an epistolary format
- Moses Herzog
 - The protagonist
 - Obsessed with writing letters to everyone
 - For both living and dead
- He experiences a spiritual and emotional paralysis
 - Due to the breakup of his marriage and his contemplation of the wasteland of modern life

Herzog's Letters

- In the letters, Herzog
 - Examines various philosophical theories
 - Recalls fond images of his childhood
 - Apologizes to ignored friends and lovers
 - Reproaches those, like his wife and her lover, who have caused his suffering
- Through the letters, he analyzes his past and tries to determine his future
- Thus, he
 - Copes with his sense of alienation and displacement
 - Restores his faith in himself and in humanity
- The fragmented form of letters show
 - The disorientation of his life
 - His need to restore some kind of order

Mr. Sammler's Planet (1970)

- The novel takes place over a few days in the 1960s in New York
- It is like a wasteland
- Artur Sammler, the protagonist
 - A Polish Jew, Holocaust survivor and academic
 - A half-blind septuagenarian
 - Was friends with HG Wells
- With his good eye he reflects on the degenerations of city life and looks deep into the sufferings of the human soul

Humboldt's Gift (1975)

- Won the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
- Roman a clef
- Theme: the role of the artist in the advanced technological society of America (John Berryman, Hart Crane, Bellow's friend Delmore Schwartz)
- The poet Von Humboldt Fleisher's life is narrated by his friend Charlie Citrine
- Humboldt was a romantic poet; met with early success, turns to women and alcohol, becomes a manic-depressive, and dies
- Charlie too is an artist who has fallen into difficulties
- The novel is about his struggles against the fate of the dead poet; described as "a comic book about death"

Charlie Citrine

- Charlie Citrine
 - The narrator
 - A successful writer of Broadway plays and historical and political books
- He has witnessed Humboldt's decline
- Charlie is suffering many evils himself
 - Money troubles, women troubles and self-doubt
- Rinaldo Cantabile is Charlie's instructor in materialism
- The exploitative 20th century Western culture is presented through the metaphor of cannibalism (recurs in Bellow's fiction)
- Charlie struggles against defeat & death
 - Studies anthroposophy, experiences an inner light
- He is helped by Humboldt's "gift"

Elie Wiesel (1928-2016)

- Romanian-born
- Holocaust survivor, academic and activist
- Wrote over 60 works of fiction and non-fiction
 - Dealing with
 - Judaism
 - The Holocaust
 - The moral responsibility of all people to fight hatred, racism and genocide
- Was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986

Major Works

- Night (1960)
 - A memoir of his experiences surviving the Holocaust
 - Along with Dawn (1961) and Day (1962), forms a trilogy that examines humankind's destructive treatment of one another
- Two volumes of memoirs
 - All Rivers Run to the Sea (1995)
 - And the Sea is Never Full (1999)
- A Beggar in Jerusalem (1970)
- The Testament (1981)
- The Fifth Son (1985)
- The Sonderberg Case (2010)

Philip Roth (1933-2018)

- Born in Newark in New Jersey, where his novels are set
- Intensely autobiographical fiction
- Many of his novels feature the characters
 - Nathan Zuckerman, Roth's alter-ego
 - David Kepesh, a professor of literature
- His novels are postmodern and self-reflexive
- Feminists have objected to his writing for extolling explicit male sexuality
- Goodbye, Columbus and Five Short Stories (1959)
 - A collection of short stories humorously portraying American Jewish life
 - His criticism of the Jewish community has been controversial

Other Works

- Portnoy's Complaint (1969)
 - Monologue of a lusty Jewish bachelor who confesses to his psychiatrist in explicit language
- American Pastoral (1997)
 - Won Pulitzer Prize in 1998
 - Narrated by Nathan Zuckerman
- The Human Stain (2000)
 - Narrated by Nathan Zuckerman
- In the Kafkaesque novel The Breast (1972), David Kepesh turns into a female breast

American Pastoral (1997)

- Set against the socio-political turmoil of the 1960s
- Jerry Levov tells Nathan Zuckerman the story of his brother Seymour Levov
- Seymour Levov's daughter Merry commits an act of terrorism in protest against America's involvement in the Vietnam War
- In the years that follow, Zuckerman realizes that Seymour Levov, his wife and daughter all have another reality behind their appearances
- The novel raises questions like
 - What is truth?
 - What is reality?
 - What is innocence?
- It shows the chaos beneath the order, the chaos beneath the American pastoral.

William Styron's Sophie's Choice

- Sophie's Choice (1979) is a major work of Holocaust literature
- Stingo
 - Narrator
 - A novelist
 - Narrates the story of two lovers
 - Nathan Landau (a Jewish-American)
 - Sophie Zawistowska, a beautiful, Polish-Catholic survivor of the concentration camps of World War II
- Sophie tells Stingo of her past
 - she had chosen to sacrifice her 7-year-old daughter at Auschwitz so that her son would live
- Sophie suffers from terrible guilt
- Ultimately commits suicide with Nathan
 - Nathan was a violent paranoid schizophrenic

Other Writers

Lillian Hellman (1905-84)

- Woman playwright and screenwriter
- Famously blacklisted for “un-American activities” at the height of the anti-communist campaigns of 1947-52
- The Children’s Hour (1934)
 - Stage play set in an all-girls boarding school run by two women, Karen Wright and Martha Dobie
 - An angry student, Mary Tilford, runs away from the school and to avoid being sent back she tells her grandmother that the two headmistresses are having a lesbian affair
 - The accusation destroys the women’s careers, relationships and lives
 - At the time, any mention of homosexuality on stage was illegal in New York State
 - But the play was such a success and so widely praised by critics that the rule was not enforced

Eudora Welty (1909-2001)

- Short story writer and novelist of the American South
- Published collections of photographs
- A Curtain of Green
 - 1941
 - First collection of short stories
- The Optimist's Daughter
 - 1973
 - Won Pulitzer Prize
- Characteristics of Works
 - Humor
 - Psychological insight
 - Intricacy of human relationships
 - Postmodern elements

Major Works

- Famous short stories
 - “Why I live at the P.O.”
 - “Death of a Traveling Salesman”
 - “The Wide Net”
- Novels
 - The Robber Bridegroom (1942)
 - Delta Wedding (1946)

The Optimist's Daughter (1973)

- Autobiographical
- The story of Laurel, a widow who returns to Mississippi when her father is ill
- She witnesses his death and funeral
- From there embarks on a deeply personal journey to explore her past and her family
- This journey helps her make sense of her future
- Complex emotions of the characters are depicted

Flannery O'Connor (1925-64)

- Major Works
 - Wise Blood (1952)
 - The Violent Bear It Away (1960)
 - A Good Man is Hard to Find (1955)
 - Short story collection
 - Everything That Rises Must Converge (1965)

Carson McCullers (1917-67)

- Major Works
 - The Mortgaged Heart (1971)
 - The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (1940)
 - Reflections in a Golden Eye (1941)
 - The Member of the Wedding (1946)
 - Clock Without Hands (1961)

“E. L.” Doctorow (b. 1931)

- Known for his unique works of historical fiction
- Has written short fiction and essays also
- The Book of Daniel (1971)
 - A freely fictionalized consideration of the trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for giving nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union during the Cold War
- Ragtime (1975)
 - Mainly set in New York City from about 1900 until the United States entry into World War I in 1917
 - Centres on a wealthy family simply named “Father,” “Mother,” “Mother’s Younger Brother,” “Grandfather” and a young son who is not named at all
- Billy Bathgate (1989)
- The March (2005)

Erich Segal (1937-2010)

- Best-known as the author of the bestseller tragic, sentimental novel Love Story (1970)
- Also wrote the screenplay for the film Love Story (1970)
 - Rich young boy Oliver falls in love with and marries working class girl Jenny; his father refuses support; their struggles for education and for life; she dies of a terminal illness; his father regrets
- Wrote the screenplay for The Beatles' 1968 motion picture, Yellow Submarine

Postmodern Literature

- Irony, playfulness, black humour
- Self-consciously deconstructed, self-reflexive and paranoid narrators / protagonists
- A sense of discontinuity in a world devoid of authority
- Pastiche (pasting elements of previous genres and styles of literature to create a new narrative voice / mode)
- Intertextuality
- Mingling of fact and fiction as in Faction and Historiographic metafiction
- Distortion of chronology and time
- Technoculture and hyperreality
- Reader Participation

Don DeLillo (b.1936)

- Born in New York
- Americana
 - 1971
 - First novel
- Described his fiction as being concerned with living in dangerous times

Diverse Themes

- Diverse themes
 - Television
 - Nuclear war
 - Sports
 - The complexities of language
 - Performance art
 - The Cold War
 - Mathematics
 - The advent of the digital age
 - Global terrorism

Major Works

- Americana (1971)
 - Story of a former television executive turned avant-garde filmmaker
- Ratner's Star (1976)
 - Comic story of a child prodigy mathematician
 - Modelled on the works of Lewis Carroll
- Libra (1988)
 - A fictionalized account of the life of Lee Harvey Oswald up to the 1963 assassination of John F. Kennedy

More Recent Works

- Mao II (1992)
 - Influenced by the lives of Salman Rushdie and JD Salinger, the novel discusses the position of the novelist and the novel in a media- and terrorist-dominated society
- Underworld (1997)
 - An epic Cold War history regarded as his masterpiece
- The Body Artist (2001)
 - The grief of a young performance artist, following the suicide of her significantly older husband
- Cosmopolis (2003)
 - A modern re-interpretation of James Joyce's Ulysses set in New York around the time of the collapse of the dot-com bubble in the year 2000

White Noise (1984)

- Follows the life of Jack Gladney
 - A professor
 - Made his name by pioneering the field of Hitler studies
- Babette
 - Wife
- Jack and Babette are both extremely afraid of death
- Babette cheats on Jack in order to gain access to a fictional drug called Dylar
 - An experimental treatment for the terror of death
- Jack continues to obsess over death
- Jack's colleague hypothesizes that killing someone could perhaps alleviate the fear

Jack Gets Over the Fear of Dying

- Jack decides to track down and kill Willie Mink
 - Willie Mink had given Dylar to Babette in exchange for sex
- Jack tries to murder Willie but then takes him to the hospital
- Later that day Jack's youngest son rides his tricycle across the highway and miraculously survives
- The event allows Jack to let go of his fear of death and obsession with health and safety hazards

Ken Kesey (1935-2001)

- A counter-cultural figure associated with the older Beatniks of the 1950s and the hippies of the 1960s
- Author of One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962)
 - A quintessentially Oregon novel
 - Explores the conflict between modern industrial society and individuality, a struggle between conformity and freedom

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1962)

- Story takes place in a mental hospital during the late 1950s
- At one level the story of how a highly individualistic man named McMurphy becomes a patient
 - For a time overturns the senseless and dehumanizing routines of the ward
- At a deeper level this is a commentary on the US society which is so hopelessly conformist as to stifle individuality and creativity
- This novel bridges the transition
 - From the Beatniks of the late 1950s, who used poetry, music, and fashion to express their dissatisfaction with conformist society
 - To the hippies of the 1960s, whose counterculture rebellion included free love and drug use

J.D. Salinger (1919-2010)

- Produced only a few works
- Led a reclusive lifestyle
- But was a greatly influential literary figure
- The Catcher in the Rye (1951) catapulted him to fame
- Shied away from the limelight; published very few works after this
- Followed Zen Buddhism

The Catcher in the Rye (1951)

- The account of three disoriented days in the life of a troubled sixteen-year-old boy, Holden Caulfield
 - Holden, the first-person narrator, tells the story in flashback
- Themes of adolescent alienation and loss of innocence
- Was immensely popular for many years, especially among teenagers and young adults, largely because of its fresh, brash style and anti-establishment attitudes
- Irrate parents objected to the main character's obscene language, erratic behavior, and antisocial attitudes, leading to a controversy

Holden Leaves Pencey Prep

- Holden has expelled for the fourth time from Pencey Prep, an exclusive private school in (fictional) Agerstown, Pennsylvania
- He has to begin his journey home, where he must face his parents
- He also considers whether he should simply go out west and start a new life, rather than go home at all
- Before he leaves, Ackley, his dorm neighbour, comes over to visit
 - Ackley has several personal habits which make him unappealing, but Holden tolerates him
- Stradlater, Holden's roommate, goes on a date
 - Although Stradlater is handsome and has the veneer of sincerity, Holden thinks he is a phony
 - Holden later picks a fight with him and gets a bloody nose
- Surrounded by Pencey's all pervasive loneliness, Holden decides to return home immediately
- That night, yelling loud enough to wake everyone, he screams his final farewell to his moronic classmates, thus venting his frustration one last time

A Nightclub and a Prostitute

- The next evening, he checks into the dilapidated Edmont Hotel in New York City
- Holden dances with three female tourists in a nightclub and struggles with his own sexuality
- Back at his hotel, he accepts an offer from the elevator operator to meet the prostitute Sunny
 - She seems his own age and he begins to consider her as a person; tells her that he is not in the mood for sex
 - Though he pays her, she returns with her pimp Maurice and demands more money

Sally, Phoebe, Mr Antolini

- The next day, Sunday, Holden meets two nuns at breakfast
 - He enjoys their conversation and insists on giving them a contribution
- That afternoon, he takes his old girlfriend, Sally Hayes, to see a play
 - Still hesitant to go home, Holden tries to talk Sally into running away with him
 - When he insults her, she asks him to leave
- Later, he goes home and sneaks into the house to talk to his sister, Phoebe, before he runs away
- He decides to spend the night at the home of his former English teacher, Mr. Antolini
 - Holden suspects that his former teacher is a pervert when he is awakened by Mr. Antolini petting him on the head
 - Holden makes up a flimsy excuse about getting his bags from the train station and bolts from the apartment

A Day with Phoebe

- Holden continues to be obsessed by his plan to go out west
- On Monday morning, he writes Phoebe a note at her school asking her to meet him near the Metropolitan Museum
- Phoebe meets him with suitcase in hand
- She has decided to run away with him, but he tells her that he is not going away after all
- They visit the zoo, and then Phoebe wants to ride the carousel in the park
- Before she gets on, he confirms to her that he really is going home
- While standing in a soaking rain, watching Phoebe ride the carousel, he feels so happy that he is on the verge of tears

Other Works

- Nine Stories (1953, short story collection)
- Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction (1963, two novellas)
- Franny and Zooey (1961, a novella and a short story)
- Hapworth 16, 1924 (1965, a novella)

Harper Lee (1926-2016)

- American woman novelist best known for her novel, To Kill a Mockingbird (1960)
 - Pulitzer Prize-winning best-seller
 - Autobiographical elements
- She grew up as a tomboy in a small town
- Her father was a lawyer, a member of the Alabama state legislature and also owned part of the local newspaper
- Her mother suffered from mental illness, rarely leaving the house
- Truman Capote was her childhood friend

To Kill a Mockingbird (1960)

- Southern Gothic novel and a bildungsroman
- Three key years in the life of Jean Louise Scout Finch, the young daughter of Atticus Finch, a principled lawyer in the town of Maycomb, Alabama
- 1962 film adaptation directed by Robert Mulligan had Gregory Peck in the role of Atticus Finch
- At one level, a coming-of-age story and a regional novel
- The novel also reflects racial prejudices in the South
- Two Plots
 - Scout and her brother Jem and their friend Dill explore the mystery of the Radley Place and its inhabitant Boo Radley
 - The accusation of Thomas Robinson as a rapist, his trial, and his conviction

Boo Radley

- The adult “Scout” reflects back on key events in two years of her childhood, from when she was 6 to 8
- Scout, her brother Jem and Dill become fascinated with Arthur “Boo” Radley, a reclusive neighbour
 - Radley’s father, a religious fanatic, confined Boo to the house because he was arrested for youthful pranks as a teenager
 - Years later, Boo casually stabbed his father in the leg with a pair of scissors, confirming people’s worst fears about him
 - Scout is confused about people and relationships, and learns from her father that she must put herself in others’ places before judging them
 - The children attempt to enter the Radley compound, and are driven away by Nathan Radley, Boo’s brother
 - Boo leaves the children gum, Indian head pennies and replicas of Scout and Jem carved in soap in the hole of a tree

Tom Robinson

- Bob (Robert) Ewell is a despicable drunkard
- His daughter Mayella struggles to run the household and is sometimes helped by Tom Robinson, a poor black man
- Once Mayella attempts to seduce Tom but he escapes
- Bob Ewell beats Mayella and then accuses Tom of rape
- Atticus is appointed to defend Tom
- Other children taunt Jem and Scout by calling their father a “nigger-lover”
- Atticus proves that Tom has not beaten Mayella
 - Mayella was beaten primarily on the right side of her body by a left-handed man
 - By having Bob Ewell sign his name, Atticus shows him to be left-handed
 - Tom’s left arm, however, is crippled from a boyhood accident

Robert Ewell

- Despite the evidence favouring Tom, the all-white jury convicts him of rape, a crime punishable by death
- Desperate, Tom attempts to escape and is shot dead
- Robert Ewell is determined to seek revenge on Atticus
- Too scared to attack Atticus, Ewell violently attacks Jem and Scout while they were returning home from school after a Halloween pageant, with Scout dressed as “ham”
- Boo Radley hears the commotion and manages to kill Ewell before he can harm the children further
- Sheriff Heck Tate knows that Boo killed the man, but decides to say that Ewell fell on his knife
- He tells Atticus, “Let the dead bury the dead”
- Tom Robinson died for no reason and now the man who caused his death is dead

Prejudices

- Boo is revealed to be a gentle soul through his unseen acts:
 - The gifts he leaves in the tree
 - His mending of Jem's torn pants
 - The blanket he puts around Scout the night Miss Maudie's house caught fire
 - And finally, his rescue of the children from Bob Ewell's murderous attack
- The children's fear of Boo Radley, based on ignorance rather than knowledge, subtly reflects the prejudice of the town against Tom Robinson

The Mockingbird Symbol

- When the children receive guns for Christmas, Atticus tells them “it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird.”
- Miss Maudie Atkinson explains, it would be thoughtlessly cruel to kill innocent creatures that “don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy.”
- The mockingbirds are silent as Atticus takes to the street to shoot a rabid dog
 - Scout describes a similar silence in the courtroom just prior to the jury pronouncing Tom Robinson guilty
- Finally, Scout tells her father that revealing Boo Radley’s role in Bob Ewell’s death would be “like shootin’ a mockingbird.”

Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977)

- Russian-born American novelist, critic, poet and playwright
- Mashenka (Mary)
 - 1926
 - First novel
- His first nine novels were in Russian
- But achieved international prominence after he began writing in English
- Nabokov published under the pseudonym "Vladimir Sirin" in the 1920s to 1940s
- Noted for
 - His complex plots
 - Clever word play
 - Daring metaphors
 - Prose style capable of both parody and intense lyricism

Major Works

- King, Queen, Knave (1928)
- The Defense (1930)
 - A chess novel
- Despair (1936)
- Invitation to a Beheading (1938)
- Speak, Memory (1951)
 - His memoir
- Lolita (1955)
- Pnin (1957)
 - An episodic novel about an émigré professor of entomology in the US
- Pale Fire (1962)

Lolita (1955)

- Grotesque parody, farce, and pathos blended with two powerful, shocking subjects:
 - The passionate feelings of a grown man toward a pubescent girl and
 - The complex nature of romantic love, which is not only tender and generous but also ruthless and even totalitarian
- Banned for its controversial content
- First adapted into film by Stanley Kubrick in 1962

The Foreword

- Fictitious Freudian psychiatrist John Ray, Ph.D.
 - Claims to be editing Humbert's manuscript titled "Lolita or The Confession of a White Widowed Male"
 - Notes that Humbert died in prison in November 1952 of heart disease a few days before the beginning of his trial
 - Also reveals that Mrs. Richard F. Schiller (Lolita) died giving birth to a stillborn girl on Christmas Day, 1952, at the age of 17
- Ray, whom Nabokov later admitted he "impersonated," warns readers that they will be "entranced with the book while abhorring its author"

A Fictitious Memoir

- Humbert begins his memoir with the words
 - “Lolita. light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.”
- He admits that Lolita had a precursor, and that “there might have been no Lolita at all had I not loved, one summer, a certain initial girl-child.”
- Humbert’s first love was called Annabel

Annabel Leigh

- Humbert had a peaceful upbringing
- When he was 13, he met his first love, the 12-year-old Annabel Leigh
- They never consummate their love
- Annabel dies of typhus four months later
- Humbert goes on to a career as a teacher of English literature, but spends time in a mental institution and works on several odd jobs
- Has a failed marriage with Valeria
- Humbert is obsessed with sexually precocious young girls, whom he calls “nymphets”
- They remind him of Annabel, though he fails to find another like her

Charlotte Haze

- Humbert comes to the United States
- Becomes a boarder in the house of widow Charlotte Haze in a sleepy, suburban New England town
- Is instantly infatuated with her 12-year-old daughter Dolores, called Lolita
- Humbert records his pedophilic longings in a journal
- Charlotte, whom Humbert loathes, falls in love with him; Humbert marries Charlotte in order to stay near Lolita
- Humbert wants to be alone with Lolita and even toys with the idea of killing Charlotte
- Charlotte finds his diary; wants to leave him and storms out of the house
- Almost immediately, she is hit by a car, and killed

Humbert is “Seduced”

- Humbert picks up Lolita from the summer camp she was in
- At a motel, he tells her that Charlotte has died
- Narrator Humbert claims that Lolita seduces him
- The two drive across the country for nearly a year
- Humbert becomes increasingly obsessed with Lolita and she learns to manipulate him
- When she engages in tantrums or refuses his advances, Humbert threatens to put her in an orphanage
- A strange man appears to be following them in their travels

Humbert Loses Lolita

- Humbert gets a job at a college; Lolita enrolls in school
- She wishes to socialize with boys, and Humbert becomes more restrictive in his rules
- Lolita begins to behave secretively around Humbert, and he accuses her of being unfaithful and takes her away on another road trip
- On the road, Humbert suspects that they are being stalked, and accuses Lolita of conspiring with their stalker
- Lolita is ill with a flu, and is hospitalized
- When Humbert returns to get her, the nurses tell him that her uncle has already picked her up

Lolita Doesn't Return

- For two years, Humbert searches for Lolita; starts a relationship with Rita
- Receives a note from Lolita, pregnant, asking for money
- Is determined to kill her husband, whom he thinks is the stalker
- He finds Lolita, who admits that she had run away with Clare Quilty, a playwright, who had known her mother
- Quilty kicked her out when she refused to participate in a child pornography orgy, and she married one man called Dick
- Humbert begs her to return to him; Lolita gently refuses
- Humbert gives her 4000 dollars and departs
- He tracks down Quilty and shoots him to death
- Humbert is put in prison; he continues to write his memoir, stipulating that it can only be published upon Lolita's death
- After Lolita dies in childbirth, Humbert dies of heart failure, and the manuscript is sent to John Ray, Jr., Ph.D.

As a Postmodern Novel

- Lolita marked a move away from the notion that a novel should tell a realistic story from an objective perspective
- Like all postmodern novels, Lolita shows the fragmentary nature of experience and the complexity of language
 - Humbert Humbert narrates the novel from a highly subjective point of view, in a rich, sophisticated language
 - The beauty and intensity of the language allow readers to remain sympathetic to the pedophile protagonist
 - The novel contains a vast variety of linguistic devices, including puns, multilingual expressions, artistic allusions and word patterns
 - These linguistic devices show that a novel is not a fixed work of literature, but rather a more fluid, organic creation that was interconnected with other media

Norman Mailer (1923-2007)

- Novelist, journalist, essayist, playwright, film maker, actor and politician
- An innovator of creative nonfiction (Faction or New Journalism)
 - In this genre, the style and devices of literary fiction are superimposed onto factual journalism
 - Other practitioners: Truman Capote, Hunter S. Thompson and Tom Wolfe
- Won two Pulitzer Prizes

Major Works

- The Naked and the Dead (1948)
 - First novel
 - Based on his military service in World War II
 - Attacked by Kate Millett in Sexual Politics
- “The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster” (1957, essay)
- An American Dream (1965)
 - The protagonist, an embodiment of the American Dream, descends into the lurid underworld
 - Attacked by Kate Millett in Sexual Politics
- Marilyn (1973)
 - Biography of Marilyn Monroe

Two Pulitzer-Winning Works

- The Armies of the Night (1968)
 - Creative non-fiction work
 - Sub-titled “History as a Novel/The Novel as History”
 - The narrative is split into historicized and novelized accounts of the October 1967 March on the Pentagon
 - Won Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award
- The Executioner’s Song (1979)
 - Won Pulitzer Prize
 - On the life and death of murderer Gary Gilmore
 - The book participated in the national debate over the revival of capital punishment by the Supreme Court as Gilmore was the first person in the US executed since the re-instatement of the death penalty in 1976

Truman Capote (1924-84)

- Author of fiction and creative non-fiction, screenwriter and playwright
- Began his literary career by writing short stories
- First published novel is Other Voices, Other Rooms (1948)
 - Semi-autobiographical
 - 13-year-old Joel Knox after the death of his mother
 - The book featured the 23-year-old Truman Capote photographed by Harold Halma in 1947, showing a reclining Capote gazing fiercely into the camera; this iconic photo was equally famous as the book itself
- His works are widely adapted into film and television

Breakfast at Tiffany's (1958)

- Set in Manhattan, in autumn 1943
- The unnamed narrator becomes friends with the 18-year-old woman Holly Golightly, who calls him “Fred”, after her older brother
- She is unemployed and lives by socializing with wealthy men, and she hopes to marry one of them
- Holly shocks people with carefully selected information from her personal life or her outspoken viewpoints on various topics
- The narrator is fascinated by her curious lifestyle
- Finally, Holly fears that she will never know what is really hers until after she has thrown it away
- Their relationship ends in autumn 1944
- The novella was loosely adapted into the 1961 movie Breakfast at Tiffany's starring Audrey Hepburn

In Cold Blood (1966)

- “True crime” novel labelled a “nonfiction novel”
- A journalistic work about the murder of four members of a Kansas farm family in their home
- The book examines the complex psychological relationship between two criminals who together commit the mass murder
- Also explores the lives of the victims and the effect of the crime on the community in which they lived
- A milestone in popular culture
- Helped by his friend Harper Lee in writing this

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr (1922-2007)

- American novelist of German ancestry
- His works combine satire, gallows humour, and science fiction
- Associated with counterculture
- Major Works
 - Cat's Cradle (1963)
 - Slaughterhouse-Five (1969)
 - Based on his II World War experience
 - As part of a group of American prisoners of war who survived the bombing in an underground slaughterhouse meat locker
 - This slaughterhouse was used by them as an ad hoc detention facility
 - Breakfast of Champions (1973)

Joseph Heller (1923-99)

- Born in Brooklyn, New York, to Russian Jewish immigrants
- The surrealistic, carnival-like neighbourhood in which he grew up gave him a biting sense of humour
- In 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and in 1944, the year in which Catch-22 is set, Heller was stationed on the island of Corsica in the Mediterranean Sea
- After the War, embarked on an academic career
- Also worked as an advertising copywriter
- After the success of Catch-22 (1961), focussed on a writing career

Catch-22 (1961)

- Satirical war novel
- Depicts a world that seems to lack rationality, justice, or humanity, in which the individual becomes alienated, frustrated, and desperate
- Through the experiences of Captain John Yossarian
 - A bombardier pilot stationed on the island of Pianosa near Italy, in World War II
- Story is not told in a linear manner
 - The novel revolves around episodes in Yossarian's life
 - Employs flashbacks and digressions, paradoxes and inversions
- From the title, the term "Catch-22" entered English language
 - It refers to a vicious circle with an absurd, no-win choice, where the desired outcome of the choice is an impossibility, and some negative outcome is a certainty

John Barth (b. 1930)

- Novelist and short-story writer who pioneered postmodernism, fabulism and metafiction
- Two early realist novels
 - The Floating Opera and The End of the Road
- The Sot-Weed Factor (1960)
 - First conceived as the third part of the trilogy comprising the earlier realist novels
 - A satirical epic set in the 1680s-90s in London and colonial Maryland
 - The story of a fictionalized poet Ebenezer Cooke
 - Complicated Tom Jones-like plot is interwoven with numerous digressions and stories-within-stories

More Works

- Giles Goat-Boy (1966)
 - Metafictional comic novel
 - The world is portrayed as a university campus in an elaborate allegory of the Cold War
 - Became a bestseller
 - Pioneered Fabulism
 - A form of magic realism in which fantastical elements are placed into an everyday setting
- Short story collections
 - Lost in the Funhouse (1968)
 - Chimera (1972)

More Works

- Letters (1979)
 - Epistolary Novel
 - More than 7 narratives revealed through the letters written by characters of Barth's earlier novels
- The Development (2008)

Donald Barthelme (1931-89)

- Short story writer known for his playful, postmodern style
- Features of his stories
 - Exceptionally compact
 - Called “short-short fiction” or “flash fiction”
 - Often placed fictional and popular figures in absurd situations
 - Such as Snow White or Batman
 - Traditional plot structures are avoided
 - Offer verbal collages of seemingly unrelated detail

Major Short Stories

- “The Joker’s Greatest Triumph”
- “The Balloon”
- “The Indian Uprising”
- “Robert Kennedy Saved From Drowning”

Major Novels

- Snow White (1967)
- The Dead Father (1975)
- Paradise (1986)
- The King (1990, posthumous)

John Updike (1932-2009)

- Novelist, poet, short story writer, art critic, and literary critic
- Famous for his “Rabbit” series of novels
 - Describing the life of the middle-class everyman Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom over the course of several decades, from adolescence to death
 - Rabbit, Run (1960)
 - Rabbit Redux (1971)
 - Rabbit Is Rich (1980, Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award)
 - Rabbit At Rest (1990, Pulitzer Prize)
 - “Rabbit Remembered”
- Short stories
 - “Pigeon Feathers”

Other Novels

- *The Centaur* (1963)
 - The story of a depressive schoolteacher and his anxious son
 - Won National Book Award
- The Maple short stories
 - Describe the life of a young couple, Joan and Richard Maple
- Scarlet Letter Trilogy
 - On the theme of suburban adultery
- *The Coup* (1978)
 - About a dictatorship in Africa
- *The Witches of Eastwick* (1984)
 - A playful novel about witches living in Rhode Island
 - Very popular
 - Later, wrote *The Widows of Eastwick* (2008)

More Novels

- After the Rabbit series ended, Updike turned to experimental novels and diverse genres
- *Memories of the Ford Administration* (1992)
 - Historical fiction
- *Brazil* (1994)
 - Magic realism
- *In the Beauty of the Lilies* (1996)
 - Historical saga spanning several generations
- *Toward the End of Time* (1997)
 - Science fiction
- *Gertrude and Claudius* (2000)
 - Postmodern, with elements of parody and pastiche
- *Seek My Face* (2002)
 - Experimental fiction
- *Terrorist* (2006)

Cormac McCarthy (b. 1933)

- Novelist, playwright, and screenwriter
- Novels belong to the Southern Gothic, Western, and post-apocalyptic genres
- Major Works
 - *Suttree* (1979)
 - *Blood Meridian* (1985, regarded his masterpiece)
 - A Western (or Anti-Western) novel
 - Border Trilogy
 - *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), *Cities of the Plain* (1998)
 - *No Country for Old Men* (2005)
 - *The Road* (2006)
 - Journey of a father and his young son over a period of several months, across a post-apocalyptic landscape

Thomas Pynchon (b. 1937)

- Reclusive novelist known for his experimental style in fiction
- Wrote short stories in high school
- Studied engineering physics
- Worked for Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, Washington as a technical writer
- Has dense and complex novels as well as non-fiction on a wide variety of subject matter, styles and themes, including history, science and mathematics
- The plots are often difficult to follow because of their intricate twists and turns and their sometimes incredibly esoteric subject matter
- Pynchon's characters are also hard to relate to

Major Works

- V. (1963)
 - Describes the adventures of a discharged US Navy sailor named Benny Profane
 - He reconnects in New York with a group of pseudo-bohemian artists
 - Also about the quest of an aging traveller named Herbert Stencil to identify and locate the mysterious entity he knows only as “V”
 - “V” turns out to be an illusory and mysterious woman who appears in several incarnations
- *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966)
 - Short and comparatively more accessible work
 - Depicts a world of drugs, manic and full of conspiracies and illusions and contains a pervasive sense of cultural chaos

Major Works

- *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973)
 - Lengthy, complex novel with a large cast of characters
 - Set in Europe at the end of World War II
 - Narrative centres on the design, production and dispatch of V-2 rockets by the German military
- *Mason & Dixon* (1997)
 - Centres on the collaboration of the historical Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon in their astronomical exploits
- *Bleeding Edge* (2013)
 - A detective story
 - Major themes are the September 11 attacks in New York City and the transformation of the world by the Internet

Joyce Carol Oates (b. 1938)

- Highly prolific author
- Has written over forty novels, a number of plays and novellas, and many volumes of short stories, poetry, and nonfiction
- Also wrote under the pseudonyms Rosamond Smith and Lauren Kelly
- Major themes: power of the self, the struggle for autonomy, the nature of love and sexual power, contemporary issues
- “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been” is a famous story
 - Dedicated to Bob Dylan, the pop singer
 - Features Connie, a female protagonist struggling with adolescence who finds herself in a dangerous situation with the stranger Arnold Friend

Major Novels

- *Wonderland*(1971)
- *Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart* (1990)
- *Black Water* (1992)
- *What I Lived For* (1994)
- *Blonde* (2000)

Other Major Novelists

- Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy* (1987)
- Tim O'Brien
 - *The Things They Carried* (1990, semi-autobiographical short stories on Vietnam War)
- Bret Easton Ellis links violence with consumerism, sex and drugs
 - *Less Than Zero* (1985)
 - *American Psycho* (1991)
 - *Glamorama* (1998)

Sam Shepard (1943-2017)

- Born in Illinois
- Real name is Samuel Shepard Rogers
 - Adopted the name Sam Shepard when he entered Off Off Broadway
 - In 1962
- Initially associated with Theatre Genesis
 - Off Off Broadway theater founded in 1964 by Ralph Cook
- Received Pulitzer prize for drama in 1979
 - For *Burned Child*

Literary Life of Shepard

- Early works
 - Had jazz like rhythms of action and speeches
 - Usually nonlinear and illogical
 - Mixing of ordinary with the supernatural
- Those include
 - *Cowboys* (1964)
 - First play performed in Off Off Broadway
 - *Icaru's Mother* (1965)
 - *La Tourista* (1966)
 - *Operation Sidewinder* (1970)
 - *Mad Dog Blues* (1971)
 - *The Tooth of Crime* (1972)
 - *Action* (1974)
 - *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* (1974)

The New Narrative Style of Shepard

- Shepard later moved away from the disjunctive narrative rhythms
 - Began focussing on domestic realism
- Includes
 - *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977)
 - It was a trilogy and was followed by
 - *A Buried Child* (1979)
 - *True West* (1980)
- *The God of Hell* (2007)

Kate Chopin (1850-1904)

- *The Awakening*

Horror & Cyberpunk Fiction

- Horror and Cyberpunk are major postmodern genres
- A related term is Postmodern Gothic
- In visual and other digital media also
- Features of these genres that are related to Postmodernism
 - Menace and paranoia
 - Violation of accepted norms of culture
 - An irrational, disoriented world
 - Apocalyptic visions of the future
 - The destabilizing effects of technology
 - An unconventional understanding of the relationship between body and consciousness

Isaac Asimov (1920-92)

- one of the three pioneers of science fiction
- Along with Robert A. Heinlein and Arthur C. Clarke
- Most famous for the *Foundation* Series
 - A series of seven novels
 - Within the series, there is the famous *Foundation Trilogy*
 - Centers on the mathematician Hari Seldon
 - He spends his life developing a branch of mathematics known as psychohistory
 - A concept of mathematical sociology
- Also important are
 - *Galactic Empire* series
 - The *Robot* series
- Also wrote mysteries, fantasies and much non-fiction

Stephen King (b. 1947)

- One of the best-known contemporary horror writers
- Has written 50 novels and much non-fiction
- His immensely popular books have been adapted into feature films, television movies and comic books

Major Works

- *Carrie* (1974)
 - “Carrie” White a shy high school girl who uses her newly discovered telekinetic powers to exact revenge on those who tease her—in the process, causing one of the worst disasters in American history
- *The Shining* (1977)
 - Jack Torrance accepts a position as the caretaker of the historic Overlook Hotel in the Colorado Rockies
 - His family accompanies him on this job
 - His young son Danny possesses “the shining,” a range of psychic abilities that shows him the horrific past of the hotel
 - After a winter storm, the supernatural forces inhabiting the hotel influence Jack’s sanity, leaving his wife and son in incredible danger

Major Works

- *The Stand* (1978)
 - Post-apocalyptic horror/fantasy novel
 - A mutated strain of the flu spreads that will wipe out 99 percent of humanity
- *It* (1986)
 - Seven children are terrorized by a strange being, which exploits the fears and phobias of its victims in order to disguise itself while hunting its prey

Major Works

- *Misery* (1987)
 - Paul Sheldon is a writer famous for Victorian-era romance novels involving the character of Misery Chastain
 - One day he is rescued from a car crash by his crazed fan Annie Wilkes, who takes him to her home and, once finding out what he has done to Misery in his latest book, forces him to write a new book modifying the story
- *The Dark Tower*
 - A series of books

William Gibson (b. 1948)

- Pioneer of the Cyberpunk
 - A subgenre of science fiction in a near-future setting
- Coined the term “cyberspace”
 - Popularized in his novel *Neuromancer* (1984)
- Gibson established the conceptual foundations for the rapid growth of virtual environments such as video games and the World Wide Web
- Other novels
 - The Sprawl trilogy
 - *The Difference Engine*
 - The Bridge trilogy

African American Literature

- There was an unprecedented popularity of African American literature in postwar America
- Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) is considered to have inaugurated an era of social realism in African American literature
- Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) was a major text of American modernism
- Black Arts Movement of the 1960s

Themes and Styles

- Dramatic, evocative language
- Issues of race and ethnicity
- Use of Biblical verses, proverbs, aphorisms, and the tone of sermons
- Conversational tone
- Use of Ethnolinguistic idioms, or black dialects
- A powerful evocation of cultural values and community consciousness
- Intense, subjective and emotional treatment of events and situations

Richard Wright (1908-60)

- His novels concern racial themes
 - Those involving the plight of African Americans during the late 19th to mid-20th centuries
- Best known for his novel, *Native Son* (1940)
 - The story of Bigger Thomas, a Black man struggling for acceptance in Chicago
- *Black Boy* (1945, semi-autobiographical)
- *The Outsider* (1953)
- *White Man, Listen!* (1957)

Ralph Ellison (1914-94)

- Novelist and literary critic from Oklahoma
- Best known for his only novel, *Invisible Man* (1952)
 - Won National Book Award in 1953
 - Narrator is an “invisible man”, as a the result of the refusal of others to see him
 - He has gone underground in order to write the story of his life and invisibility
 - Not a typical protest novel
 - Written in an experimental style
- Also wrote essays
- *Juneteenth*
 - After Ellison’s death, this novel was pieced together from the 2,000-plus pages he had written over 40 years

James Baldwin (1924-1987)

- Essayist, playwright and novelist
- Born in Harlem
- Best known for his novel, *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1953, semiautobiographical)
 - Examines the role of the Christian Church in the lives of African-Americans, both as a source of repression as well as inspiration
- Wrote deeply personal stories and essays
- Examined his identities of being Black and homosexual at a time when neither of these was accepted by American culture
- Richard Wright was his idol and friend
 - A collection of Baldwin's essays is titled *Notes of a Native Son*, referring to Wright's novel *Native Son*
 - Later wrote an essay criticizing *Native Son*

Major Works

- *Go Tell it on the Mountain* (1953)
 - First work
- Other Novels
 - *Giovanni 's Room* (1956)
 - Explored the theme of homosexuality
 - Story of a young white American expatriate in Paris
 - *Another Country* (1962)
 - *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968)
 - *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974)
 - *Just Above My Head* (1979)

Major Plays

- *The Amen Corner* (1955)
- *Blues For Mr. Charlie* (1964)
- *One Day, When I was Lost* (1973)
- *A Deed from the King of Spain* (1974)

Go Tell it on the Mountain (1953)

- John Grimes
 - Protagonist
 - Modeled on James Baldwin
- Begins with the 14th birthday
- The book is divided into 3 sections
- First section deals with the marginal position of Grimes in the family
 - Father hates Grimes
- The second section concentrate on the life of Grime's aunt, stepfather, mother
 - Links the story of individuals to African American history
 - From slavery to Great Migration

Malcolm X (1925-65)

- Articulated race pride and black nationalism
- Born in Nebraska
- “X” in his name signify the unknown name of his African ancestors
- Became a minister for the Nation of Islam
 - Preached political black nationalism
- Proposed a violent revolution to create a black nation
 - Martin Luther King was critical of Malcolm’s proposal for a violent revolution
v
- He was assassinated in 1965

Martin Luther King (1929-68)

- Born in Atlanta
- Baptist minister and civil-rights activist
- Tried to end the legal segregation of African Americans in the South and other parts of the country
- Nobel prize in 1964
- Delivered approximately 2000 speeches
 - Used biblical and literary allusions
 - Mixed different traditions of thought and language
- "I Have a Dream"
 - Famous speech
 - 1963
- He was assassinated in 1968

African American Women Poets

- Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)
- Maya Angelou (b. 1928)
- Nikki Giovanni (b. 1943)
- Gloria Naylor (b. 1950)
- Rita Dove (b. 1952)

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)

- Her book of poetry, *Annie Allen* (1949) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize
- The first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize
- Brooks's poems, especially those from the 1960s and later
 - Show a political consciousness
 - Reflect the civil rights activism of that period
 - Depict the life of the Black urban poor
- *Maud Martha* (1953)
 - Her only novel; describes a black woman's life

Maya Angelou (1928-2014)

- Poet, educator, historian, best-selling author, actress, playwright, civil-rights activist, producer and director
- Born Marguerite Ann Johnson
- One of the first African American women who was able to publicly discuss her personal life
- Her work is called autobiographical fiction
- Has written seven autobiographies, three books of essays, and several books of poetry
- Her first autobiography, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969)
 - Tells of her first seventeen years
 - Brought her international recognition

Major Works

- *Gather Together in My Name* (1974)
- *Singin' and Swingin' and Getting' Merry Like Christmas* (1976)
- *The Heart of a Woman* (1981)
- *All God's Children Need Travelling Shoes* (1986)
- *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002)

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1969)

- This coming-of-age story extends from Marguerite's arrival in Stamps, Arkansas, to the birth of her son
- Marguerite's parents divorce when she is only 3 years old
- Marguerite and her older brother, Bailey are sent to live with their paternal grandmother, Annie Henderson, in rural Stamps, Arkansas
- Marguerite is tormented by the belief that she is an ugly child
- The reader experiences Marguerite's insecurity, her love of family, her church and school experiences, and her visits to her mother and father
- On one of these visits to her mother's, Marguerite is raped by her mother's boy friend, Mr Freeman
- Later Mr Freeman is found violently beaten to death
- Marguerite mistakenly believes she is partially responsible for her rape and for his death
- Marguerite is mute for some time after this

Social Awareness

- Marguerite returns to Stamps and is at last able to make two friends: Mrs. Flowers and Louise Kendricks
- As Marguerite matures, she observes the class and caste system around her in Stamps
- Her grandmother takes her to California to live with her mother. Marguerite is impressed with how her grandmother, who has never before left the vicinity of Stamps, is able to function in a new social structure
- Later she visits her father in another town in California
- With all this, she becomes aware of different social structures

Marguerite runs away

- Her father lives with Dolores Stockland
- Dolores becomes very angry when Marguerite goes with her father to Mexico and does not return until the next day
- An argument ensues and Dolores cuts Marguerite
- Marguerite's father is ashamed and embarrassed by the incident
- Marguerite runs away
 - Spends her first night in a junkyard
 - The next morning she meets a gang of juveniles who live in the junked cars and who have their own code of conduct
 - Marguerite lives with them for a month
 - At last she calls her mother for plane fare home

Marguerite has a son

- Marguerite breaks racial barriers in California when she becomes the first Black employee on the San Francisco streetcars
- Marguerite has trouble dealing with her own sexuality and wonders if she is lesbian
- She decides to have sex and starts a relationship with one of two brothers who live near her home
- Three weeks later, with her questions still unanswered, Marguerite finds herself pregnant
- She manages to graduate from high school about three weeks before the birth of her son
- The book ends with Marguerite accepting the care and support of the child she loves

“And Still I Rise”

- The opening stanza

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may tread me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

“And Still I Rise”

- The closing stanza

Out of the huts of history's shame

I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain

I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,

Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,

I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I rise

I rise

I rise.

Lorraine Hansberry (1930-65)

- The first black woman to write a play performed on Broadway
- Born in Chicago, a city carved into strictly divided black and white neighborhoods
- Her parents were well-educated, successful black citizens who publicly fought discrimination against black people
- One of the first playwrights to create realistic portraits of African-American life
- Died from cancer in 1965 at the age of thirty-four

A Raisin in the Sun (1959)

- Addresses many issues important during the 1950s in the United States
- 1950s
 - Economic prosperity following World War II
 - Growing domestic and racial tension
- Title taken from Langston Hughes' poem "A Dream Deferred"
- The story of the Black American Younger family living under racial segregation in Chicago
 - One of the first honest depictions of a black family on an American stage
 - Avoidance of ethnic stereotypes

The Check is Awaited

- The opening scene of *A Raisin in the Sun* occurs on a typical Friday morning when the members of the Younger family are preparing to go to school or work
 - Mama (Lena) and her children Walter and Beneatha; Walter's wife Ruth and their son Travis
 - They are poor; share a bathroom with other tenants and Travis sleeps on sofa; Ruth refuses to give Travis 50 cents for school, but Walter gives him 1 dollar (additional 50) to prove they are not poor
- Some of the talk is about a check Mama expects to receive the next day
- It is from the insurance policy of Mr. Walter Younger, Sr. (Mama's husband), who has died
- Each member of the family has his or her own ideas about how to use the money.

The Family's Dreams

- Walter wants to buy a liquor store with the money
- The others are hesitant to invest money with Walter's friends
- Walter is frustrated, and longs for a more independent life
- Beneatha reminds him that the money belongs to Mama, but her response is hypocritical because she already knows Mama will spend some of the money for Beneatha's education
 - She dreams of becoming a doctor
- Mama doesn't agree to Walter's plan for two reasons
 - She does not approve of liquor, and
 - She would like to buy a house for the family
- This possibility excites Ruth
- Beneatha has a date with George Murchison, a wealthy man
- She defies her mother regarding religion
- The scene concludes when Ruth suddenly faints

The Fissures in Relationships

- The next morning, two gentleman friends of Beneatha visit her: Joseph Asagai from Nigeria, and George Murchison
 - Joseph Asagai criticizes Beneatha for straightening her hair and aspiring to white values
 - Says a woman's fulfillment should come from being a wife
- Ruth is pregnant and may want an abortion
- The mailman brings the check
- Later that day, Beneatha is wearing an African gown Asagai has given her, but George disapproves of it
- Walter drinks heavily and argues
 - With Murchison about the latter's pretensions
 - With Beneatha about her plans for medical school
 - With his wife and mother about the liquor store

The House

- Mama pays for a house located in Clybourne Park, an entirely white neighborhood
 - This was not a political statement
 - She bought it because it was big enough for her family and within her price range
 - She has always wanted her own home, with a garden in the back
- Ruth is happy and decides not to have the abortion
- Walter is upset because he wants money

Racial Troubles

- A few weeks later, Beneatha stops seeing George Murchison because he does not understand her ideals, hopes, or dreams.
- Walter is in danger of losing his job because of his drinking
- A neighbor, Mrs. Johnson, tells them that more black families' homes have recently been bombed in white neighborhoods
- Worried, Mama agrees to give Walter money for his liquor store
- A week later, a white man named Karl Lindner visits and tells them that the residents of Clybourne Park, want to pay them not to move in; Walter throws the man out of the house

New Plans

- Bobo, Walter's friend visits
 - He informs them that the entire insurance money is lost
 - The man Bobo entrusted it with has disappeared with it
- Asagai reminds Beneatha that her future does not depend solely on her mother; he asks her to go to Africa with him when she becomes a doctor
- Mrs. Younger prepares to forget about moving house
- Walter says he will accept the offer of money not to move from Mr. Lindner

Walter's Change of Heart

- Walter talks to Mr. Lindner, but his attitude is changed now
- Walter remembers
 - His father's sufferings to provide for his family
 - How the family struggles to survive and to fulfill their aspirations
- Walter changes his mind and tells Mr. Lindner they will not accept his offer
- The play ends as the family starts the move to Clybourne Park, determined to face all hardships

An Analysis of the Play

- The play is essentially about dreams
 - The main characters struggle to deal with the oppressive circumstances of their lives
- The theme of racial discrimination is also predominant
 - Mr. Lindner represents the racism of the whites
 - They try to accept adversities calmly at first (symbolized by Ruth asking Walter, “Eat your eggs”)
 - At the end, the Youngers resist with defiance and strength
- The unity of the family is underscored
 - The family is united in the end to realize their dream of buying a house (symbolized by Mama and her caring for her plant)

Toni Morrison (b. 1931)

- Born Chloe Anthony Wofford in a family that possessed an intense appreciation for black culture
- Inspired by storytelling, songs, and folktales in her childhood
- Explored Black American experience (particularly Black female experience) in her novels
- Received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993
- *The Bluest Eye* (1970, first novel)
 - A novel of girlhood; of initiation concerning a victimized adolescent black girl who is obsessed by white standards of beauty and longs to have blue eyes
- *Sula* (1973)
 - A novel of womanhood; examines (among other issues) the dynamics of friendship and the expectations for conformity within the community

Writings of Toni Morrison

- Wrote several concentric histories of the American experience from a distinctively African American perspective
- The Bluest Eye (1970)
 - First work
- Sula (1973)
- Song of Solomon (1977)
 - Story of Milkman Dead
 - About the distinctive black identity and community
- Tar Baby (1981)
 - Focus on the ancestry and identity of African Americans
 - Primarily through the contrast between Jadine Childs and Son

Other Works

- Beloved (1987)
 - Pulitzer Prize
- Published other two books that forms a loosely connected trilogy
 - Jazz (1992)
 - Set in New York City's Harlem during the 1920s
 - Paradise (1998)
 - About a black utopian community in Oklahoma
- Morrison says that these three are about various kinds of love
 - Love of mother to her child
 - Romantic love
 - The love of God and love for fellow human beings

Other Works

- The Black Book (1974)
 - An eclectic collection of material relating to more than 300 years of African American history
- Love (2003)
- A Mercy (2008)
 - Deals with slavery in 17th century America
- Home (2012)
 - A Korean War veteran encounters racism after returning home and later overcomes apathy to rescue his sister

Non-Fiction

- Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (1992)
- What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction (2008, essays and speeches)

The Bluest Eye (1970)

- Pecola Breedlove is the protagonist
- The novel's prologue is an extract from a "Dick and Jane"
 - children's reader
 - Describes an ideal white family
 - A contrast to Pecola's family
- This extract is followed by an italicized preface in which the adult Claudia MacTeer reminisces
- In 1941
 - Claudia and her sister Frieda knew the girl Pecola Breedlove who had become pregnant by her own father
 - Pecola had come to live with them because her father had burnt down their house

Blue Eyes

- Claudia
 - Was from a protective family
 - She hated blue-eyed dolls and white girls, and could recognize her own worth
- Pecola
 - On the contrary, dreamt of being blue-eyed and beautiful
 - Loved to drink white milk
 - Adored Shirley Temple

Pecola's Family

- Her mother Pauline and father Cholly are constantly fighting
- Cholly himself has had a traumatic past, and is now a drunkard who gets violent
- Pauline has also suffered and escapes into the fascinating world of the movies
- She thinks herself and her children ugly
- Pecola's brother Sammy either runs away from homehelps his mother beat his father
- Pecola is lonely and alienated everywhere

Pecola's Fate

- Pecola returns home
- Once, Claudia and Frieda were selling marigold seeds to make money for a bicycle
- They hear that Pecola has become pregnant from her father
- The horror of this event is symbolically represented by the fact that no marigolds grew in the entire community that year
- Pecola becomes insane
- An imaginary friend tells her that she has been raped a second time by her father
- Pecola thinks she has got blue eyes
 - Soaphead Church, a fraudulent preacher, tricks Pecola into thinking he has given her blue eyes

Obsession With the Bluest Eyes

- The novel was published in the midst of pride in blackness of the 1960s and early 1970s
- Calls into question the aesthetics of beauty
- Morrison focuses on the psychological damage done to a black girl who accepts someone else's definition of beauty
- Pecola adopts and believes in the American definition of beauty
- Driven mad by her obsession for white skin and the bluest eyes
- Believes that people would value her more if she weren't black
- Believed that love will only be possible with a white skin and blue eyes
- The story exposes how the community scapegoats Pecola, how the community measures its own identity by devaluing and destroying her humanity

Sula (1973)

- Second novel by Morrison
- Set in an African-American neighbourhood called the Bottom (even though it is in the hills)
- The narrative begins with the community's destruction to make way for Medallion City Golf Course
- Flashback on the story of Sula Peace who leaves the Bottom
 - When she returns she is perceived as evil
 - Symbolically her return is accompanied by a plague of robins

Sula and Nel

- The young girls Sula and Nel Wright came from extremely different families, but were thick friends
 - Nel's household is clean and ordered but Sula's is disordered, with her mother Hannah's need for "manlove" (inherited from Sula's grandmother Eva Peace)
- When they were young, they accidentally let Chicken Little fall in the river and drown
- Sula watches with curiosity her mother burn to death

Sula Leaves and Returns

- Bottom being restricted by race, gender and economics, Sula leaves to seek her freedom
 - Nel stays in the community itself subscribing to its conventions
- Upon her return, Sula earns contempt for her callous actions
 - She casually takes Nel's husband Jude as a lover and just as casually discards him; Jude abandons the family
 - Puts her grandmother in a despicable old age home
 - There is a rift between Sula and Nel that gets somewhat mended only when Sula becomes deathly ill
- Sula dies like a disinterested observer of her own death
 - Remarks that it does not hurt and that she must tell Nel
- Over 20 years later, Eva Peace reminds Nel of her similarities with Sula
 - Nel realizes that all these years she was not missing Jude, but Sula herself

Features of the Novel

- Shocking and controversial protagonist
- The novel probes into the minds and motives of characters
- Sula's insistence on her freedom helps others to define themselves
- Offers a distinctive view of African American life and the lives of Black women
- Reflects Morrison's view of the importance of African American history

Song of Solomon (1977)

- Protagonist Macon Milkman Dead III
 - The novel begins with a description of the protagonist and his family: passive mother, abusive father Macon Dead II, silent frustrated sisters
 - The first baby born at (No) Mercy Hospital through the magic of Pilate
 - Called Milkman because of his mother's excessive nursing
- Grandfather Macon Dead I was murdered by whites for his property, and in turn that had to kill a white man

Milkman's Journey

- The second part of the novel involves Milkman's search for gold in a cave (that he believes his father and aunt hid there)
 - This becomes a search for himself and his family history
 - When his search for identity is complete, he decides to “fly” —flying as escaping from prejudice and racism and all the things that are pinning him down, an important symbol
 - His aunt Pilate Dead is (unlike her brother) loving, generous and moral
- At first Milkman is selfish and pleasure-loving
 - With the example of his aunt, he achieves self-knowledge and self-sufficiency
 - He is inspired by the folklore and myth surrounding his family history

The Ending

- Milkman's childhood friend Guitar Bains hunts Milkman
 - Guitar is part of a group that takes revenge for the unjust murder of blacks
 - Guitar believes Milkman will get the gold and not share with him
- Guitar aims at Milkman but shoots Pilate
- Milkman holds her and comforts her as much as he can, singing the last lines of Solomon's song to her, but replacing the name Solomon with Sugargirl. Despite his efforts, Pilate dies.
- He then leaps into the air, in an act of flying
- It is an ambiguous ending

The Title

- Song of Solomon's title refers to the biblical book of the same name, emphasizing that the novel addresses age-old themes.
- The biblical book depicts a conversation between two lovers, King Solomon and his beautiful, black Shulamite bride.
- Similarly, Morrison's novel is a celebration of the triumph of earthly love.

Tar Baby (1981)

- Story of the ill-fated love affair between Jadine Childs (an orphan educated in Europe who becomes a fashion model) and William (Son) Green (a black man who jumped ship)
- Title refers to a folktale about a farmer trying to capture a rabbit (stealing from his cabbage patch) by means of a sticky tar baby—the thrill enhances the mythical quality of the work
- Jadine is the tar baby fashioned by a rich White man (Valerian Street), and is alienated by her relatives, history and culture
- Tar Baby is generally seen as Toni Morrison's more difficult novel
- The central theme is Jadine's unresolved identity crisis and conflict with African-American history and culture

Beloved (1987)

- Mr. and Mrs. Garner owned Sweet Home, a farm in Kentucky
- Here they had slaves: Paul F, Halle, Paul A, Paul D, Sixo
- These slaves were treated with humane respect
- Sethe, a young female slave, was bought and “married” to Halle
- They had a family of two sons, Howard and Buglar, as well as a baby daughter whose name we never learn
- With Mr. Garner’s help, Halle bought his mother, Baby Suggs, out of slavery
- Baby Suggs moved to the free state of Ohio, lived at 124 Bluestone Road, and became a spiritual leader and a mender of shoes
- Then Mr. Garner became ill and died

The Present Day

- The novel begins in 1873 in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Sethe, the former slave, has been living with her 18-year-old daughter Denver
- Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, lived with them until she died eight years earlier
- Just before Baby Suggs's death, Sethe's two sons, Howard and Buglar, ran away
- Sethe believes they fled because of the malevolent presence of an abusive ghost that has haunted their house at 124 Bluestone Road for years
- Denver, however, likes the ghost, which everyone believes to be the spirit of her dead sister

Paul D Arrives

- On the day the novel begins, Paul D, whom Sethe has not seen since they worked together on Mr. Garner's Sweet Home plantation, stops by Sethe's house
- His presence resurrects memories that have lain buried in Sethe's mind for almost two decades
- From this point on, the story unfolds on two temporal planes
 - The present in Cincinnati continues
 - A series of events that took place around twenty years earlier, mostly in Kentucky, revealed through fragmented flashbacks of the major characters

Schoolteacher's Tyranny

- After the death of Mr. Garner, the weak-willed Mrs. Garner asks her sadistic, vehemently racist brother-in-law to help her run the farm
- He is known to the slaves as schoolteacher, and his oppressive presence makes life on the plantation even more unbearable than it had been before
- The slaves decide to run away
- Schoolteacher and his nephews kill Sixo and bring Paul D back to Sweet Home
- Sethe is pregnant, and still intent on running, having already sent her children ahead to her mother-in-law Baby Suggs's house in Cincinnati
- Schoolteacher's nephews violate Sethe in the barn while Halle watches the event from a loft above her, frozen with horror
- Afterward, Halle goes mad

Sethe Kills Her Daughter

- Sethe reports this to Mrs. Garner, and Schoolteacher has her whipped severely
- Swollen and scarred, Sethe nevertheless runs away, but along the way she collapses from exhaustion in a forest
- A white girl, Amy Denver, nurses her back to health
- Sethe delivers her baby in a boat, and names her Denver
- Sethe reaches Baby Suggs's house, where she meets her three older children
- After 28 wonderful days, Schoolteacher comes to get Sethe and her children
- Rather than surrender to a life of dehumanizing slavery, she tries to kill her children
- Only the older daughter dies, her throat having been cut with a handsaw by Sethe
- On the girl's tombstone is carved the name "Beloved"

Sethe and Paul D

- Sethe is arrested, but later released due to the intervention of the abolitionists led by Mr Bodwin
- Sethe returns to the house at 124, where Baby Suggs has sunk into a deep depression
- The community shuns the house, and the family lives in isolation
- Meanwhile Paul D has also had tortuous experiences, and looks forward to a future with Sethe, which Denver resents
- One day, Sethe and Paul D encounter a strange young woman sleeping near the steps of 124
- She is believed to be the embodied spirit of Sethe's dead daughter, Beloved

The Woman Called Beloved

- Denver and Beloved develop an intense attachment
- Paul D and Beloved hate each other, and Beloved controls Paul D by moving him around the house like a rag doll and by seducing him against his will
- Paul D starts living in the local church when he learns of Sethe having killed her daughter
- In his absence, the relationship between Sethe and Beloved become more intense
- Beloved grows increasingly abusive, manipulative, and parasitic, and Sethe is obsessed with satisfying Beloved's demands and making her understand why she murdered her

Beloved is Exorcised

- For the first time in 12 years, Denver leaves the premises of 124 and gets help from the community to exorcise Beloved
- When the women arrive to drive Beloved away, Sethe and Beloved meet them, the latter pregnant and naked
- Mr Bodwin also arrives to take Denver to work
- Sethe mistakes Mr Bodwin for Schoolteacher and rushes at him with an icepick
- In the confusion that follows, Beloved disappears forever
- Later, Sethe continues to be ill and Paul D moves in with her again
- Sethe thinks Beloved was the “best thing” in her life, and Paul D tries to convince her that she herself is her “best thing”

Morrison's Style

- Elements of postcolonialism and postmodernism
- Oral narrative patterns and poetic style
- Use of fantasy and myth
- Explores the pain of slavery and oppression in the cultural imaginary of the African Americans
- Morrison places her work as part of a black cultural tradition, and strives to create a distinctively black literature

Alice Walker (b. 1944)

- Novelist, poet and feminist born in a poor family
- She got an eye injury which made her feel she is ugly
- Experienced racial segregation in school and college
- Later worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer
- Controversial for her lesbian, feminist and political views
- Became active in the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi
- Greatly influenced by Zora Neale Hurston
- Wrote poetry and short stories
- The Color Purple (1982, her third novel)
 - Won the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize
 - Made into a film in 1985 by Steven Spielberg
 - Walker recorded her own feelings about this film in The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult (1996)

The Color Purple (1982)

- Focuses on the theme of double repression of black women in the American experience
 - From whites as well as from black males
- The novel projects a positive outcome in life, even under the harshest conditions
- Epistolary form
 - The only sentences outside the letters are the first two: “You better not never tell nobody but God. It’d kill your mammy.”
- Silenced forever, the main character, 14-year-old Celie, writes letters to God

Crushed as a Woman

- Raped at 14 by her own father and then forced into a marriage with a cruel older man, Celie learns to be quiet and submissive
- The person she cares most about, her sister Nettie, is forced out of her own home and kicked out of Celie's home by her husband, Mr._____
- Mr._____ had married Celie so that she could take care of his children and work for him, since he is already in love with Shug Avery
- When Shug Avery falls ill, Mr._____ keeps her at his home
- Thanks to Celie's care, Shug is able to recover and the two women begin a friendship

Shug and Nettie

- Over time, Celie learns to stand up for herself and gain self-respect
- Celie also learns how to love, as the two women become lovers as well as friends
- Shug promises Celie that she will stay and protect her from the abuse of Mr._____
- Nettie, meanwhile, finds refuge at the home of Samuel, the local reverend, and his wife, Corrine
- Corrine and Samuel have two adopted children, Adam and Olivia. Celie is actually the mother of these children; they were taken from her by her father before she married Mr._____
- Eventually the entire family, including Nettie, is sent to Africa for work as missionaries.

Corrine and Nettie

- Nettie and Samuel's family attempt to teach African children about Christianity
- Nettie becomes involved in the struggle to educate a young African girl, Tashi, despite the wishes of her father, who believes that women should follow the custom of striving to become good wives
- Nettie also enters a conflict with Corrine
 - Corrine believes that Adam and Olivia are the result of an affair Nettie had with Samuel
 - This is because the children resemble Nettie closely
- Nettie tells Samuel and Corrine that Celie is the children's mother
- At first Corrine doesn't believe her, but does after Corrine falls seriously ill
- Corrine dies understanding that Nettie had never had a relationship with Samuel

Celie Discovers

- Years pass, and Nettie and Samuel fall in love and marry
- They plan to return to America and rescue Celie from her unhappy marriage
- Nettie chronicles her adventures in Africa by writing letters to Celie twice a year
- These letters, however, are taken by Mr._____ and hidden from Celie, who believes her sister is gone forever
- Celie, with Shug's help, finds out that Mr._____ has been hiding these letters, and leaves Mr._____’s house
- She learns how to live life on her own and how to take care of others, all the while waiting for Nettie

The Affirmative Ending

- After her departure from Mr.____'s farm, Mr.____ and his son Harpo learn to be kinder to each other and to others
- Celie enjoys a life of independence and eventually reconciles with the people who have treated her cruelly
- The climax of the novel occurs when Nettie returns with Samuel, Olivia, Adam and Tashi, who has married Adam
- After a tearful reunion, Celie, after all her suffering, is the happiest she has ever felt in her life

In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose (1983)

- 36 separate pieces: essays, articles, reviews, speeches
- Womanism is a social theory deeply rooted in the racial and gender oppression of black women
- Walker defines “womanist” at the beginning of the book:
 - A black feminist or feminist of color
 - Based on the relationship of mother to female children
 - Also, a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually
 - One who appreciates and prefers women’s culture
 - Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female

Other Works

- Her first novels
 - The Third Life of Grange Copeland (1970)
 - Meridian (1976)
 - Both dealt with violence towards black women by black males
- The Temple of My Familiar (1989)
 - Multi-narrative novel containing many interlinked stories
- Possessing the Secret of Joy (1992)
 - Novel that deals with female circumcision, which is used in some African rituals

Recent Works

- Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart (2004)
- We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Light in a Time of Darkness
 - 2006
 - A collection of essays
- Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Palestine/Israel (2010)
- Hard Times Require Furious Dancing (2010)
 - Poetry collection
- The Chicken Chronicles (2012)
 - Memoir

Jamaica Kincaid (b.1949)

- Born in Antigua
- A small island in West Indies
- Original name Elaine Potter Richardson
- Major Works
 - At the Bottom of the River (1983)
 - A collection of short stories and reflections
 - Annie John (1984)
 - Lucy (1990)
 - The Autobiography of My Mother (1996)
 - My Brother (1997)

Annie John (1984)

- A coming-of-age story of a girl in Antigua, an island in the Caribbean
- Annie John worships her mother. She is shocked when she learns that she must someday leave her mother.
- Annie is sent to a new school where she must prove herself intellectually. She then falls in love with a girl by the name of Gwen. However, she soon starts admiring and adoring a girl that she called the "Red Girl".
- Annie John is then moved to a higher class because of her intelligence.
- Soon Annie is drawn away from her best friend Gwen, and alienated from her mother and other adults.
- She also suffers from some kind of mental depression, which distances her from both her family and her friends.
- The book ends with her leaving home for nursing school in England.

Lucy (1990)

- The semi-autobiographical novel begins in medias res: Lucy has come from the West Indies to the United States to be an au pair (foreign help) for a wealthy white family.
- She had been eager to leave her family in the West Indies
- Although she is initially attracted by the seemingly perfect life in the US, she grows disillusioned and feels alienated from the family.
- However, she does grow close to the mother, Mariah, who reminds Lucy of both the good and bad in her own mother.
- The strained relationship between Lucy and her mother is a central theme.

The Autobiography of My Mother (1996)

- A first person, retrospective account of the life of half-Carib and half Scottish-African Xuela Claudette Richardson, who narrates her life looking back over seventy years.
- Intermingled with Xuela's immediate story is the story of the Caribbean island of Dominica, a land that was once under the oppressions of colonial rule.
- Xuela loses her mother soon after her birth and is on her own from an early age. This novel follows her life of struggles, her relationships and surroundings as she tries to find her way in a world without a mother. It depicts her journey from childhood, to school, to adulthood, the exploring themes of fear, loss, and the forging of her character.
- Unlike her other books which are filled with poetic and flowery language, The Autobiography of My Mother is written in a more direct style of prose.

Paule Marshall (b.1929)

- Born in Brooklyn
- Daughter of second generation Barbadian immigrants
- Major Works
 - Brown Girl, Brownstones (1959)
 - First novel
 - The Chosen Place, the Timeless People (1969)
 - Praise song for the Widow (1987)
 - Daughters (1991)

The Black Arts Movement

- Dated from 1960s to 1970s
- Founded in Harlem
- By Amiri Baraka and promoted by Larry Neal
- Asserted African American cultural identity
- Sought to devise a distinctive African American aesthetic
- Promoted the idea of black separatism
 - Used populist art form and literature to promote the idea of separatism
- Hundreds of Afro centric theatre companies, public art projects, and publishing ventures were organized

Writers Involved

- Amiri Baraka
- Mari Evans
- Sonia Sanchez
- Nikki Giovanni
- Don L. Lee
- David Nelson

Amiri Baraka (1934-2014)

- Born Everett LeRoi Jones
- Felt racial segregation throughout his life
- In the 1950s, he became a Bohemian intellectual as part of the Beat literary movement, and was interested in jazz
- Jones became increasingly militant in his crusade against white oppression, expressed in violent symbolism in his poetry, essays, and drama
- He was imprisoned during the 1967 Newark riots and his poem “Black People!” was read as “evidence”
- Like Malcolm X, he was attracted to islam and converted in 1967
- He changed his name to “Imamu” Amiri Baraka, but dropped “Imamu” later

Baraka's Literary Life

- Influenced by White American poets in the early days of Baraka's career
- From 1960s
 - Involved with issues of racial and national identity
 - Used his writings as a weapon against American racism
 - Encouraged a generation to be proud and aggressive about African America heritage
- Helped in opening Black Arts Repertory School
 - 1965
 - Harlem
- Spirit House Movers
 - Trope set up by Baraka

Major Plays

- A Good Girl is Hard to Find
 - 1958
 - Play
 - First published work
- The Baptism (1964)
- The Toilet (1964)
- Dutchman (1964)
- The Slave (1964)

Major Plays

- Slave Ship: A Historical Pageant (1967)
- A Black Mass (1966)
- The Death of Malcolm X (1969)
- The Motion of History (1977)
- What Was the Relationship of the Lone Ranger to the Means of Production? (1978)

Poetry Collections

- Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note (1961)
- The Dead Lecturer (1964)
- It's Nation Time (1970)
- In Our Terribleness (1970)
- Spirit Reach (1972)
- Am/Trak(1979)
- Thoughts for You! (1984)
- Transbluesency (1995)

Other Works

- The System of Dante's Hell (1965)
 - Episodic novel
 - Equates the black slums of Newark with Inferno
- The Autobiography of LeRoi Jones (1984)

Dutchman (1964)

- Under the name LeRoi Jones he authored an acclaimed, controversial play Dutchman, in which a white woman accosts a black man on the New York subway
- Shifts in the form of his artistic work paralleled shifts in his social consciousness
- In drama, he moved from the comparatively conventional form of Dutchman (1964) to the African pageantry of Slave Ship (1967) to the communist drama of S-1 (1976)

Clay and Lula

- Dutchman takes place in a subway train
- Throughout the play, the audience is made aware of the setting through the roar of the train and the flashing lights
- 20-year-old Clay Williams, a black man, is riding the train
- Lula, a 30-year-old white woman, takes the seat next to Clay, eating an apple
- She is oddly flirtatious, and they share too many apples
- Her comments are eerily insightful of his private life (“You tried to make it with your sister when you were ten”) and sometimes psychotic (“You’re a murderer, Clay, and you know it”)
- Lula claims that she only knows so much about Clay because he is a “well-known” type, a socially ambitious black man
- She invites herself to the party to which she guesses he’s going

Lula Acts Weird

- In the 2nd scene, the two discuss the party, oblivious of other people sitting or boarding and disembarking from the train
- Lula describes a seduction and the eating of apples
- Lula describes her home morbidly, and warns Clay she lies
- She hysterically sings a blues song and dances in a profane way, shocking the other passengers
- Clay, desperately clinging to his dignity, declines her offer to dance, and she calls out a string of insults at him, “You middle class black bastard”...
- The other passengers laugh, and a drunk gets up and joins in her dance
- Clay tries to physically force her back into her seat, and finally, in genuine heartfelt anger, he grabs her, calling her a “dumb bitch” and slaps her face hard

Clay is Murdered

- Clay breaks out into a speech revealing that he is controlling his violent anger at racial injustices and discrimination
- He sees murder as the only way that would keep the blacks sane, but he would rather control his anger
- Clay's impassioned speech sobers Lula
- She has heard enough but isn't finished with him yet
- As he reaches across her to retrieve his books, she plunges a knife into Clay's chest
- The passengers help Lula throw Clay's dead body from the train and then get off of the train themselves
- Lula busies herself with "getting everything in order": her purse, bag, dress
- Just then, a young black man of about twenty boards the train, and is welcomed by the stereotypical black conductor.
- The cycle begins again

An Analysis of the Play

- The central conflict in the play is between
 - What America expects the black man to be (the assimilationist ideal), and
 - What the black man really is
- In Clay, this conflict is between
 - His desire to assimilate into white culture, and
 - His desire to express his anger at the same white culture he is attempting to assimilate into
- Lula represents white society's endorsement of black stereotypes and the "veil" through which Clay sees himself

An Analysis of the Play

- Her seduction is representative of the way in which white society seduces Clay into believing he can assimilate
- Clay's struggle with Lula is representative of his struggle to assimilate, and Lula's murder of Clay represents Baraka's opinion of the results of assimilation
- Their opposition, with Lula's automatic superiority based on her status as a white woman, can only lead to Clay's demise

Asian-American Literature

- Considered since the 1970s to be a distinct body of literature with inherent heterogeneity
- Engagements with issues of gender and sexuality, class, comparative racialization, imperialism, and diaspora
- Racialization or or ethnicization is the process of attributing racial or ethnic identities to a group that did not identify itself as such

Maxine Hong Kingston (b. 1940)

- Chinese American author
- Three novels and several works of non-fiction
- The Woman Warrior (1976)
 - Subtitle “Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts”
 - Feminist memoir
 - How gender and ethnicity affect the lives of women
 - Autobiography blended with Chinese folktales
- China Men (1980, a collection of stories)
- Tripmaster Monkey (1989, novel)
 - Influenced by Beat generation and postmodernism
 - Contains numerous allusions to pop-culture and literature

Amy Tan (b. 1952)

- Chinese American novelist who explores Chinese-American female identity
- The Joy Luck Club (1989)
 - Four Chinese American immigrant families in San Francisco who start a club known as the Joy Luck Club, playing the Chinese game of mahjong for money while feasting on a variety of foods
 - The book is structured somewhat like a mahjong game
- The Kitchen God's Wife (1991)
- The Hundred Secret Senses (1995)
- The Bonesetter's Daughter (2001)
 - The story of ghostwriter Ruth Young, her present life with an almost invisible lover, and the ongoing struggle with her Chinese mother, LuLing, diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease
- Saving Fish from Drowning (2005)

Jhumpa Lahiri (b. 1967)

- Born Nilanjana Sudeshna Lahiri
- Her debut short story collection, Interpreter of Maladies (1999), won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000
- Her first novel, The Namesake (2003), was adapted into film in 2006 by Mira Nair
 - The story spans over thirty years in the life of the Ganguli family
 - The Calcutta-born parents emigrated as young adults to the United States, where their children, Gogol and Sonia, grow up experiencing the constant generational and cultural gap with their parents
- Unaccustomed Earth (2008, short story collection)
- The Lowland (2013) was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize

Chicano Literature

- Literature written by Mexican Americans in the United States
- A Mexican American Civil Rights Movement began in the 1940s seeking Mexican American empowerment
- This culminated in the Chicano Movement in the 1960s
- The Chicano Movement gave impetus to Chicano arts and literature
- Poetry flourished; women writers emerged

Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004)

- Born with sexual and developmental abnormalities
- Scholar in feminist theory, queer theory; Chicana and lesbian activist
- Articulates a “new mestiza consciousness” in her writings
 - “Mestiza” is the Mexican term for a person of mixed race
 - Explores an identity characterized by hybridity, flexibility, and plurality
 - Uses a mix of varieties of Spanish and English in her works
 - Her works vent her anger at marginalization and oppression

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987)

- Semi-autobiographical work that combines history and personal narrative
- Examines various forms of invisible “borders” that exist in numerous opposing groups – Latino/as and whites, men and women, heterosexuals and homosexuals, etc
- A view into a life of alienation and isolation as a prisoner in the borderlands between cultures
- The book is half essay and half poetry
- The first section is a personal narrative in which Anzaldua addresses many cultural issues, from religion to sexuality to immigration
- The poetry section is centered on the theme and various forms of borders
- The book opens by talking about the ocean, which is contrasted with the unnatural boundary between Mexico and the United States

Sandra Cisneros (b. 1954)

- Key figure in Chicana (Mexican American) literature
- Best known for her first novel *The House on Mango Street* (1984)
 - A coming-of-age novel
 - The story of Esperanza Cordero, a young Latino girl, and her life growing up in Chicago with Chicanos and Puerto Ricans
- *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991, short story collection)

Native American Writers

- There was a significant increase in production of literary works by Native Americans in the years following the publication of N. Scott Momaday's novel House Made of Dawn
- It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969
- The term Native American Renaissance is related to this period
 - Reclamation of heritage through literary expression
 - Discovery and reevaluation of early texts by Native American authors
 - Renewed interest in customary tribal artistic expression
 - Mythology
 - Ceremonialism
 - Ritual
 - Oral tradition of narrative transmission

James Welch (1940-2003)

- Founding author of Native American Renaissance
- Poet, novelist and academic
- His father belonged to Blackfeet tribe
- Winter in the Blood (1974, novel)
 - Features a self-destructive contemporary Native American narrator undergoing an identity crisis
- Fools Crow (1986, novel)
 - Fools Crow is the young Blackfoot Indian protagonist
 - The invasion of white society in his tribe threatens to change their traditional way of life, and they must choose to fight or assimilate

Leslie Marmon Silko (b. 1948)

- Member of Laguna Pueblo tribe
- Novelist, poet and teacher
- One of the key figures of Native American Renaissance
- Writes about the impact of the past on contemporary life and her work preserves the traditions of her culture
- Her characters try to survive the violence of modern America by returning to Native American traditions

Ceremony (1977)

- The story of Tayo, of Laguna and white ancestry, returning from fighting against Japan in World War II
- Returns to a poverty-stricken Laguna reservation after recovering from injuries sustained in World War II
- Tayo suffers from shell-shock and is haunted by memories of his cousin Rocky who died in conflict during the Bataan Death March of 1942
- Seeking an escape from his pain, Tayo initially takes refuge in alcoholism
- However, with the support of Old Grandma, he is helped by ceremonies conducted by the mixed-blood Navajo shaman Betonie
- As a result, Tayo comes to a greater understanding of the world and his own place within it as a Laguna man

Sherman Alexie (b. 1966)

- A Native American with ancestry of several tribes
- Grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation
- First novel, Reservation Blues (1995)
- The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven (1993, short story collection)
 - A story from this collection was made into the film Smoke Signals (1998), with Alexie's screenplay
- The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian (2007, semi-autobiographical young adult fiction)