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“20th Century American Literature: A Course of Lectures” is created for the students getting education on specialty 60111800 – Foreign language and literature (English). In this course of the 20th Century American literature, we have tried to be responsive to the immense changes that have occurred over the past 20 years in the study of American literature. In particular, we have tried to register the plurality of American culture and American writing: the continued inventing of communities, and the sustained imagining of nations, that constitute the modern literary history of the United States.

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Lecture 1. American Modernism

Plan:

1. Basic Traits of American Modernism.
2. Sherwood Anderson – Father of American Modernism. “Death in the Woods”.
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4. Social Realism. Upton Sinclair. “The Jungle”.
5. Carl Sandburg. “Chicago”.

1. Basic Traits of American Modernism.

"... the greatest single fact about our modern American writing is our writers' absorption in every last detail of their American world together with their deep and subtle alienation from it."

Alfred Kazin, “On Native Grounds” (1942)

"Defining modernism is a difficult task. ... A historical definition would say that modernism is the artistic movement in which the artist's self-consciousness about questions of form and structure became uppermost. ... In brief, modernism asks us to consider what we normally understand by the center and the margins."

“Heath Anthology”, Vol. 2, 4th ed., 887-888.

Modernism was a cultural wave that originated in Europe and swept the U.S. during the early 20th century. Modernism impacted music, art and literature by radically undoing traditional forms, expressing a sense of modern life as a sharp break from the past and its rigid conventions. In literature, the elements of modernism are thematic, formal and stylistic.

Destruction. During the World War I, the world witnessed the chaos and destruction of which modern man was capable. The modernist American literature produced during the time reflects such themes of destruction and chaos. But chaos and destruction are embraced, as they signal a collapse of Western civilization's classical traditions. Literary modernists celebrated the collapse of conventional forms. Modernist novels destroy conventions by reversing traditional norms, such as gender and racial roles, notable in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *"The Great Gatsby"*, for example. They also destroy conventional forms of language by deliberately breaking rules of syntax and structure. William Faulkner's novel *"The Sound and the Fury"*, for instance, boldly rejects the rules of language, as Faulkner invents new words and adopts a first-person narrative method, interior monologue.

Fragmentation. Related to the theme of destruction is the theme of fragmentation. Fragmentation in modernist literature is thematic, as well as formal. Plot, characters, theme, images, and narrative form itself are broken. Take, for instance, T.S. Eliot's *"The Waste Land"*, which depicts a modern waste land of crumbled cities. The poem itself is fragmented, consisting of broken stanzas and sentences that resemble the cultural debris and detritus through which the speaker (modern man) wades. William Faulkner's novels, such as *"The Sound and the Fury"* are also fragmented in form, consisting of disjointed and nonlinear narratives. Modernist literature embraces fragmentation as a literary form, since it reinforces the fragmentation of reality and contradicts Hegelian notions of totality and wholeness.

Cycle. Modernist literature is concerned with representing modernity, which, by its very definition, supersedes itself. Modernity must, in order to emerge, annihilate the past. Problematically, modernity must annihilate itself the very moment it is actualized, as the moment it emerges, it becomes a part of the past. Modernist literature represents the paradox of modernity through themes of cycle and rejuvenation. Eliot's speaker in *"The Waste Land"* famously declares

"these fragments I have shored against my ruins". The speaker must reconstruct meaning by reassembling the pieces of history. Importantly, there is rebirth and rejuvenation in ruin, and modernist literature celebrates the endless cycle of destruction, as it ever gives rise to new forms and creations.

Loss and Exile. Modernist literature is also marked by themes of loss and exile. Modernism rejected conventional truths and figures of authority, and modernists moved away from religion. In modernist literature, man is assured that his own sense of morality trumps. But individualism results in feelings of isolation and loss. Themes of loss, isolation and exile from society are particularly apparent in Ernest Hemingway's novels, the protagonists of which adopt rather nihilistic outlooks of the world because they have become so disenfranchised from the human community.

Narrative Authority. Another element of modernist literature is the prevalent use of personal pronouns. Authority becomes a matter of perspective. There is no longer an anonymous, omniscient third-person narrator, as there is no universal truth, according to the modernists. In fact, many modernist novels feature multiple narrators, as many modernist poems feature multiple speakers. The conflicting perspectives of various narrators and speakers reflect the multiplicities of truth and the diversities of reality that modernism celebrates.

Social Evils. Modernist novels did not treat lightly topics about social woes, war and poverty. John Steinbeck's *"Grapes of Wrath"* frankly depicts families plagued by economic hardship and strife, contradicting idyllic depictions of American life represented elsewhere in literature. Modernist novels also reflect a frank awareness of societal ills and of man's capacity for cruelty. Ernest Hemingway's anti-heroic war tales depicted the bloodiness of the battlefields, as he dealt frankly with the horrors of war. Faulkner, particularly in his most famous novel, *"The Sound and the Fury"*, also shows how incomprehensibly cruel man can be, especially with regard to racial and class differences.

The Centers of Modernism: 1. Stylistic innovations - disruption of traditional syntax and form. 2. Artist's self-consciousness about questions of form and structure. 3. Obsession with primitive material and attitudes. 4. International perspective on cultural matters.

Modern Attitudes: 1. The artist is generally less appreciated but more sensitive, even more heroic, than the average person. 2. The artist challenges tradition and reinvigorates it. 3. A breaking away from patterned responses and predictable forms.

Contradictory Elements: 1. Democratic and elitist. 2. Traditional and anti-tradition. 3. National jingoism and provinciality versus the celebration of international culture. 4. Puritanical and repressive elements versus freer expression in intimate and political matters.

Literary Achievements: 1. Dramatization of the plight of women. 2. Creation of a literature of the urban experience. 3. Continuation of the pastoral or rural spirit. 4. Continuation of regionalism and local color.

Modern Themes: 1. Collectivism versus the authority of the individual. 2. The impact of the 1918 Revolution in Russia. 3. The Jazz Age. 4. The passage of 19th Amendment in 1920 giving women the right to vote. 5. Prohibition of the production, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages, 1920-33. 6. The stock-market crash of 1929 and the Depression of the 1930s and their impact.

Modernism and the Self: 1. In this period, the chief characteristic of the self is one of alienation. The character belongs to a "lost generation" (Gertrude Stein), suffers from a "dissociation of sensibility" (T.S. Eliot), and who has "a Dream deferred" (Langston Hughes). 2. Alienation led to an awareness about one's inner life.

Modernism and the "New Negro Renaissance" (the Harlem Renaissance): 1. The relationship between the two is complex. 2. They both share the important motif of alienation. 3. However, American modernism is inspired by the European avant-garde art; the Renaissance represents the unique and distinct experience of black Americans. 4. Modernism borrows from the

Renaissance the themes of marginality and the use of folk or the so-called "primitive" material. 5. The use of the blues tradition - important for the Renaissance - is not shared by white modernists; considered too limiting (mere complaint about one's repressed and exploited condition), the blues tradition represents images and themes of liberation and revolt. 6. This relationship requires reevaluation; the Renaissance is important for black and white readers and writers.

Study Questions:

1. Compare an early 19th-century poem (such as Bryant's "*Thanatopsis*") with an early 20th-century poem (Frost's "*Directive*"). Discuss the way both poems reflect dramatic radical shifts in paradigm or perspective in their time.
2. Choose any three 20th-century works and show how they respond to the following quotation from Wallace Stevens's "*Of Modern Poetry*": The poem of the mind in the act of finding / What will suffice. It has not always had / To find: the scene was set; it repeated what / Was in the script.
3. Read a short story by a British modernist writer, such as Lawrence, Woolf, or Joyce. Compare and contrast it with a story by an American modernist.
4. Many modernist lyric poems are about poetic form itself. Analyze one of the following poems (or any other poems by Frost, Stevens, or Williams) with particular attention to the poet's awareness of form: "*The Wood-Pile*", "*A Quiet Normal Life*", or "*To Elsie*".

Selected Sources 2016-Present:

1. Arnold, Matthew. *Culture and Anarchy*. Yale University Press, 2014.
2. Bradbury, Malcolm and McFarlane, James. *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*. Penguin, 2011.
3. Brooks, Cleanth. *Modern Poetry and the Tradition*. 4th edition. University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
4. Ransom, John Crowe. *The New Criticism*. 5th edition. New Directions Press, 2009.

2. Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) – Father of American Modernism. “Death in the Woods”.

Primary Works: “*Windy McPherson's Son*” (1916), “*Marching Men*” (1917), “*Winesburg, Ohio*” (1919), “*The Triumph of the Egg*”, short stories (1921), “*Many Marriages*” (1923), “*Horses and Men*”, short stories (1923), “*Dark Laughter*” (1925), “*Death in the Woods*”, short stories (1933), “*Kit Brandon*” (1936).

A Brief Biography of Sherwood Anderson

An excellent storyteller, Anderson seems to be preoccupied by a need to describe the plight of the "grotesque" - the unsuccessful, the deprived, and the inarticulate. He sensitively describes poverty and eccentricity. His simple style, in the oral tradition of storytelling, influenced writers like Hemingway and Faulkner who, in 1956, acknowledged Anderson as "the father of my generation of American writers and the tradition of American writing which our successors will carry on."

Sherwood Anderson, (born September 13, 1876, Camden, Ohio, U.S.—died March 8, 1941, Colon, Panama), author who strongly influenced American writing between World Wars I and II, particularly the technique of the short story. His writing had an impact on such notable writers as E. Hemingway and W. Faulkner, both of whom owe the 1st publication of their books to his efforts. His prose style, based on everyday speech and derived from the experimental writing of Gertrude Stein, was markedly influential on the early Hemingway — who parodied it cruelly in “*Torrents of Spring*” (1926) to make a clean break and become his own man.

One of 7 children of a day laborer, Anderson attended school intermittently as a youth in Clyde, Ohio, and worked as a newsboy, house painter, farmhand, and racetrack helper. After a

year at Wittenberg Academy, a preparatory school in Springfield, Ohio, he worked as an advertising writer in Chicago until 1906, when he went back to Ohio and for the next 6 years sought — without success — to prosper as a businessman while writing fiction in his spare time. A paint manufacturer in Elyria, Ohio, he left his office abruptly one day in 1912 and wandered off, turning up 4 days later in Cleveland, disheveled and mentally distraught. He later said he staged this episode to get away from the business world and devote himself to literature.

Anderson went back to his advertising job in Chicago and remained there until he began to earn enough from his published work to quit. Encouraged by Theodore Dreiser, Floyd Dell, Carl Sandburg, and Ben Hecht — leaders of the Chicago literary movement — he began to contribute experimental verse and short fiction to “*The Little Review*”, “*The Masses*”, the “*Seven Arts*”, and “*Poetry*”. Dell and Dreiser arranged the publication of his 1st 2 novels, “*Windy McPherson’s Son*” (1916-1921) and “*Marching Men*” (1917), both written while he was still a manufacturer. “*Winesburg, Ohio*” (1919) was his 1st mature book and made his reputation as an author. Its interrelated short sketches and tales are told by a newspaper reporter-narrator who is as emotionally stunted in some ways as the people he describes. His novels include “*Many Marriages*” (1923), which stresses the need for love fulfillment; “*Dark Laughter*” (1925), which values the “primitive” over the civilized; and “*Beyond Desire*” (1932), a novel of Southern textile mill labour struggles.

His best work is generally thought to be in his short stories, collected in “*Winesburg, Ohio, The Triumph of the Egg*” (1921), “*Horses and Men*” (1923), and “*Death in the Woods*” (1933). Also valued are the autobiographical sketches “*A Story Teller’s Story*” (1924), “*Tar: A Midwest Childhood*” (1926), and the posthumous “*Memoirs*” (1942-1969). A selection of his “*Letters*” appeared in 1953.

“Death in the Woods” (1933)

“*Death in the Woods*” is a short story in a form of a recollection of events from the narrator’s childhood, as he attempts to explain a death and its relationship to other lives. According to many critics, Anderson’s artistic powers were waning at this point in his career; yet “*Death in the Woods*” stands out as a masterpiece, paralleling the brilliance of the stories collected in his best known work, “*Winesburg, Ohio*”.

“*Death in the Woods*” chronicles the deceptively simple story of the life and death of a poor and downtrodden farm woman. The narrator, an adolescent boy at the time of these events, observes her dead body — a formative moment in his development as a man and an artist. He puts together the pieces of her story, which takes on mystery and mythic meaning as he reflects back on it years later.

“*Death in the Woods*” exemplifies Anderson’s pared-down writing style and brooding, bittersweet tone. The story is most notable for the stark simplicity of its subject matter and the contrasting intricacy of its self-conscious narration.

Study Questions:

1. What is contribution of Sherwood Anderson to the development of American literature? By which peculiarities this author is best-known?
2. Discuss “*Death in the Woods*” as a story of initiation.
3. Discuss the symbolism in “*Death in the Woods*”. What is suggested by the narrator’s comment that “The running of the dogs may have been kind of death ceremonial”? Comment on the almost mystical illumination that the incident, the silent tableau, and the presence of death had for the boy.
4. Do you find Mrs. Grimes from “*Death in the Woods*” a sympathetic character? Why or why not? Cite specific passages from the text to support your point of view.

Selected Sources 2009-Present:

1. Buechsel, Mark. *Sacred Land: Sherwood Anderson, Midwestern Modernism, and the Sacramental Vision of Nature*. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2013.
2. Lindsay, Clarence. *Such a Rare Thing: The Art of Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio*. Kent, OH: Kent State UP, 2009.
3. Whalan, Mark. *Race, Manhood, and Modernism in America: The Short Story Cycles of Sherwood Anderson and Jean Toomer*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2014.

3. John Reed (1887-1920). “Ten Days That Shook the World”.

Primary Works: “*Insurgent Mexico*” (1914), “*The War in Eastern Europe*” (1916), “*Ten Days that Shook the World*” (1919).

A Brief Biography of John Reed

John Reed, (born Oct. 22, 1887, Portland, Ore., U.S.—died Oct. 19, 1920, Moscow), U.S. poet-adventurer whose short life as a revolutionary writer and activist made him the hero of a generation of radical intellectuals. Reed, a member of a wealthy Portland family, was graduated from Harvard in 1910 and began writing for a Socialist newspaper, *The Masses*, in 1913. In 1914 he covered the revolutionary fighting in Mexico and recorded his impressions in “*Insurgent Mexico*” (1914). Frequently arrested for organizing and defending strikes, he rapidly became established as a radical leader and helped form the Communist Party in the United States. He covered World War I for *Metropolitan* magazine; out of this experience came “*The War in Eastern Europe*” (1916). He became a close friend of Lenin and was an eyewitness to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, recording this event in his best known book, “*Ten Days That Shook the World*” (1919). When the U.S. Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party split in 1919, Reed became the leader of the latter. Indicted for treason, he escaped to Russia and died of typhus; he was subsequently buried with other Bolshevik heroes beside the Kremlin wall. Following his death, the Communist Party formed many John Reed clubs, associations of writers and artists, in U.S. cities.

“Ten Days That Shook the World” (1919)

“*Ten Days That Shook the World*” (1919) is a book by American journalist and socialist John Reed about the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, which Reed experienced firsthand. Reed followed many of the prominent Bolshevik leaders closely during his time in Russia. John Reed died in 1920, shortly after the book was finished, and he is one of the few Americans buried at the Kremlin Wall Necropolis in Moscow, a site normally reserved only for the most prominent Russian leaders.

John Reed was on an assignment for *The Masses*, a magazine of socialist politics, when he was reporting the Russian Revolution. Although Reed states that he had “tried to see events with the eye of a conscientious reporter, interested in setting down the truth” during the time of the event, he stated in the preface that “in the struggle my sympathies were not neutral”. Upon returning from Russia during April 1918, Reed's trunk of notes and materials on the revolution — which included Russian handbills, newspapers, and speeches — were seized by custom officials. Reed would not receive his materials until 7 months later in November. Max Eastman recalls a meeting with John Reed in the middle of Sheridan Square during the period of time when Reed isolated himself writing the book: ...he wrote “*Ten Days that Shook the World*” — wrote it in another ten days and ten nights or little more.

“*Ten Days That Shook the World*” has received mixed responses since its publication in 1919, resulting in a wide range of critical reviews from negative to positive. However, the book was overall positively received by critics at the time of its 1st publication, despite some critics’ vocal opposition to Reed’s political beliefs.

Study Questions:

1. Was John Reed's experience as a journalist reflected in his literary works?
2. What John Reed tried to express in his "*Ten Days That Shook the World*"?

Selected Sources 2012-Present:

1. Charles, John C. "The John Reed Clubs." in Rosendale, Steven. ed. *American Radical and Reform Writers: First Series*. Detroit: Gale, 2015.
2. Lehman, Daniel W. *John Reed & the writing of revolution*. Athens, OH: Ohio UP, 2012.

4. Social Realism. Upton Sinclair (1878-1968). "The Jungle".

Primary Works: "*The Jungle*" (1906), "*The Brass Check*" (1919), "*I, Governor of California, and How I Ended Poverty*" (1934), "*Lanny Budd*" series (1940-1953), "*The Fasting Cure*" (1911), "*Courtmartialed*" (1898), "*Saved by the Enemy*" (1998), "*The Fighting Squadron*" (1898), "*A Prisoner of Morro*" (1898), "*A Soldier Monk*" (1898), "*A Gauntlet of Fire*" (1899), "*Holding the Fort*" (1899), "*Wolves of the Navy*" (1899), "*Springtime and Harvest*" (1901), "*The Journal of Arthur Stirling*" (1903), "*Off the West Point*" (1903), "*The West Point Rivals*" (1903), "*King Coal*" (1917), "*They Call Me Carpenter: A Tale of the Second Coming*" (1922), "*Mammonart*" (1925), "*Oil!*" (1927), "*Boston*" (1928), "*Roman Holiday*" (1931), "*The Gnomobile*" (1936-1962), "*The Flivver King: A Story of Ford-America*" (1937), "*Little Steel*" (1938), "*World's End*" (1940), "*Between Two Worlds*" (1941), "*Dragon's Teeth*" (1942), "*Wide Is the Gate*" (1943), "*Presidential Agent*" (1944), "*Dragon Harvest*" (1945), "*A World to Win*" (1946), "*A Presidential Mission*" (1947), "*One Clear Call*" (1948), "*O Shepherd, Speak!*" (1949), "*The Return of Lanny Budd*" (1953), "*The Cup of Fury*" (1956), "*The Coal War*" (1976).

A Brief Biography of Upton Sinclair

Upton Sinclair, in full Upton Beall Sinclair (born September 20, 1878, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.—died November 25, 1968, Bound Brook, New Jersey), prolific American novelist and polemicist for socialism, health, temperance, free speech, and worker rights, among other causes. His classic muckraking novel "*The Jungle*" (1906) is a landmark among naturalistic proletarian work, one praised by fellow socialist Jack London as "the Uncle Tom's Cabin of wage slavery".

Sinclair's parents were poor but his grandparents were wealthy, and he attributed his exposure to the 2 extremes as the cause of his socialist beliefs. He graduated from the College of the City of New York in 1897 and did graduate work at Columbia University, supporting himself by writing jokes for newspapers and cartoonists and adventure stories for pulp magazines. His 1st 4 books — "*King Midas*" (1901, 1st published the same year as *Springtime and Harvest*), "*Prince Hagen*" (1903), "*The Journal of Arthur Stirling*" (1903), and a Civil War novel "*Manassas*" (1904) — were well received by the critics but did not sell well.

His public stature changed dramatically in 1905, after Sinclair was sent to investigate conditions in the Chicago stockyards. The result of his 7-week investigation was "*The Jungle*" (1905). Though intended to create sympathy for the exploited and poorly treated immigrant workers in the meatpacking industry, the novel instead aroused widespread public indignation at the low quality of and impurities in processed meats and thus helped bring about the passage of federal food-inspection laws. As Sinclair commented at the time, "I aimed at the public's heart and by accident I hit it in the stomach".

Sinclair moved to Pasadena, California, in 1916. His muckraking novels continued with "*King Coal*" (1917), which is about the poor working conditions in the mining industry. With "*The Brass Check*" (1919), Sinclair tackled the financial interests and supposed "free press" principles of major newspapers and the "yellow journalism" they often engaged in to attract readers. His novel "*Oil!*" (1927) was based on the Teapot Dome Scandal, and "*Boston*" (1928)

was inspired by the Sacco-Vanzetti case. His searing novel *"The Wet Parade"* (1931) is about the tragedy of alcoholism, and *"The Flivver King"* (1937) tells the story of Henry Ford and how "scientific management" replaced skilled workers in the automotive industry.

During the crisis of the 1930s, Sinclair organized the EPIC (End Poverty in California) socialist reform movement and registered as a Democrat. The campaign was surprisingly popular, helping to inspire Franklin D. Roosevelt's *New Deal* programs, but once again he lost. He was defeated by a joint propaganda campaign by the conservative business establishment and Hollywood studio bosses, who used admen, media consultants, "fake news" and assorted "dirty tricks". Sinclair recounted the campaign in *"I, Candidate for Governor: And How I Got Licked"* (1935).

Inspired by a tour of the northern California redwoods in 1936, Sinclair wrote a children's story called *"The Gnomobile"*. It was one of the 1st books for children with an environmentalist message, and it was later adapted as a film by Walt Disney in 1967. Sinclair again reached a wide audience with his *"Lanny Budd"* series, 11 contemporary historical novels, beginning with *"World's End"* (1940), that were constructed around an antifascist hero who witnesses all the events surrounding World War II. For *"Dragon's Teeth"* (1942), the 3rd novel in the series, about the Nazi takeover of Germany in the 1930s, Sinclair won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1943. Of his autobiographical writings, *"American Outpost: A Book of Reminiscences"* (1932; also published as *"Candid Reminiscences: My First Thirty Years"*) was reworked and extended in *"The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair"* (1962). *"My Lifetime in Letters"* (1960) is a collection of letters written to Sinclair.

"The Jungle" (1906)

The most famous, influential, and enduring of all muckraking novels, *"The Jungle"* was an exposé of conditions in the Chicago stockyards. Because of public response, the U.S. Pure Food and Drug Act was passed and conditions in the slaughterhouses were improved. The novel was written when Sinclair was sent by the socialist weekly newspaper *Appeal to Reason* to investigate working conditions in the meatpacking industry. He wrote pointedly about the exploitation of immigrant laborers and graphically described the disguising of spoiled and diseased meat and the unsanitary environment in the stockyards. Although Sinclair's chief goal was to expose abusive labor conditions, the American public was most horrified by the lack of sanitation in the meat-processing plants.

"The Jungle" was not the 1st muckraking novel, although it is easily one of the most influential books of the 20th century. It is a raw and sometimes nauseating chronicle based on the real incidents of the 1904 stockyard workers' strike in Chicago. A manifesto for social change, it savagely reveals the American dream gone sour. Sinclair strips away the myth of America as a boon to the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. Instead, the golden land of manifest destiny is shown to be a Dickensian nightmare, where wage slaves can barely survive, where powerless immigrants are chewed up by a capitalist machine oiled by corruption and bald greed.

Sinclair personally sent a copy of his book to then American President Theodore Roosevelt. Often ranked with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *"Uncle Tom's Cabin"* in regard to its social impact, *"The Jungle"* was highly lauded by other such esteemed literary figures Jack London, H.L. Mencken, and George Bernard Shaw.

Study Question:

1. What was the reason of Upton Sinclair to investigate social problems of American society? How did the author realize it in his books?
2. Why do you think Jack London praised *"The Jungle"* as "the Uncle Tom's Cabin of wage slavery"?
3. Give general characteristics of Upton Sinclair's muckraking novels.

Selected Sources 2012-Present:

1. Harris, Leon. *"Upton Sinclair: American Rebel"*. 3rd edition. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 2015.
2. Derrick, Scott. *"What a Beating Feels Like: Authorship Dissolution, and Masculinity in Sinclair's The Jungle"*. Bloom, Infobase, 2012.
3. Yoder, Jon. *"Upton Sinclair"*. Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 2015.
4. Salamon, Julie. *"Upton Sinclair: Revisit to Old Hero Finds He's Still Lively"*. NY.: The New York Times Books, 2015.

5. Carl Sandburg (1878-1967). "Chicago".

Primary Works: *"Chicago Poems"* poem collection (1914), *"Chicago"*, poem (1914), *"Smoke and Steel"* (1920), *"Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years"*, biography (1926), *"Abraham Lincoln: The War Years"*, biography (1939), *"The American Songbag"*, folk songs (1927), *"Good Morning, America"* (1928), *"Remembrance Rock"* (1948), *"New American Songbag"*, folk songs (1950), *"Always the Young Strangers"* (1953). *"Prairie-town Boy"* (1955), *"Honey and Salt"* (1963), *"Breathing Tokens"* (1978).

A Brief Biography of Carl Sandburg

Carl Sandburg, (born Jan. 6, 1878, Galesburg, Ill., U.S.—died July 22, 1967, Flat Rock, N.C.), American poet, historian, novelist, and folklorist.

From the age of 11, Sandburg worked in various occupations — as a barbershop porter, a milk truck driver, a brickyard hand, and a harvester in the Kansas wheat fields. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, he enlisted in the 6th Illinois Infantry. These early years he later described in his autobiography *"Always the Young Strangers"* (1953).

Moving to Chicago in 1913, he became an editor of *System*, a business magazine, and later joined the staff of the *Chicago Daily News*. In 1914 a group of his *"Chicago Poems"* appeared in *Poetry* magazine. In his most famous poem, *"Chicago"*, he depicted the city as the laughing, lusty, heedless "Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation". Sandburg's poetry made an instant and favorable impression. In Whitmanesque free verse, he eulogized workers: "Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Gary, they make their steel with men" (*"Smoke and Steel"*, 1920).

In *"Good Morning, America"* (1928) Sandburg seemed to have lost some of his faith in democracy, but from the depths of the Great Depression he wrote a poetic testament to the power of the people to go forward, *"The People, Yes"* (1936). The folk songs he sang before delighted audiences were issued in two collections, *"The American Songbag"* (1927) and *"New American Songbag"* (1950). He wrote the popular biography *"Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years"*, 2 vol. (1926), and *"Abraham Lincoln: The War Years"*, 4 vol. (1939; Pulitzer Prize in history, 1940). A journalist by profession, he wrote a massive biography of Abraham Lincoln that is one of the classic works of the 20th century.

To many, Sandburg was a latter-day Walt Whitman, writing expansive, evocative urban and patriotic poems and simple, childlike rhymes and ballads. He traveled about reciting and recording his poetry, in a lilting, mellifluously toned voice that was a kind of singing. At heart he was totally unassuming, notwithstanding his national fame. What he wanted from life, he once said, was "to be out of jail... to eat regular... to get what I write printed... a little love at home and a little nice affection hither and yon over the American landscape... (and) to sing every day."

"Chicago" (1914)

"Chicago" is a poem in free verse, one without a set meter or rhyme scheme, running twenty-three lines. A fine example of Carl Sandburg's themes and his Whitmanesque style. The

title gives the name of the city that the poet is praising, which does not appear elsewhere in the poem. Without the title, this poem could refer to any industrial city, suggesting a universal love of place.

The poem, written in the 1st person so that the poet addresses the reader directly, celebrates both the virtues and vices of the city. It begins with a staccato list of occupations found in Chicago (hog butcher, tool maker, stacker of wheat), followed by three adjectives that attach an emotion to those occupations. Carl Sandburg calls them “Stormy, husky, brawling,” creating an aura of vitality. This 1st section of the poem is abrupt and rapid, like the city being portrayed.

The 2nd section departs from the brief phrasing and turns to long, flowing, melodic sentences. Each of the first three sentences acknowledges a vice of the city in the 1st half of the sentence. It is wicked, corrupt, and brutal. The poet agrees to each accusation, supplying a specific detail that supports the charge in the 2nd half of the sentence. There are “painted women,” “gunmen,” and “wanton hunger.” The city does, in fact, have its failings.

Study Questions:

1. What are basic traits of Sandburg’s writing in style? In vocabulary? In syntax? Find examples in his works.
2. In your opinion can biographies of Lincoln written by Sandburg be considered as fiction? If yes – why? If not – why?

“Chicago”:

1. Who do you think the speaker of the poem is?
2. What is the effect of all of the personification in the poem?
3. Why does the speaker love everything about Chicago, even the ugly parts? Shouldn't he acknowledge that murder and starvation are majorly bad problems?
4. What is the relationship between Chicago and the rest of America in the poem?
5. Do you think of “Chicago” as a love poem? Why or why not?

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Lecture 2. Lost Generation

Plan:

1. The Literature of “Lost Generation”.
2. F. Scott Fitzgerald. “The Great Gatsby”. “May Day”. “The Rich Boy”. “Babylon Revisited”. The Age of Jazz. Break of American Dream.
3. John Dos Passos. The “U.S.A.” Trilogy. The Theme of the South. “Manhattan Transfer”. Polyphonic Montageroman.

1. The Literature of “Lost Generation”.

The term “Lost Generation” refers to the generation of people who reached adulthood during or immediately following World War I. Demographers generally consider 1883 to 1900 as the birth year range of the generation.

Key Takeaways:

- 1) The “Lost Generation” reached adulthood during or shortly after World War I.
- 2) Disillusioned by the horrors of war, they rejected the traditions of the older generation.
- 3) Their struggles were characterized in the works of a group of famous American authors and poets including Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot.
- 4) Common traits of the “Lost Generation” included decadence, distorted visions of the “American Dream,” and gender confusion.

Lost Generation, a group of American writers who came of age during World War I and established their literary reputations in the 1920s. The term is also used more generally to refer to the post-World War I generation.

The generation was “lost” in the sense that its inherited values were no longer relevant in the postwar world and because of its spiritual alienation from a United States that, basking under Pres. Warren G. Harding’s “back to normalcy” policy, seemed to its members to be hopelessly provincial, materialistic, and emotionally barren. The term embraces Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, E.E. Cummings, Archibald MacLeish, Hart Crane, and many other writers who made Paris the center of their literary activities in the 1920s. They were never a literary school.

Gertrude Stein is credited for the term Lost Generation, though Hemingway made it widely known. According to Hemingway’s *A Moveable Feast* (1964), she had heard it used by a garage owner in France, who dismissively referred to the younger generation as a “*génération perdue*.” In conversation with Hemingway, she turned that label on him and declared, “You are all a lost generation.” He used her remark 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.

In the 1930s, as these writers turned in different directions, their works lost the distinctive stamp of the postwar period. The last representative works of the era were Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night* (1934) and Dos Passos’s *The Big Money* (1936).

Having witnessed what they considered pointless death on such a massive scale during the War, many members of the generation rejected more traditional ideas of proper behavior, morality, and gender roles. They were considered to be “lost” due to their tendency to act aimlessly, even recklessly, often focusing on the hedonistic accumulation of personal wealth.

In literature, the term also refers to a group of well-known American authors and poets including Ernest Hemingway, Gertrude Stein, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot, whose works often detailed the internal struggles of the “Lost Generation.”

The term is believed to have come from an actual verbal exchange witnessed by novelist Gertrude Stein during which a garage owner derisively told his young employee, “You are all a lost generation.” Stein’s colleague and pupil Ernest Hemingway popularized the term when he used it as an epigraph to his classic 1926 novel “*The Sun Also Rises*.”

In an interview for *The Hemmingway Project*, Kirk Curnutt, author of several books about the Lost Generation writers suggested that they were expressing mythologized versions of their own lives. “They were convinced they were the products of a generational breach, and they wanted to capture the experience of newness in the world around them,” said Curnutt.

Decadent Excesses of the Lost Generation. Throughout their novels “*The Sun Also Rises*” and “*The Great Gatsby*,” Hemingway and Fitzgerald feature the decadent, self-indulgent lifestyles of their Lost Generation characters. In both “*The Great Gatsby*” and “*Tales of the Jazz Age*” Fitzgerald depicts an endless stream of lavish parties hosted by the main characters. With their values so completely destroyed by the war, the expatriate American circles of friends in Hemingway’s “*The Sun Also Rises*” and “*A Moveable Feast*” live shallow, hedonistic lifestyles, aimlessly roaming the world while drinking and partying.

Fallacy of the Great American Dream. Members of the Lost Generation viewed the idea of the “American Dream” as a grand deception. This becomes a prominent theme in “*The Great Gatsby*” as the story’s narrator Nick Carraway comes to realize that Gatsby’s vast fortune had been paid for with great misery. To Fitzgerald, the traditional vision of the American Dream — that hard work led to success — had become corrupted. To the Lost Generation, “living the dream” was no longer about simply building a self-sufficient life, but about getting stunningly rich by any means necessary.

Belief in an Impossible Future. Unable or unwilling to come to grips with the horrors of warfare many of the Lost Generation created impossibly unrealistic hopes for the future. This is expressed best in the final lines of “*The Great Gatsby*” in which narrator Nick exposed Gatsby’s idealized vision of Daisy that had always prevented him from seeing her as she really was: “Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter — tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning — So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”

The “green light” in the passage is Fitzgerald’s metaphor for the perfect futures we continue to believe in even while watching it get ever farther away from us. In other words, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the Lost Generation continued to believe that “one fine day,” their dreams will come true.

Study Questions:

1. What was the Lost Generation’s impact on American literature?
2. Name main authors and works of the Lost Generation literature.

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2. F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). “*The Great Gatsby*”. “*May Day*”. “*The Rich Boy*”. “*Babylon Revisited*”. *The Age of Jazz. Break of American Dream.*

Primary Works: “*This Side of Paradise*” (1920), “*Flappers and Philosophers*” (1921), “*The Beautiful and the Damned*” (1922), “*Tales of the Jazz Age*”, collection (1922): “*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*”, “*The Great Gatsby*” (1925), “*All the Sad Young Men*”, collection (1926): “*Rich Boy*”, “*Absolution*”; “*Tender is the Night*” (1934).

A Brief Biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (born September 24, 1896, St. Paul, Minnesota, U.S.—died December 21, 1940, Hollywood, California), American short-story writer and novelist famous for his depictions of the Jazz Age (the 1920s), his most brilliant novel being “*The Great Gatsby*” (1925). His private life, with his wife, Zelda, in both America and France, became almost as celebrated as his novels.

Fitzgerald was the only son of an unsuccessful, aristocratic father and an energetic, provincial mother. As a result, he had typically ambivalent American feelings about American life, which seemed to him at once vulgar and dazzlingly promising. He also had an intensely romantic imagination, what he once called “a heightened sensitivity to the promises of life”. At both St. Paul Academy and Newman School he tried too hard and made himself unpopular, but at Princeton he came close to realizing his dream of a brilliant success. He became a prominent figure in the literary life of the university and made lifelong friendships with Edmund Wilson and John Peale Bishop. He became a leading figure in the socially important *Triangle Club*, a dramatic society.

In November 1917 he left to join the army. In July 1918, while he was stationed near Montgomery, Alabama, he met Zelda Sayre, the daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court judge. They fell deeply in love, and, as soon as he could, Fitzgerald headed for New York determined to achieve instant success and to marry Zelda.

“*This Side of Paradise*” was a revelation of the new morality of the young; it made Fitzgerald famous. This sudden prosperity made it possible for him and Zelda to play the roles they were so beautifully equipped for, and Ring Lardner called them the prince and princess of their generation. Though they loved these roles, they were frightened by them, too, as the ending of Fitzgerald’s 2nd novel, “*The Beautiful and Damned*” (1922), shows. “*The Beautiful and Damned*” describes a handsome young man and his beautiful wife, who gradually degenerate into a shopworn middle age while they wait for the young man to inherit a large fortune. Ironically, they finally get it, when there is nothing of them left worth preserving. To escape the life that they feared, in 1924 the Fitzgeralds moved to the Riviera, where they found themselves a part of a group of American expatriates whose style was largely set by Gerald and Sara Murphy; Fitzgerald described this society in his last completed novel, “*Tender Is the Night*”, and modeled its hero on Gerald Murphy.

Considered today as one of the major prose stylist of the 20th century, Fitzgerald celebrates the boom of the 1920s and the crash of the 1930s. His themes combine the hollowness of the American worship of riches and the never-ending dream of love, splendor, and glory. Shortly after their arrival in France, Fitzgerald completed his most brilliant novel, “*The Great Gatsby*” (1925). All of his divided nature is in this novel, the naive Midwesterner afire with the possibilities of the “American Dream” in its hero, Jay Gatsby, and the compassionate Yale gentleman in its narrator, Nick Carraway. “*The Great Gatsby*” is the most profoundly American novel of its time; at its conclusion, Fitzgerald connects Gatsby’s dream, his “Platonic conception of himself”, with the dream of the discoverers of America.

Some of Fitzgerald’s finest short stories appeared in “*All the Sad Young Men*” (1926), particularly “*The Rich Boy*” and “*Absolution*,” but it was not until 8 years later that another novel appeared.

The next decade of the Fitzgeralds’ lives was disorderly and unhappy. Fitzgerald began to drink too much, and Zelda had 2 mental breakdowns in 1930 and in 1932, from which she never fully recovered. Fitzgerald did not finish his next novel, “*Tender Is the Night*”, until 1934. It is the story of a psychiatrist who marries one of his patients, who, as she slowly recovers, exhausts his vitality until he is, in Fitzgerald’s words, *un homme épuisé* (“a man used up”). This is Fitzgerald’s most moving book, though it was commercially unsuccessful. By 1937, however, he had come back far enough to become a scriptwriter in Hollywood, and there he met and fell in love with Sheilah Graham, a famous Hollywood gossip columnist. For the rest of his life — except for

occasional drunken spells when he became bitter and violent — Fitzgerald lived quietly with her. In October 1939 he began a novel about Hollywood, *“The Last Tycoon”*. The career of its hero, Monroe Stahr, is based on that of the producer Irving Thalberg. This is Fitzgerald’s final attempt to create his dream of the promises of American life and of the kind of man who could realize them. In the intensity with which it is imagined and in the brilliance of its expression, it is the equal of anything Fitzgerald ever wrote, and it is typical of his luck that he died of a heart attack with his novel only half-finished.

“The Great Gatsby” (1925)

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *“The Great Gatsby”*, follows Jay Gatsby, a man who orders his life around one desire: to be reunited with Daisy Buchanan, the love he lost 5 years earlier. Gatsby's quest leads him from poverty to wealth, into the arms of his beloved, and eventually to death. *“The Great Gatsby”* is a classic piece of American fiction. It is a novel of triumph and tragedy, noted for the remarkable way Fitzgerald captured a cross-section of American society.

The 3 most important aspects of *“The Great Gatsby”*:

1. Nick Carraway is the narrator, or storyteller, of *“The Great Gatsby”*, but he is not the story's protagonist, or main character. Instead, Jay Gatsby is the protagonist of the novel that bears his name. Tom Buchanan is the book's antagonist, opposing Gatsby's attempts to get what he wants: Tom's wife Daisy.

2. From the gold hat mentioned in the novel's epigram to the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, *“The Great Gatsby”* is filled with things that are gold and green: the colors of money.

3. There are 2 kinds of wealth in *“The Great Gatsby”*: the inherited wealth of Daisy and Tom Buchanan, and the newly acquired wealth of Gatsby. The 1st kind comes with social standing and protects the Buchanans from punishment, as Daisy literally gets away with murder. Gatsby's kind of wealth, though considerable, leaves its owner vulnerable.

“May Day” (1922)

“May Day” is a short story. The setting of the story is taken from the May Day riots of 1919 in Ohio, which resulted in 2 deaths and over 100 arrests. The nature of the riot was political: a dispute arose over the use of the Socialist flag by some protesters.

The 3 individual stories dovetail into each other to present a scene across the city of New York: the story of Sterrett, the story of the newspaper offices, and the story of Key and Rose. Each scene links carefully with the next, showing in the imaginative skill of the author the careful construction of a script writer, who meshes together disparate scenes to make a cohesive whole. We see across the democratic whole of American society, and are shown the lowest of each class at the hands of the great leveler: alcohol.

The theme of the text is the conflict between rich and poor.

The introduction of the text is written in high-flown style. The setting is New York City at the end of the World War I. The author shows pathos and triumph which is typical to chronicles and epic narrations with the help of different figures of speech, so he uses a lot of stylistic devices, such as epithets – great and vivid city, triumphal arches, resonant wind of the brasses; inversion – “there had been a war fought and won...”, “thrown flowers of white, red and rose”.

The next part is narrated in the form of dialogue between two young friends. It is full of shortenings such as it's, I'm, you'd, you'll, I've, won't, and, and vulgarisms: Every God damn thing..., I've made a hell of.... It is told in the 3rd person singular. Fitzgerald likes to include a lot of dialogue, not only to keep the reader's attention, but also to elaborate on what was taking place throughout the story and give a more in-depth look into the lives of the characters in the story.

The author introduced to a wide range of characters, though really there are only two types: the fortunate and the unlucky. He represented them in a contrast. They are described indirectly through their actions, speech, thoughts, appearance.

In conclusion we can mention that F. Scott Fitzgerald is considered a member of the ‘Lost Generation,’ and key terms of Fitzgerald's works – Jazz Age, Lost Generation and American

Dream. The main idea depicts it. This idea is the basis for such phenomenon in American culture as American dream.

“The Rich Boy” (1926)

“*The Rich Boy*” was Fitzgerald’s 1st serious work after “*The Great Gatsby*”. It appeared in the “*Red Book*” in 1926, and was included in his most famous collection of stories, “*All the Sad Young Men*”, published in the same year. Like “*The Great Gatsby*”, to which it is closely akin in several respects, “*The Rich Boy*” shows us Fitzgerald at the top of his powers, and at the same time in his most characteristic and historically important role — as a critic of the American worship of wealth. Here, as in *Gatsby*, the author probes with remarkable sympathy and insight into the psychology of the very rich.

“*The Rich Boy*” is a study of the effect of large amounts of money on the character of a young man; it contains, on the 1st page, Fitzgerald’s famous statement about the born rich: “They are different from you and me”. The essential idea of the story is that hereditary wealth creates a complacency and self-satisfaction in the rich that ruins them for contact with the reality of life; their crack-up generally comes in the form of a love affair, since true human affection is one of the few things that cannot be bought.

Anson, the hero, is effortlessly successful in his early life as a Yale student, as a Naval aviator, and as a broker and speculator on Wall Street. But he falls in love with ‘a conservative and rather proper girl’, Paula Lagendre, who after a long courtship rejects him because of his lack of character. Anson, turned cynical by the experience, dabbles in a purely physical affair with the social climber Dolly Karger, but finds that nothing satisfies him, not even his success in the financial world. At the end of the story he reencounters Paula, now happily married and a mother, and realizes for the 1st time the extent of the happiness he has missed. A counterplot relates the jealousy of the happiness of his Aunt Edna and her lover Cary Sloane; he eventually drives Sloane to suicide by threatening to expose him”.

In this story Fitzgerald addressed himself directly to the matter of “the very rich”, and the subtle revelation that the story makes through the character of Anson Hunter, and that a summary statement such as this can only debase, is that not only does their ‘carelessness’ serve to be brutally destructive of others, but that their ease and pride and self-sufficiency prevent their own fulfillment in human relationships, numb the capacity for love, make personal commitment impossible.

“Babylon Revisited” (1931)

“*Babylon Revisited*” is the story of a Charlie Wales, a former drunken party-goer who returns to Paris, the site of his former 1920s debauchery, shortly after the stock market crash of 1929. Charlie sees his world with new sober eyes and is both shocked and appalled by the extravagance that characterized his former life. The story is rooted in the financial crisis of its times. Fitzgerald wrote the piece in December of 1930, when the good times of the *Jazz Age* (also called the “*Roaring Twenties*”) had come to an end and America was headed into the Great Depression. Charlie’s horror with his own former waste and self-destruction is Fitzgerald’s condemnation of a society who drank away the '20s.

Study Questions:

1. What qualities typify Fitzgerald’s modern heroines? Illustrate your response with reference to 3 stories of “*May Day*”.
2. How does Fitzgerald use setting to illustrate contrasts within his stories?
3. F. Scott Fitzgerald has been called one of the great stylists in American fiction. Discuss the prose style, structure, and point of view in “*Babylon Revisited*”.
4. In “*Babylon Revisited*”, how convincing is Charlie Wales in his insistence that he has changed his ways?
5. What view of the social climate in the Jazz age is presented in the stories “*Crazy Sunday*”, “*The Lost Decade*” and “*Babylon Revisited*”?

6. What realistic themes are explored in the fantasy story "*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*"?
7. How is the film industry portrayed in the short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald?

"Great Gatsby":

1. Analyze Fitzgerald's conception of the American Dream. Does he view it as totally dead, or is it possible to revive it?
2. Is Nick a reliable narrator? How does his point of view color the reality of the novel, and what facts or occurrences would he have a vested interest in obscuring?
3. Trace the use of the color white in the novel. When does it falsify a sense of innocence? When does it symbolize true innocence?
4. What does the green light symbolize to Gatsby? To Nick?
5. How does Fitzgerald juxtapose the different regions of America? Does he write more positively about the East or the Midwest?
6. In what ways are Wilson and Gatsby similar? Dissimilar? Who is Nick more sympathetic to?
7. Is Tom most responsible for Gatsby's death? Daisy? Myrtle? Gatsby himself? Give reasons why or why not each character is implicated in the murder.

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4. Irwin, John T. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction: 'An Almost Theatrical Innocence'*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP, 2014.

3. John Dos Passos (1896-1970). The "U.S.A." Trilogy. The Theme of the South. "Manhattan Transfer". Polyphonic Montageroman.

Primary Works: "*One Man's Initiation: 1917*" (1920), "*Three Soldiers*" (1921-1912), "*A Pushcart at the Curb*" (1922), "*Rosinante to the Road Again*" (1922), "*Streets of Night*" (1923), "*Manhattan Transfer*" (1925), "*Facing the Chair*" (1927), "*Orient Express*" (1927), "*U.S.A.*" trilogy (1938): "*The 42nd Parallel*" (1930) – "*Nineteen Nineteen*" (1932) – "*The Big Money*" (1936), "*Tour of Duty*" (1946), "*The Ground We Stand On*" (1949), "*District of Columbia*" trilogy (1952): "*Adventures of a Young Man*" (1939) – "*Number One*" (1943) – "*The Grand Design*" (1949), "*Chosen Country*" (1951), "*Most Likely to Succeed*" (1954), "*The Head and Heart of Thomas Jefferson*" (1954), "*The Theme Is Freedom*" (1956), "*The Men Who Made the Nation*" (1957), "*The Great Days*" (1958), "*Prospects of a Golden Age*" (1959), "*Midcentury*" (1961), "*Mr. Wilson's War*" (1962), "*Brazil on the Move*" (1963), "*The Best Times: An Informal Memoir*" (1966), "*The Shackles of Power*" (1966), "*The Portugal Story*" (1969), "*Easter Island: Island of Enigmas*" (1970).

A Brief Biography of John Dos Passos

John Roderigo Dos Passos (January 14, 1896 – September 28, 1970) was an American novelist and artist active in the 1st half of the 20th century. Born in Chicago, Illinois, he graduated from Harvard College in 1916. He was well-traveled, visiting Europe and the Middle East, where he learned about literature, art, and architecture. During World War I he was a member of the American Volunteer Motor Ambulance Corps in Paris and in Italy, later joining the U.S. Army Medical Corps.

In 1920 his 1st novel, *“One Man’s Initiation: 1917”*, was published, and in 1925 his novel, *“Manhattan Transfer”*, became a commercial success. In 1928, he went to Russia to study socialism, and later became a leading participator in the 1935 First American Writers Congress sponsored by League of American Writers. He was in Spain in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War, and led to severing his relationship with fellow writer Ernest Hemingway.

Dos Passos is best known for his “U.S.A.” trilogy, which consists of the novels *“The 42nd Parallel”* (1930), *“1919”* (1932), and *“The Big Money”* (1936). In 1998, the Modern Library ranked the “U.S.A.” Trilogy 23rd on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

An artist as well as a novelist, Dos Passos created his own cover art for his books, was influenced by the Modernist Movement in 1920s Paris, and continued to paint throughout his lifetime. He died on September 28, 1970, in Baltimore.

“U.S.A.” trilogy (1938)

The “U.S.A.” trilogy is a major work of John Dos Passos, comprising the novels *“The 42nd Parallel”* (1930), *“1919”* (1932), and *“The Big Money”* (1936). The 3 books were 1st published together in a single volume titled “U.S.A.” by Harcourt Brace in January 1938. Dos Passos had added a prologue with the title “U.S.A.” to The Modern Library edition of *“The 42nd Parallel”* published the previous November, and the same plates were used by Harcourt Brace for the trilogy.

The trilogy employs an experimental technique, incorporating 4 narrative modes: fictional narratives telling the life stories of 12 characters; collages of newspaper clippings and song lyrics labeled *Newsreel*; individually labeled short biographies of public figures of the time such as Woodrow Wilson and Henry Ford and fragments of autobiographical stream of consciousness writing labeled *Camera Eye*. The trilogy covers the historical development of American society during the 1st 3 decades of the 20th century. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked “U.S.A.” 23rd on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

4 narrative modes:

1. In the fictional narrative sections, the “U.S.A.” trilogy relates the lives of 12 characters as they struggle to find a place in American society during the early part of the 20th century. Each character is presented to the reader from their childhood on and in free indirect speech. While their lives are separate, characters occasionally meet. Some minor characters whose point of view is never given crop up in the background, forming a kind of bridge between the characters.

2. *“The Camera Eye”* sections are written in ‘stream of consciousness’ and are an autobiographical *Künstlerroman* of Dos Passos, tracing the author’s development from a child to a politically committed writer. *Camera Eye* 50 arguably contains the most famous line of the trilogy, when Dos Passos states upon the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti: “all right we are two nations.”

3. The *Newsreels* consist of front page headlines and article fragments from the *Chicago Tribune* for *“The 42nd Parallel”*, the *New York World* for *“1919”* and *“The Big Money”*, as well as lyrics from popular songs. *Newsreel* 66, preceding *Camera Eye* 50, announcing the Sacco and Vanzetti verdict, contains the lyrics of *“The Internationale”*.

4. The biographies are accounts of historical figures. The most often anthologized of these biographies is *“The Body of an American”*, which tells the story of an unknown soldier who was killed in World War I which concludes *“1919”*.

The separation between these narrative modes is rather a stylistic than a thematic one. Some critics have pointed out connections between the fictional character Mary French in *“The Big Money”* and journalist Mary Heaton Vorse, calling into question the strict separation between fictional characters and biographies. Coherent quotes from newspaper articles are often woven into the biographies as well, calling into question the strict separation between them and the *“Newsreel”* sections. The fragmented narrative style of the trilogy later influenced the work of British science-fiction novelist John Brunner.

Dos Passos portrays the everyday situations of the characters before, during, and after World War I, with special attention to the social and economic forces that drive them. Those characters who pursue "the big money" without scruple succeed, but are dehumanized by success. Others are destroyed, crushed by capitalism, and ground underfoot. Dos Passos does not show much sympathy for upwardly mobile characters who succeed, but is always sympathetic to the down and out victims of capitalist society. He explores the difficulty faced by winners and losers alike when trying to make a stable living for themselves as well as wanting to settle down in some means.

"Manhattan Transfer" (1925)

"Manhattan Transfer" is a seminal American novel, and yet it is not widely read. John Dos Passos is perennially overlooked in the literary canon in favor of his contemporaries Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. Dos Passos was friends with Hemingway and his writing, in turn, has much in common with Fitzgerald's exuberant prose, particularly in its treatment of color and smell and its focus on the surfaces of modern life – the popular songs, the posters, the pin-ups, the ads, the trends. Yet, for whatever reason, Dos Passos has never achieved the kind of far-reaching popular awareness and critical acclaim Hemingway and Fitzgerald have.

Though best known for his *"U.S.A."* trilogy, Dos Passos's 1st masterpiece, and the novel which sealed his reputation, is *"Manhattan Transfer"*. As a result of this work, Sinclair Lewis and Jean-Paul Sartre, among others, lavished praise on Dos Passos. Sartre even went so far as to proclaim him, in the 1930s, the greatest writer of the era. Novel's vignettes, its tapestry of a narrative, its insistently nonlinear structure, and its juxtaposition of prose and poetic forms, proved hugely influential. Though it met with mixed reviews when published in November 1925 by Harper & Brothers, Lewis declared *"Manhattan Transfer"* - "the foundation of a whole new school of novel-writing".

Indeed, though the influences of Joyce, Cendrars, Flaubert, Zola, Baudelaire, and Eliot on Dos Passos were evident, nothing quite like *"Manhattan Transfer"* - a novel which attempts to do the impossible, that is encompass an entire city and an entire era – had ever been seen. The breadth of its vision and the depth of its concerns distinguish it, along with Dos Passos's jazz-inspired writing style. Along with *"U.S.A."* it was one of the milestones of Dos Passos's lengthy and illustrious career, and it is one of the landmarks of American fiction.

Study Questions:

1. What 2 communications media influenced John Dos Passos's technique in his novels? How successful do you consider these innovations?
2. Is it possible to justify Dos Passos's relative inattention to character development in his fiction?
4. How does Dos Passos unify the multifarious contents of *"U.S.A."*?
5. Analyze Dos Passos's style. Choose any one of the short vignettes involving a nameless character or set of characters, and examine the following: diction, syntax, rhythm, structure, use of poetic devices, ellipsis, and imagery. Explicate the passage as if it were a poem unto itself.
6. *"Manhattan Transfer"* bears many similarities to T.S. Eliot's *"The Waste Land"*. To what extent can the novel be described as poetry? Examine the ways in which Dos Passos blurs the lines between prose and poetry.

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Lecture 3. Great Depression

Plan:

1. The Literature of “Great Depression”.
2. Erskine Caldwell. “Tobacco Road”.

1. The Literature of “Great Depression”.

The Great Depression, the longest, deepest, and most pervasive depression in American history, lasted from 1929 to 1939. Its effects were felt in virtually all corners of the world, and it is one of the great economic calamities in history.

Ultimately, literature changed a great deal during the *Great Depression*. Authors of the time had a limitless amount of source material to draw from in current events, from World War I to the *Roaring Twenties* to the *Great Depression* itself. While literature does evolve slowly and literary movements tend to last for several decades, the *Great Depression* saw an increasingly social-conscious authorship, most likely due to sympathy with the plight that was almost universally experienced, and also due to the fact that media and literature was being truly mainstreamed and mass produced at a level higher than ever before. The increase in public awareness due to radio innovation and advances in industry combined with the desire for escapism allowed for book sales to skyrocket astronomically, and authors had to take into account what the “average Joe” would want to read due to increased literacy and a more populated reader base. Reading for leisure was no longer restricted to the upper class and higher educated in the 20th century. All of these things playing together intricately led to the changes in literature during the *Great Depression*. 2 works describe the setting of the *Great Depression*. They are “*Of Mice and Men*” by John Steinbeck and “*America's Great Depression*” by Murray N. Rothbard.

Study Questions:

1. What was the impact of the *Great Depression* on American literature?
2. Name main authors and works of the *Great Depression* period.

Selected Sources 2010-Present:

1. Barnard, Rita. *The Great Depression and the Culture of Abundance: Kenneth Fearing, Nathanael West, and Mass Culture in the 1930s*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
2. Bernanke, Ben S. *Essays on the Great Depression*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010.
3. Rothermund, Dietmar. *The Global Impact of the Great Depression, 1929–1939*. London: Routledge, 2016.

2. Erskine Caldwell (1903-1987). “Tobacco Road”.

Primary Works: “*Poor Fool*” (1930), “*Tobacco Road*” (1932), “*God's Little Acre*” (1933), “*Journeyman*” (1935), “*Trouble in July*” (1940), “*The Sacrilege of Alan Kent*” (1936), “*North of the Danube*”, with Margaret Bourke-White (1939), “*Say! Is This the U.S.A.?*” with Margaret Bourke-White (1941), “*Georgia Boy*” (1943), “*Tragic Ground*” (1944), “*The Sure Hand of God*” (1947), “*Deep South*” (1968), “*With All My Might: An Autobiography*” (1987).

A Brief Biography of Erskine Caldwell

Erskine Caldwell, (born Dec. 17, 1903, Coweta County, Ga., U.S.—died April 11, 1987, Paradise Valley, Ariz.), American author whose unadorned novels and stories about the rural poor

of the American South mix violence and passion in grotesque tragicomedy. His works achieved a worldwide readership and were particularly esteemed in France and Russia.

Caldwell's father was a home missionary who moved frequently from church to church in the clay hills of central Georgia. While accompanying his father, Caldwell acquired a deep familiarity with the mentality and dialect of the impoverished sharecroppers that his father ministered to. He attended Erskine College, Due West, S.C., and the University of Virginia but did not graduate.

He settled in Maine in 1926, determined to work seriously as a writer of fiction. Fame arrived with *"Tobacco Road"* (1932), a highly controversial novel whose title grew to be a byword for rural squalor and degradation. A dramatization of *"Tobacco Road"* by Jack Kirkland in 1934 ran for 7,5 years on the New York stage and became a staple of the American theatre, with its tragicomic picture of Jeeter Lester, his family, and his neighbors. Caldwell's reputation as a novelist largely rests on *"Tobacco Road"* and on *"God's Little Acre"* (1933), another best-selling novel featuring a cast of hopelessly poor and degenerate whites in the rural South. Among his other more important works are *"Trouble in July"* (1940); the episodic narrative *"Georgia Boy"* (1943), a well-told story of boyhood; the literary autobiography *"Call It Experience"* (1951); and *"In Search of Bisco"* (1965).

Caldwell provided the text and his wife-to-be, Margaret Bourke-White, provided the photographs for a powerful documentary book about the rural South entitled *"You Have Seen Their Faces"* (1937). They collaborated on 2 more such picture-and-text books on eastern European countries.

Caldwell worked overseas as a journalist during World War II, wrote screenplays in Hollywood, and continued to produce works of fiction and remembrance in the latter part of his career. Caldwell's later novels attracted little critical interest. Although his fellow – Southern novelist W. Faulkner considered him among the 5 best contemporary American writers, most American critics generally have been more grudging in their praise.

"Tobacco Road" (1932)

"Tobacco Road" is tragicomic exposé of poverty and ignorance among a family of Georgia sharecroppers during the Depression. It establishes the paradox of Southern poor whites: They are lazy, amoral, shameless, and debased, but at the same time they are innocent, free, and uncontaminated by social hypocrisies. Jeeter Lester, the central character, derives an existential nobility from his unquestioning faith in God's anticipated (but never realized) beneficence. As spring approaches, he lays plans to plow the fields, if by some miracle he can acquire a mule, seed cotton, and fertilizer. He has made that same plan — and failed to effect it — every year for the past 8, since the landowner left him to fend for himself against eroding soil and falling cotton prices. Lacking either credit or prospects, Jeeter cannot imagine himself apart from the land, so his only action is inaction. He dreams and sleeps, plots and starves, while life goes on unchanged.

The novel was included in *Life Magazine's* list of the 100 outstanding books of 1924–1944.

Study Questions:

1. What is background for E. Caldwell's works?
2. Can we say that the author changes his attitude to the rural South from his 1st works to the last ones? If you think "yes" – why? If you think "not" – why?

Selected Sources 2009-Present:

1. Allred, Jeff. *American Modernism and Depression Documentary*. NY: Oxford UP, 2009.
2. Rieger, Christopher. *Clear-Cutting Eden: Ecology and the Pastoral in Southern Literature*. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2009.
3. Vials, Chris. *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U. S. Culture, 1935-1947*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2009.

Lecture 4. Afro-American Literature

Plan:

1. Harlem Renaissance (1910-1930).
2. Langston Hughes. "Not Without Laughter".
3. Festus Claude McKay. "Home to Harlem".
4. Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915). "Up from Slavery".

1. Harlem Renaissance (1910-1930).

Harlem Renaissance (HR) is the name given to the period from the end of World War I and through the middle of the 1930s Depression, during which a group of talented African-American writers produced a sizable body of literature in the 4 prominent genres of poetry, fiction, drama, and essay.

The notion of "twoness", a divided awareness of one's identity, was introduced by W.E.B. Du Bois, one of the founders of the *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People* (NAACP) and the author of the influential book "*The Souls of Black Folks*" (1903): "One ever feels his two-ness - an American, a Negro; 2 souls, 2 thoughts, 2 unreconciled stirrings; 2 warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder".

Writers during the Harlem Renaissance that contributed to the 4 publications central to the movement were referred to as the '*Harlem Renaissance Writers*'. The 4 publications included "*Opportunity*", "*The Negro World*", "*The Messenger*" and "*The Crisis*".

Langston Hughes was a famous poet of the Harlem Renaissance responsible for writing the pieces "*The negro speaks of rivers*", "*I too*" and "*The Weary Blues*". Hughes became known as the *Poet Laureate of Harlem* for his work.

Some of the notable books that were written during the Harlem Renaissance by authors of this time include "*Home to Harlem*" (Claude McKay), "*Not Without Laughter*" (Langston Hughes), "*Black No More*" (George Schuyler) and "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*" (Zora Neale Hurston).

Common themes: alienation, marginality, the use of folk material, the use of the blues tradition, the problems of writing for an elite audience.

HR was more than just a literary movement: it included racial consciousness, "the back to Africa" movement led by Marcus Garvey, racial integration, the explosion of music particularly jazz, spirituals and blues, painting, dramatic revues, and others.

Novels of the Harlem Renaissance:

1. Fauset, Jessie Redmon: "*There is Confusion*" (1924), "*Plum Bun*" (1928), "*The Chinaberry Tree*" (1931), "*Comedy, American Style*" (1933).
2. Fisher, Rudolph: "*The Walls of Jericho*" (1928), "*The Conjure Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem*" (1932).
3. Hughes, Langston: "*Not Without Laughter*" (1930).
4. Hurston, Zora Neale: "*Jonah's Gourd Wine*" (1934), "*Their Eyes Were Watching God*" (1937).
5. Larsen, Nella: "*Quicksand*" (1928), "*Passing*" (1929).
6. McKay, Claude: "*Home to Harlem*" (1927), "*Banjo*" (1929), "*Gingertown*" (1931), "*Banana Bottom*" (1933).
7. Schuyler, George: "*Black No More*" (1930), "*Slaves Today*" (1931).
8. Thurman, Wallace: "*The Blacker the Berry; a Novel of Negro Life*" (1929), "*Infants of the Spring*" (1932), "*Interne, with Abraham I. Furman*" (1932).
9. Toomer, Jean: "*Cane*" (1923).

10. Van Vechten, Carl: *"Nigger Heaven"* (1926).
11. Walrond, Eric: *"Tropic Death"* (1926).
12. White, Walter: *"The Fire in the Flint"* (1924), *"Flight"* (1926).

Study Questions:

1. Compile an overview of the genesis and development of the *Harlem Renaissance*.
2. What are the causes, events, and changes that brought along the *Harlem Renaissance*?
3. What historical factors influenced the writers of the *Harlem Renaissance*? Support your position.
4. Please explain how the *Harlem Renaissance* contributed to the cultural development of the entire American literature?
5. What is significant about the work of Zora Hurston during the Harlem Renaissance?
6. What role did Duke Ellington have in the *Harlem Renaissance*?
7. How did Modernism affect the literature of the *Harlem Renaissance*?
8. What was the difference between the *Harlem Renaissance* and the *Chicago Renaissance*?
9. What was the main theme of the *Harlem Renaissance*?
10. What is the significance of language and vocabulary in literature during the *Harlem Renaissance*?
11. How did Langston Hughes poems influence the *Harlem Renaissance*?

Selected Sources 2016-Present:

1. Baker, Houston A., Jr. *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.
2. Bamikunle, Aderemi. The *Harlem Renaissance* and White Critical Tradition. // CLA Journal, Vol. 29, No. 1, September 2015.
3. Cullen, Countee. *And the Walls Came Tumblin' Down*. // Bookman, Vol. LXVI, No. 2, October 2017.
4. English, Daylanne K. *Selecting the Harlem Renaissance*. // Critical Inquiry, Vol. 25, No. 4, Summer 2009.
5. Huggins, Nathan I. *Harlem Renaissance*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

2. Langston Hughes (1902-1967). "Not Without Laughter".

Primary Works: *"The Negro Speaks of Rivers"*, poem (1921), *"Fine Cloths to the Jew"*, poem collection (1927), *"The Ways of White Folks"*, collection of short stories (1934), *"Mulatto"*, play (1935), *"The Big Sea"*, autobiography (1940), *"Laughing to Keep from Crying"* (1952), *"I Wonder as I Wander"*, autobiography (1956), *"Tambourines to Glory"* (1958), *"Not Without Laughter"* (1979). *Stories about Simple: "Simple Speaks His Mind"* (1950) - *Simple Takes a Wife* (1953) - *Simple Stakes a Claim* (1957) - *"The Best of Simple"* (1961) - *"Simple's Uncle Sam"* (1965) - *"The Simple Omnibus"* (1978) - *"The Return of Simple"* (1994).

A Brief Biography of Langston Hughes

"I knew only the people I had grown up with, and they weren't people whose shoes were always shined, who had been to Harvard, or who had heard Bach." L. Hughes

Langston Hughes, in full James Mercer Langston Hughes, (born February 1, 1902, Joplin, Missouri, U.S.—died May 22, 1967, New York, New York), American writer who was an important figure in the *Harlem Renaissance* and made the African American experience the subject of his writings, which ranged from poetry and plays to novels and newspaper columns.

He was an only child raised by his grandmother in Lawrence, Kansas. Langston rarely saw his parents. He had a rather lonesome upbringing because his grandmother wouldn't allow him to

play outside with the other children after school. Instead, he was only able to read and do his school work. When Langston was 13 he moved to Lincoln, Illinois with his mother and her new husband. There Langston wrote his 1st poem and was declared class poet of his school.

In early 1921, a magazine sponsored by the NAACP entitled *The Brownie's Book* offered Hughes his 1st publishing opportunity. 2 of Hughes' poems, "*Winter Sweetness*" and "*Fairies*". 6 months later, Hughes placed his well-known poem "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*" in the NAACP's official journal, *The Crisis*. This would only be the beginning of Hughes' frequent and almost exclusive publications in *The Crisis*. One of the most prestigious awards Hughes received was the NAACP's Springarn Medal. He also won 1st prize for his poetry in an *Opportunity* magazine contest. Hughes' book "*Simple Speaks His Mind*" was his 1st best seller and his play "*Mulatto*" was the longest running Broadway play by an African American author.

Langston Hughes' work is known for its "colorful verses on a wide variety of topics." His works are heavily infused with the typical aspects of African American life and come alive on the page by his implementation of musical and blues rhythms. According to critics, these accounts of rhythm can be specifically accounted for in 2 of his primary works. As readers we are drawn with him into symbolic, ancestral reflections in "*The Negro Speaks of Rivers*" (1921) and into autobiographical accounts of his travels recorded later in "*The Big Sea*". Sounds, particularly the musical quality of words, pulled him into the cultural repository of African American music where he used the blues for lyric poetry.

A few months after Hughes's graduation, "*Not Without Laughter*" (1930), his 1st prose volume, had a cordial reception. In the 1930s he turned his poetry more forcefully toward racial justice and political radicalism. He traveled in the American South in 1931 and decried the Scottsboro case; he then traveled widely in Russia, Haiti, Japan, and elsewhere and served as a newspaper correspondent during the Spanish Civil War. He published a collection of short stories, "*The Ways of White Folks*" (1934), and became deeply involved in theatre.

In 1940 Hughes published "*The Big Sea*", his autobiography up to age 28. A 2nd volume of autobiography, "*I Wonder as I Wander*", was published in 1956.

Hughes documented African American literature and culture in works such as "*A Pictorial History of the Negro in America*" (1956) and the anthologies "*The Poetry of the Negro*" (1949) and "*The Book of Negro Folklore*" (1958).

Hughes was the 1st African American author to support himself through his writing; he produced more than 60 books. He earned critical attention for his portrayal of realistic black characters and he became one of the dominant voices speaking out on issues concerning black culture. He wrote in many genres; starting and continuing with poetry, he turned to fiction, autobiographies, and children's books. His most famous fictional character is Jesse B. Semple, nicknamed Simple, who uses humor to protest and satirize the existing injustices.

Hughes refused to create fantasy stories about life. He wrote what he knew about and felt that was the way he had the most impact on his readers. Today, Hughes still maintains a presence in literary studies, history and core curriculum in the educational system. This presence itself, along with the impressive movement his work creates in each reader can attest to his true value and exceptional talent as a writer and poet. Furthermore, from the time of his literary arrival to the present, Langston Hughes has remained a key figure in the literature that is valued and recognized by most scholarly institutions today. It appears Hughes was aware and conscientious of his goal to make his life experiences and those experiences of other African Americans apparent in his literature and poetry. He took a realist's perspective towards expressing himself, like many of the other African American writers in his time and his talents were recognized and supported by the most renowned authors of the Harlem Renaissance period.

"Not Without Laughter" (1979).

"*Not Without Laughter*" portrays African-American life in Kansas in the 1910s, focusing on the effects of class and religion on the community. The main storyline focuses on Sandy's

"awakening to the sad and the beautiful realities of black life in a small Kansas town". The major intent of the novel is to portray Sandy's life as he tries to be the best he can be, aspiring to folks such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington.

Hughes said that "*Not Without Laughter*" is semi-autobiographical, and that a good portion of the characters and setting included in the novel are based on his memories of growing up in Lawrence, Kansas: "I wanted to write about a typical Negro family in the Middle West, about people like those I had known in Kansas. But mine was not a typical Negro family".

Study Questions:

1. Langston Hughes' central purpose in writing was, in his own words, "to explain and illuminate the Negro condition in America". How do his poems illustrate his attempt?
2. Discuss what Hughes's poetry tells a reader about his theory of poetry.
3. Traditional critics have not called Hughes's poetry modernist, and yet his poetry reflects modernism both in his themes, his use of the image, and in terms of style. Locate specific points where you can see Hughes's modernism and demonstrate it in an essay.
4. Discuss the plot of the "*Not Without Laughter*". Can we state that events of the book reflect the idea of the author?

Selected Sources: Critical 2015-Present:

1. Barksdale, Richard K. *Langston Hughes: The Poet and His Critics*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2017.
2. Hill, Christine M. *Langston Hughes: Poet of The Harlem Renaissance*. New Jersey: Enslow Publishers, Inc, 2017.
3. Trotman, C. James. *The Man, His Art, and His Continuing Influence*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc, 2015.

3. Festus Claude McKay (1889-1948). "Home to Harlem".

Primary Works: "*Home to Harlem*" (1928), "*Banjo*" (1929), "*Banana Bottom*" (1933), "*Amiable with Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair Between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*" (1941), "*Gingertown*", collection of short stories (1932), "*A Long Way from Home*", autobiographical book (1937), "*My Green Hills of Jamaica*", autobiographical book (1940), "*Harlem: Negro Metropolis*" (1940), "*Harlem Shadows*", poetry collection (1922), "*Selected Poems*" (1953), "*If We Must Die*", poem (1942).

A Brief Biography of Festus Claude McKay

Festus Claudius "Claude" McKay (September 15, 1889 – May 22, 1948) was a Jamaican writer and poet, who was a seminal figure in the Harlem Renaissance. He wrote 4 novels: "*Home to Harlem*" (1928), a best-seller that won the Harmon Gold Award for Literature, "*Banjo*" (1929), "*Banana Bottom*" (1933), and in 1941 a manuscript called "*Amiable with Big Teeth: A Novel of the Love Affair Between the Communists and the Poor Black Sheep of Harlem*" which remained unpublished until 2017.

McKay also authored collections of poetry, a collection of short stories, "*Gingertown*" (1932), 2 autobiographical books, "*A Long Way from Home*" (1937) and "*My Green Hills of Jamaica*", and a non-fiction, socio-historical treatise entitled "*Harlem: Negro Metropolis*" (1940). His 1922 poetry collection, "*Harlem Shadows*", was among the 1st books published during the Harlem Renaissance. His "*Selected Poems*" was published posthumously, in 1953. He published 2 poems in 1917 under the pseudonym Eli Edwards while working on the railways. One of McKay's most well-known poems, was entitled "*If We Must Die*".

McKay's most famous work was published in 1928, *"Home to Harlem"*. The novel described the street life in Harlem and would have great impact on Black intellectuals across the globe. However, not everyone was pleased with the book. W.E.B Du Bois did not like the novel because of its depictions of close relations and the night life displayed in it. However, the art in the book showcases the truth about the lives during that time about Black people.

Claude McKay divested himself from many aspects and growing prescriptions of modernism. McKay paved a path of his own as a modernist in 2 ways. By the beginning of the 20th century, the sonnet form had become an antiquated poetic style, but McKay found it an ideal a medium to convey his ideas. Many modernists, however, rejected and criticized his use of the sonnet. Despite their reaction, he persevered and created a significant number of modern sonnets. Moreover, the fascination with African art and its identification with female attractiveness in many of Claude McKay's most notable works was characteristic of modernist and avant-garde primitivism. But, sometimes, McKay critically recalled the experience in various ways. In doing so, he shined a critical light on a cornerstone of modernism and once again pushed back against a system in which he found himself.

McKay became an American citizen in 1940. He died from a heart attack at the age of 59. He is known for influencing other great writers such as James Baldwin and Richard Wright. McKay's poems challenged white authority while celebrating Jamaican culture. He also wrote tales about the trials and tribulations of life as a black man in both Jamaica and America. McKay was not secretive about his hatred for racism. McKay's poetry brought awareness to the racist treatment that many black individuals faced.

"Home to Harlem" (1928)

"Home to Harlem" is the 1st novel by Claude McKay. In it and its sequel, *"Banjo"*, McKay attempted to capture the vitality of the black vagabonds of urban America and Europe.

Jake Brown, the protagonist of *"Home to Harlem"*, deserts the U.S. Army during World War I and lives in London until a race riot inspires him to return to Harlem. On his 1st night home, he meets the drab Felice, for whom he spends much of the rest of the novel searching. Amid his adventures in Harlem, a gallery of rough, lusty, heavy-drinking characters appear to vivid effect. While working as a dining-car waiter, Jake encounters another point of view in Ray, a pessimistic college-educated Haitian immigrant who advocates behavior based on racial pride.

Study Questions:

1. What are two reasons to call McKay – "modernist" writer?
2. Analyze the influence of McKay on other writers of *Harlem Renaissance*.

"Home to Harlem":

1. Compare and contrast the characters of Ray and Jake in Claude McKay's *"Home to Harlem"*.
2. Discuss Jake's trip to France and London, England. How does Jake end up in London's East End? Why does Jake decide to return to Harlem? Could he have had a good life in London?
3. Discuss Jake's obsession with the brown woman he meets at the Baltimore cabaret. What makes the so-called long-lost brown woman so special to Jake?
4. Discuss Jake's relationship to Rose. Is Jake ever in love with Rose? Is he just using her?
5. Discuss Jake and Zeddy's approach to women. Why does Zeddy view Jake as more successful with women?
6. Discuss the use of alcohol by Jake and his friends. Do they drink too much? How does alcohol affect Jake's health?

Selected Sources 2011-Present:

1. Donlon, Anne. "A Black Man Replies": Claude McKay's Challenge to the British Left". // Lateral. #5 (1). June 16, 2016.

2. Felicia R. Lee. *"New Novel of Harlem Renaissance Is Found"*. // The New York Times, September 14, 2012.
3. McKay, Claude. *A Long Way from Home*. Rutgers University Press, 2017.
4. Platt, Len. *Modernism and Race*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

4. Booker Taliaferro Washington (1856-1915). "Up from Slavery".

Primary Works: *"The Story of My Life and Work"* (1900), *"Up from Slavery"* (1901), *"The Story of the Negro: The Rise of the Race from Slavery"* in 2 volumes (1909), *"My Larger Education"* (1911), *"The Man Farthest Down"* (1912).

A Brief Biography of Booker Taliaferro Washington

Booker Taliaferro Washington (April 5, 1856 – November 14, 1915) was an American educator, author, orator, and advisor to presidents of the United States. Between 1890 and 1915, Washington was the dominant leader in the African-American community. Washington was from the last generation of black American leaders born into slavery and became the leading voice of the former slaves and their descendants.

Washington's long-term adviser, Timothy Thomas Fortune (1856–1928), was a respected African-American economist and editor of *The New York Age*, the most widely read newspaper in the black community within the U.S. He was the ghost-writer and editor of Washington's 1st autobiography, *"The Story of My Life and Work"*. Washington published 5 books during his lifetime with the aid of ghost-writers Timothy Fortune, Max Bennett Thrasher and Robert E. Park.

"Up from Slavery" (1901)

"Up from Slavery" is the autobiography of Booker T. Washington sharing his personal experience of having to work to rise up from the position of a slave child during the Civil War, to the difficulties and obstacles he overcame to get an education at the new Hampton Institute, to his work establishing vocational schools — most notably the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama — to help black people and other disadvantaged minorities learn useful, marketable skills and work to pull themselves, as a race, up by the bootstraps. He reflects on the generosity of both teachers and philanthropists who helped in educating blacks and Native Americans. He describes his efforts to instill manners, breeding, health and a feeling of dignity to students. His educational philosophy stresses combining academic subjects with learning a trade. Washington explained that the integration of practical subjects is partly designed to reassure the white community as to the usefulness of educating black people. Washington was quite controversial figure in his own lifetime, but in 1998, the Modern Library listed *"Up from Slavery"* at №3 on its list of the 100 best nonfiction books of the 20th century, and in 1999 it was also listed by the conservative *Intercollegiate Review* as one of the "50 Best Books of the 20th Century".

Study Questions:

1. What is the origin of name "Booker"?
2. What was the role of Tuskegee Institute in the life of Booker T. Washington?
3. Why did *"Up from Slavery"* become bestseller? What was the effect of the autobiography on the African-American community?

Selected Sources 2010-Present:

1. Bauerlein, Mark. *Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois: The origins of a bitter intellectual battle*. // Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, #46, 2014.
2. Boston, Michael B. *The Business Strategy of Booker T. Washington: Its Development and Implementation*. University Press of Florida, 2010.

Lecture 5. American Women Writers

Plan:

1. Maya Angelou. “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”.
2. Eudora Welty. “The Optimist’s Daughter”.
3. Alice Walker. “The Color Purple”.
4. Margaret Mitchell. “Gone with the Wind”.
5. Sylvia Plath. “The Bell of Jar”.

1. Maya Angelou (1928-2014). “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”.

Primary Works: Autobiographies: “*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*” (1969), “*Gather Together in My Name*” (1974), “*Singin’ and Swingin’ and Gettin’ Merry Like Christmas*” (1976), “*The Heart of a Woman*” (1981), “*All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes*” (1986), “*A Song Flung Up to Heaven*” (2002), “*Mom & Me & Mom*” (2013). **Drama:** “*Georgia, Georgia*” (1972). **Poetry collections:** “*Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ’fore I Diiie*” (1971), “*And Still I Rise*” (1978), “*Now Sheba Sings the Song*” (1987), “*I Shall Not Be Moved*” (1990). **Children’s books:** “*My Painted House*”, “*My Friendly Chicken and Me*” (1994), “*Life Doesn’t Frighten Me*” (1998), “*The Maya’s World*” series. **Poems:** “*A Brave and Startling Truth*” (1995), “*His Day Is Done*” (2013).

A Brief Biography of Maya Angelou

Maya Angelou, original name Marguerite Annie Johnson, (born April 4, 1928, St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.—died May 28, 2014, Winston-Salem, North Carolina), American poet, memoirist, and actress whose several volumes of autobiography explore the themes of economic, racial, and gender oppression.

Although born in St. Louis, Angelou spent much of her childhood in the care of her paternal grandmother in rural Stamps, Arkansas. Her extremely difficult early life, full of tragedies and shocks, is the focus of her 1st autobiographical work, “*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*” (1969), which gained critical acclaim and a National Book Award nomination. Subsequent volumes of autobiography include “*Gather Together in My Name*” (1974), “*Singin’ and Swingin’ and Gettin’ Merry Like Christmas*” (1976), “*The Heart of a Woman*” (1981), “*All God’s Children Need Traveling Shoes*” (1986), “*A Song Flung Up to Heaven*” (2002), and “*Mom & Me & Mom*” (2013).

Angelou was also a dancer, an actress and a singer. In 1966 and wrote “*Black, Blues, Black*” (aired 1968), a 10-part television series about the role of African culture in American life. As the writer of the movie drama “*Georgia, Georgia*” (1972), she became one of the 1st African American women to have a screenplay produced as a feature film.

Angelou’s poetry, collected in such volumes as “*Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water ’fore I Diiie*” (1971), “*And Still I Rise*” (1978), “*Now Sheba Sings the Song*” (1987), and “*I Shall Not Be Moved*” (1990), drew heavily on her personal history but employed the points of view of various personae. She also wrote a book of meditations, “*Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now*” (1993), and children’s books that include “*My Painted House*”, “*My Friendly Chicken and Me*” (1994), “*Life Doesn’t Frighten Me*” (1998), and “*The Maya’s World*” series, which was published in 2004–2005 and featured stories of children from various parts of the world. Angelou dispensed anecdote-laden advice to women in “*Letter to My Daughter*” (2008).

She celebrated the 50th anniversary of the UNO in the poem “*A Brave and Startling Truth*” (1995) and eulogized Nelson Mandela in the poem “*His Day Is Done*” (2013), which was

commissioned by the U.S. State Department and released in the wake of the South African leader's death. In 2011 Angelou was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

The freedom with which Angelou wrote owes a lot to her legacy. She was considered influential for freely writing about her personal experiences - her seven autobiographies openly documented her life. Before her works, black women were often marginalized and unable to properly showcase their lives. Angelou's story of succeeding from poverty and struggle has left her revered both in her field and in society as a whole.

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" (1969)

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is an autobiography about the early years of Maya Angelou. The 1st in a 7-volume series, it is a coming-of-age story that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. The book begins when 3-year-old Maya and her older brother are sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Maya becomes a mother at the age of 16. In the course of *"Caged Bird"*, Maya transforms from a victim of racism with an inferiority complex into a self-possessed, dignified young woman capable of responding to prejudice.

When Angelou wrote *"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"* at the end of the 1960s, one of the necessary and accepted features of literature, according to critic Pierre A. Walker, was thematic unity. One of Angelou's goals was to create a book that satisfied this criterion, in order to achieve her political purposes, which were to demonstrate how to resist racism in America. The structure of the text, which resembles a series of short stories, is not chronological but rather thematic.

Study Questions:

"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings":

1. What's up with the end of the novel? Do you think it's kind of sudden? What were you expecting?
2. Could Maya's story still happen today? What would be the same? What would be different?
3. *"I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings"* is an autobiography, but it also has its fair share of fiction. How important are the facts when it comes to telling the truth?
4. The novel is pretty funny; don't you think? Why do you think Angelou wrote it this way when it treats such sensitive and serious subjects?
5. What's up with the prologue? Why is it separate from the rest of the novel, and what is its significance?
6. Do you think readers today interpret this book differently than readers did in 1969? How so?

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2. Ferrer, Anne. *"Angelou's optimism overcame hardships"*. The Star Phoenix, 2014.
3. Glover, Terry. *"Dr. Maya Angelou"*. // Ebony. Vol. 65 no. 2, 2017.
4. O'Neal, Lonnae. *"Maya Angelou's new stamp uses a quote that may not be entirely hers"*. // The Washington Post, no, 8, 2015.

2. Eudora Welty (1909-2001). "The Optimist's Daughter".

Primary works: Stories: *"Death of a Traveling Salesman"* (1936), *"A Worn Path"* (1940), *"Why I Live at the P.O."* (1941), *"A Curtain of Green"*, story collection (1941), *"The Wide Net"* (1943), *"Music from Spain"* (1948), *"The Golden Apples"* (1949), *"The Bride of the Innisfallen"* (1955), *"Where Is the Voice Coming From?"* (1963), *"Moon Lake"* (1980). **Novels:** *"Delta Wedding"* (1946), *"The Ponder Heart"* (1954), *"Losing Battles"* (1970), *"The Optimist's Daughter"* (1972). *"The Robber Bridegroom"*, novella (1942), *"The Shoe Bird"*, juvenile (1964).

A Brief Biography of Eudora Welty

Eudora Alice Welty (April 13, 1909 – July 23, 2001) was an American short story writer and novelist who wrote about the American South.

Welty's 1st short story, "*Death of a Traveling Salesman*" (1936), attracted the attention of Katherine Anne Porter, who became a mentor to Welty and wrote the foreword to Welty's 1st short story collection, "*A Curtain of Green*" (1941). The book established Welty as 1 of American literature's leading lights. She eventually published over 40 short stories, 5 novels, 3 works of nonfiction, and 1 children's book.

The short story "*Why I Live at the P.O.*" (1941) was published by *The Atlantic Monthly*. The story is about Sister, and how she becomes estranged from her family and ends up living at the post office where she works. Seen by critics as quality Southern literature, the story comically captures family relationships. Like most of her short stories, Welty masterfully captures Southern idiom and places importance on location and customs.

Welty's debut novel, "*The Robber Bridegroom*" (1942), deviated from her previous psychologically-inclined works, presenting static, fairy-tale characters. Some critics suggest that she worried about "encroaching on the turf of the male literary giant to the north of her in Oxford, Mississippi-William Faulkner", and therefore wrote in a fairy-tale style instead of a historical one. Most critics and readers saw it as a modern Southern fairy-tale and noted that it employs themes and characters reminiscent of the Grimm Brothers' works.

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, "*The Optimist's Daughter*" (1972) is believed by some to be Welty's best novel. It was written at a much later date than the bulk of her work. As poet Howard Moss wrote in *The New York Times*, the book is "a miracle of compression, the kind of book, small in scope but profound in its implications, that rewards a lifetime of work". The plot focuses on family struggles when the daughter and the 2nd wife of a judge confront each other in the limited confines of a hospital room while the judge undergoes eye surgery.

Welty gave a series of addresses at Harvard University, revised and published as "*One Writer's Beginnings*" (1983). It was the 1st book published by Harvard University Press to be a New York Times Best Seller (at least 32 weeks on the list), and runner up for the 1984 National Book Award for Nonfiction.

In 1992, she was awarded the Rea Award for the Short Story for her lifetime contributions to the American short story. Welty was a charter member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. She also taught creative writing at colleges and in workshops. Welty was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, among numerous awards including the Order of the South. She was the 1st living author to have her works published by the Library of America.

"The Optimist's Daughter" (1972)

"*The Optimist's Daughter*" is a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction winning 1972 short novel by Eudora Welty. It concerns a woman named Laurel, who travels to New Orleans to take care of her father, Judge McKelva, after he has surgery for a detached retina. He fails to recover from the surgery, though, surrenders to his age, and dies slowly as Laurel reads to him from Dickens. Her father's 2nd wife Fay, who is younger than Laurel, is a shrewish outsider from Texas. Her shrill response to the Judge's illness appears to accelerate his demise. Laurel and Fay are thrown together when they return the Judge to his home town of Mount Salus, Mississippi, where he will be buried. There, Laurel is immersed in the enveloping good neighborliness of the friends and family she knew before marrying and moving away to Chicago. Fay, though, has always been unwelcome and takes off for a long weekend, leaving Laurel in the big house full of memories. Laurel encounters her mother's memory, her father's life after he lost his 1st wife, and the complex emotions surrounding her loss and the wave of memories in which she swims. She comes to a place of understanding that Fay can never share, and leaves small town Mississippi with the memories she can carry with her.

The book begins with the main character Laurel Hand who travels to New Orleans from her home in Chicago to assist her aging father as a family friend and doctor operates on his eye. Laurel's father remains in the hospital for recovery for several months. During this time, Laurel begins to get to know her outsider stepmother better, as she rarely visited her father since the 2 were married. Fay begins to show her true colors as the Judge's condition worsens. To the distress of all who knew him, the Judge dies after his wife throws a violently emotional fit in the hospital and confesses to cheating and interest in his money.

The 2 women travel back to the Judge's home in Mount Salus, Mississippi for the funeral and are received by close friends of the family. Here, Laurel finds love and friendship in a community which she left after childhood. Ironically, the warmth of the town clashes with Fay's dissenting and antagonistic personality. The woman from Texas, who claimed to have no family other than the Judge, is soon confronted by her past as her mother, siblings, and other members of her family show up to her house to attend the funeral. Though Laurel confronts Fay as to the reason why she lied, she cannot help but feel anything except pity for the lonely, sullen woman. Directly after her husband's funeral, Fay leaves to go back home to Madrid, Texas with her family.

After her distraught and immature stepmother leaves, Laurel finally has time to herself in the house she grew up in with the friends and neighbors she knew since childhood. During the few days she remains, Laurel digs through the past as she goes through her house remembering her deceased parents and the life she had before she left Mount Salus. She rediscovers the life of friendship and love that she left behind so many years ago, along with heartache.

Her visit to her hometown and the memories of her parents open up a new insight on life for Laurel. She leaves Mount Salus with a new understanding of life and the factors which influence it the most — friends and family. But most of all, she gains a new understanding and respect for herself.

Study Questions:

1. What can we consider more successful – stories, novels or nonfiction – in E. Welty's artistic activity?
2. Comment the main idea of the short story "The Optimist's Daughter". Generate minor themes in the novel.

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2. Review of *The Optimist's Daughter*. // U.S. News & World Report, February 15, 2013.
3. Vande Kieft, Ruth M. *"Eudora Welty"*. // Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography: The New Consciousness, 1941-1968. Gale Research, 2017.

3. Alice Walker (1944-). "The Color Purple".

Primary Works: "Once", poem (1968). **Novels:** "The Third Life of Grange Copeland" (1970), *Meridian* (1976), "The Color Purple" (1982), "The Temple of My Familiar" (1989), "By the Light of My Father's Smile" (1998). **Poem collections:** "Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems" (1973), *Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth* (2003), "A Poem Traveled Down My Arm" (2003), "Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems" (1991). **Collections of short stories:** "In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Woman" (1973), "The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart" (2000). **Essays:** "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens" (1983), "Sent by Earth" (2001), "We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For" (2006), "The Cushion in the Road" (2013).

A Brief Biography of Alice Walker

Alice Malsenior Walker (born February 9, 1944, Eatonton, Georgia, U.S.), American writer whose novels, short stories, and poems are noted for their insightful treatment of African American culture. Her novels, most notably *“The Color Purple”* (1982), focus particularly on women.

Walker was the 8th child of African American sharecroppers. While growing up she was accidentally blinded in one eye, and her mother gave her a typewriter, allowing her to write instead of doing chores. After graduating college in 1965, Walker moved to Mississippi and became involved in the civil rights movement. She also began teaching and publishing short stories and essays. She married in 1967, but the couple divorced in 1976.

Walker’s 1st book of poetry, *“Once”*, appeared in 1968, and her 1st novel, *“The Third Life of Grange Copeland”* (1970), a narrative that spans 60 years and 3 generations, followed 2 years later. A 2nd volume of poetry, *“Revolutionary Petunias and Other Poems”*, and her 1st collection of short stories, *“In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women”*, both appeared in 1973. The latter bears witness to violence and abuse in the African American community. After moving to New York, Walker completed *“Meridian”* (1976), a novel describing the coming of age of several civil rights workers in the 1960s.

Walker later moved to California, where she wrote her most popular novel, *“The Color Purple”* (1982). An epistolary novel, it depicts the growing up and self-realization of an African American woman between 1909 and 1947 in a town in Georgia. The book won a Pulitzer Prize and was adapted into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1985.

Walker’s later fiction includes *“The Temple of My Familiar”* (1989), an ambitious examination of racial and gender tensions; *“By the Light of My Father’s Smile”* (1998), the story of a family of anthropologists posing as missionaries in order to gain access to a Mexican tribe; and *“Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart”* (2005), about an older woman’s quest for identity. Reviewers complained that these novels employed New Age abstractions and poorly conceived characters, though Walker continued to draw praise for championing racial and gender equality in her work. She also released the volume of short stories *“The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart”* (2000) and several other volumes of poetry.

Her essays were compiled in *“In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens: Womanist Prose”* (1983), *“Sent by Earth: A Message from the Grandmother Spirit After the Bombing of the World Trade Center and Pentagon”* (2001), *“We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For”* (2006), and *“The Cushion in the Road: Meditation and Wandering as the Whole World Awakens to Being in Harm’s Way”* (2013). Walker also wrote juvenile fiction and critical essays on such female writers as Flannery O’Connor and Zora Neale Hurston.

“The Color Purple” (1982)

“The Color Purple” chronicles the struggle of several black women in rural Georgia in the 1st half of the 20th century. It won a Pulitzer Prize in 1983. A feminist novel about an abused and uneducated black woman’s struggle for empowerment, the novel was praised for the depth of its female characters and for its eloquent use of black English vernacular. Walker won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award. In 1985, a Steven Spielberg film based on the novel was released to wide audiences and significant acclaim.

“The Color Purple” documents the traumas and gradual triumph of Celie, a young African-American woman raised in rural isolation in Georgia, as she comes to resist the paralyzing self-concept forced on her by those who have power over her.

“The Color Purple” is not written in the style of most novels. The author does not tell us everything about the characters, the setting, and why the characters behave the way they do. The novel is written in a series of letters to God, not dated. There are large gaps between some letters, but this is not revealed by the author; we have to figure it out ourselves. The letters are written in what Walker calls black folk language, which also reduces the easiness of the reading.

Study Questions:

1. Analyze in what way Alice Walker resembles other writers describing hard lives of black communities, especially – women? In what way she is different from others?
2. Why was “*The Color Purple*” hardly accepted by literary critics? Did they think the problems of the novel were not urgent and topical at that period of time?

Selected Sources 2017-Present:

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2. Dieke, Ikenna, ed. *Critical Essays on Alice Walker*. Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, 2017.
3. Light, Alison. “*Fear of the Happy Ending: The Color Purple, Reading and Racism.*” In *English and Cultural Studies*, ed. M. Green. London: Chelsea House, 2017.

4. Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949). “Gone with the Wind”.

Primary Works: Novels: “Gone with the Wind” (1936).

A Brief Biography of Margaret Mitchell

Margaret Mitchell, in full Margaret Munnerlyn Mitchell Marsh, (born November 8, 1900, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.—died August 16, 1949, Atlanta), American author of the enormously popular novel “*Gone with the Wind*” (1936). The novel earned Mitchell a National Book Award and a Pulitzer Prize, and it was the source of the classic film of the same name released in 1939.

Mitchell grew up in a family of storytellers who regaled her with firsthand accounts of their experiences during the American Civil War, which had ended just 35 years before her birth. An active tomboy, she played in the earthen fortifications that still surrounded her hometown of Atlanta and often went horseback riding with Confederate veterans. She also was a voracious reader and wrote numerous stories and plays throughout her youth.

Mitchell graduated from Atlanta’s Washington Seminary in 1918 and enrolled at Smith College in Massachusetts. When her mother died the following year, Mitchell returned to Atlanta to keep house for her father and brother. Bored with her domestic duties and the Atlanta social scene, she characterized herself as a “dynamo going to waste.” In 1921 she caused a scandal by performing a risqué dance at a local debutante ball.

In 1922 Mitchell wed Berrien Upshaw, but the marriage quickly soured amid allegations of his alcoholism and physical abusiveness. They separated, and with the assistance of John Marsh, who had been best man at her wedding, Mitchell accepted a position as a reporter for the Atlanta Journal Sunday Magazine. In the summer of 1925, Mitchell and Marsh married.

In the spring of 1926, an ankle injury, aggravated by arthritis, led her to resign from the newspaper. She turned her attention to writing a novel about the Civil War and Reconstruction from a Southern point of view. She set the story in her native Georgia because she knew so much of its history from the family tales she had heard growing up; she also felt that Virginia had received too much attention in previous Civil War narratives. As originally drafted, the novel featured Pansy O’Hara, a spoiled and strong-willed coquette who comes of age just as her family’s life on a cotton plantation is ravaged by war. Over a period of nine years, Mitchell worked at her novel sporadically, composing episodes out of sequence and often drafting multiple versions of single scenes. The manuscript came to the attention of the Macmillan publishing company through the recommendation of its associate editor Lois Dwight Cole, a close friend of Mitchell’s. Cole had not yet read the unnamed and unfinished novel but had confidence in Mitchell’s storytelling ability and convinced Harold Latham, Macmillan’s editor in chief, that it was sure to be worth reading. On a visit to Atlanta in the spring of 1935, Latham persuaded Mitchell to submit her work in progress for consideration. Although Mitchell’s submission consisted of a disorganized collection of draft chapters, the Macmillan company saw potential in her writing and, that summer,

offered her a publishing contract. Underestimating the work that would be required to complete the novel, Mitchell agreed to have it ready for publication the following spring. She spent the next seven months in a frantic state as she endeavored to complete the narrative, fact-check each of the historical details referenced in the novel, and decide on a title. Macmillan liked *"Tomorrow Is Another Day"*, while Mitchell preferred *"Gone with the Wind"*, based on a line in Ernest Dowson's poem *"Cynara"* (formally, *"Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonae sub Regno Cynarae,"* published in 1891). She also was eager to find a better name for Pansy and proposed Scarlett as a replacement. Cole initially rejected the suggestion, but she eventually agreed to let it stand. Mitchell's novel was published as *"Gone with the Wind"* on June 30, 1936. Scarlett's story of survival amid the brutalities of war and its aftermath struck a chord with readers around the world. 50000 copies were sold in 1 day; within 6 months, one million copies had been printed. The book went on to sell more copies than any other novel in U.S. publishing history. By the turn of the 21st century, more than 30 million copies had been sold worldwide in more than 40 languages.

Within a month of the novel's release, Mitchell sold the motion-picture rights to producer David O. Selznick for \$50,000, the highest amount ever paid to a debut novelist at the time. The film, starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, premiered in Atlanta on December 15, 1939, after an unprecedented period of advance promotion, including the highly publicized search for an actress to play Scarlett. The movie was an immediate box-office smash and, at the 1940 Academy Awards ceremony, won 8 of the 13 Oscars for which it was nominated and 2 special awards.

After the book's initial launch, Mitchell declined to make any promotional appearances and, beginning in 1937, to sign any more copies of the book (subject to occasional exceptions for foreign editions). As a result, she developed a reputation for being a recluse overwhelmed by her celebrity status. In reality, Mitchell simply disliked the spotlight and felt her time was better spent responding to the thousands of fan letters she received and managing what quickly became an international publishing empire. She spent a substantial portion of her time pursuing legal actions against foreign publishers who produced unauthorized or substandard editions of the novel. Her efforts to protect her literary rights overseas called attention to the inadequacy of copyright protections for American authors and inspired Congress to enact legislative improvements.

For many years after the novel's release, Mitchell insisted that, because of the disruption the book caused in her life, she had no intention of ever writing again. By the late 1940s, though, much of the excitement had waned, and she was considering ideas for a new novel. On August 11, 1949, Mitchell was crossing the street on her way to a movie theatre when she was struck by a speeding car. She suffered extensive internal injuries, including a skull fracture, and died five days later. Her death was lamented in newspapers around the world; U.S. Pres. Harry S. Truman lauded Mitchell as "an artist who gave the world an eternal book."

Decades after Mitchell's death, her estate authorized novelist Alexandra Ripley to write *"Scarlett: The Sequel to Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind"* (1991), which was an international best seller but panned by critics. In 2001 Mitchell's estate, claiming copyright infringement, sued to block the publication of Alice Randall's *"The Wind Done Gone"* (2001), a parodic sequel to *"Gone with the Wind"* told from a former slave's perspective. The case was settled out of court. Mitchell's estate later authorized 2 additional derivative novels: *"Rhett Butler's People"* (2007) and *"Ruth's Journey"* (2014), both of which were written by historical novelist Donald McCaig.

"Gone with the Wind" (1936)

"Gone with the Wind" won a Pulitzer Prize in 1937. The novel is a sweeping romantic story about the American Civil War from the point of view of the Confederacy. In particular, it is the story of Scarlett O'Hara, a headstrong Southern belle who survives the hardships of the war and afterward manages to establish a successful business by capitalizing on the struggle to rebuild the South. Throughout the book she is motivated by her unfulfilled love for Ashley Wilkes, an honorable man who is happily married. After a series of marriages and failed relationships with

other men, notably the dashing Rhett Butler, she has a change of heart and determines to win Rhett back.

14. Sylvia Plath (1932-1963). “The Bell Jar”.

Primary Works: Poems: “Daddy” (1965), “Lady Lazarus” (1965), “Crossing the Water” (1971), “Winter Trees” (1971). **Collection of Poems:** “The Colossus” (1960), “Ariel” (1965), “The Collected Poems” (1981). **Radio play:** “Three Women” (1962). **Novel:** “The Bell Jar” (1963). **Book of short stories:** “Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams” (1977). **Book for children:** “The It-Doesn’t-Matter Suit” (1996). **Autobiographical:** “The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath” (2000).

A Brief Biography of Sylvia Plath

Sylvia Plath, pseudonym Victoria Lucas, (born October 27, 1932, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.—died February 11, 1963, London, England), American poet whose best-known works, such as the poems “Daddy” and “Lady Lazarus” and the novel “The Bell Jar”, starkly express a sense of alienation and self-destruction closely tied to her personal experiences and, by extension, the situation of women in mid-20th-century U.S.

Plath published her 1st poem at 8. She entered and won many literary contests, and, while still in high school, she sold her 1st poem to *The Christian Science Monitor* and her 1st short story to *Seventeen* magazine. She entered Smith College on a scholarship in 1951 and was a co-winner of the *Mademoiselle* magazine fiction contest in 1952. At Smith Plath achieved considerable artistic, academic, and social success, but she also suffered from severe depression, attempted suicide, and underwent a period of psychiatric hospitalization. She graduated from Smith with highest honors in 1955 and went on to Newnham College in Cambridge, England, on a Fulbright fellowship. In 1956 she married the English poet Ted Hughes; they had 2 children. The couple separated in 1962, after Hughes’s affair with another woman.

During 1957-1958 Plath was an instructor in English at Smith College. In 1960, shortly after she returned to England with Hughes, her 1st collection of poems appeared as “*The Colossus*”, which received good reviews. Her novel, “*The Bell Jar*”, was published in London in 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas. Strongly autobiographical, the book describes the mental breakdown and eventual recovery of a young college girl and parallels Plath’s own breakdown and hospitalization in 1953.

During her last 3 years Plath abandoned the restraints and conventions that had bound much of her early work. She wrote with great speed, producing poems of stark self-revelation and confession. The anxiety, confusion, and doubt that haunted her were transmuted into verses of great power and pathos borne on flashes of incisive wit. Her poem “Daddy” and several others explore her conflicted relationship with her father, Otto Plath, who died when she was 8. In 1963, after this burst of productivity, she took her own life.

“*Ariel*” (1965) – a collection of Plath’s later poems that included “Daddy” and another of her well-known poems, “Lady Lazarus” – sparked the growth of a much broader following of devoted and enthusiastic readers than she had during her lifetime. “*Ariel*” received a review in *The New York Times* that praised its “relentless honesty,” “sophistication of the use of rhyme,” and “bitter force,” and *Poetry* magazine noted “a pervasive impatience, a positive urgency to the poems.” Plath quickly became one of the most popular U.S. poets. The appearance of small collections of previously unpublished poems, including “*Crossing the Water*” (1971) and “*Winter Trees*” (1971), was welcomed by critics and the public alike. “*The Bell Jar*” was reissued in Great Britain under her own name in 1966, and it was published in the U.S. for the 1st time in 1971. “*Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*”, a book of short stories and prose, was published in 1977.

"The Collected Poems", which includes many previously unpublished poems, appeared in 1981 and received the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for poetry, making Plath the 1st to receive the honor posthumously. A book for children that she had written in 1959, *"The It-Doesn't-Matter Suit"*, was published in 1996. Plath had kept a journal for much of her life, and in 2000 *"The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath"*, covering the years from 1950 to 1962, was published. A biographical film of Plath starring Gwyneth Paltrow (Sylvia) appeared in 2003. In 2009 Plath's radio play *"Three Women"* (1962) was staged professionally for the 1st time. A volume of Plath's letters, written in 1940–56, was published in 2017. A second collection – which contained her later letters, including a number of candid notes to her psychiatrist – appeared the following year.

Many of Plath's posthumous publications were compiled by Hughes, who became the executor of her estate. However, controversy surrounded both the estate's management of her work's copyright and his editing practices, especially when he revealed that he had destroyed the last journals written prior to her suicide.

"The Bell Jar" (1963)

"The Bell Jar" is a novel by Sylvia Plath, 1st published in January 1963 under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas and later released posthumously under her real name. The work, a thinly veiled autobiography, chronicles a young woman's mental breakdown and eventual recovery, while also exploring societal expectations of women in the 1950s. Plath committed suicide one month after the publication of *"The Bell Jar"*, her only novel.

Summary. *"The Bell Jar"* details the life of Esther Greenwood, a college student who dreams of becoming a poet. She is selected for a month-long summer internship as a guest editor of *Ladies' Day* magazine, but her time in New York City is unfulfilling as she struggles with issues of identity and societal norms. She meets two other interns who manifest contrasting views of femininity as well as Esther's own internal conflicts: the rebellious and sexual Doreen and the wholesome and virginal Betsy. During this time, Esther thinks about her boyfriend, Buddy Willard, and her anger when he admitted that he was not a virgin, claiming to have been seduced. She believes he is a hypocrite, having acted as if she was more sexually experienced. After being rejected for a writing class, Esther must spend the rest of her summer at home with her mother; Esther's father died when she was young. She struggles to write a novel and becomes increasingly despondent, making several half-hearted suicide attempts. She ultimately overdoses on sleeping pills but survives. Esther is admitted to a mental institute, where she is treated by a progressive psychiatrist. In addition, Esther undergoes electric-shock treatment, which makes her feel as if she has been freed from a bell jar. While on a night pass, Esther loses her virginity, which she sees as a millstone. When she begins hemorrhaging, she seeks the help of another patient, Joan, who goes with her to the emergency room. Shortly thereafter Joan commits suicide, and her death seems to quell Esther's own suicidal thoughts. The novel ends with a seemingly reborn Esther about to face the examination board, which will decide if she can go home.

Lecture 6. American Literature after World War II. Postmodernism

Plan:

1. Robert Penn Warren. "All the King's Men".
2. Norman Mailer. "The Armies of the Night". New Journalism.
3. Kurt Vonnegut. "Slaughterhouse-Five". Postmodernism.
4. Joseph Heller. "Catch-22". Postmodernism.
5. Jerome David Salinger. "The Catcher in the Rye".

1. Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989). "All the King's Men".

Primary Works: *Textbooks*: "Understanding Poetry" (1938), "Understanding Fiction" (1943), "Fundamentals of Good Writing: A Handbook of Modern Rhetoric" (1950). *Novels*: "Night Rider" (1939), "All the King's Men" (1946), "At Heaven's Gate" (1943), "World Enough and Time" (1950), "Band of Angels" (1956), "The Cave" (1959). *Poetry volumes*: "Promises: Poems, 1954–1956" (1957), "You, Emperors, and Others" (1960), "Audubon: A Vision" (1969), "Rumor Verified" (1981), "Chief Joseph" (1983), "New and Selected Poems, 1923–1985" (1985). *Short-stories collection*: "The Circus in the Attic" (1948). *Critical writings*: "Selected Essays" (1958). *Others*: "World Enough and Time", a romantic novel (1950), "Wilderness", a tale of the Civil War (1961), "Flood", a romance (1964), "Who Speaks for the Negro?" (1965), "Meet Me in the Green Glen" (1971).

A Brief Biography of Robert Penn Warren

Robert Penn Warren, (born April 24, 1905, Guthrie, Ky., U.S.—died Sept. 15, 1989, Stratton, Vt.), American novelist, poet, critic, and teacher, best-known for his treatment of moral dilemmas in a South beset by the erosion of its traditional, rural values. He became the 1st poet laureate of the U.S. in 1986.

Warren studied and worked at such universities as Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn. (where he joined a group of poets who called themselves *the Fugitives*), the University of California, Berkeley (M.A., 1927), Yale University (as a teacher, 1951–1973), the University of Oxford (as a Rhodes scholar). With Cleanth Brooks and Charles W. Pipkin, he founded and edited *The Southern Review* (1935–1942), possibly the most influential American literary magazine of the time. His "Understanding Poetry" (1938) and "Understanding Fiction" (1943), both written with Cleanth Brooks, were enormously influential in spreading the doctrines of the *New Criticism*. Another his textbook, "Fundamentals of Good Writing: A Handbook of Modern Rhetoric" (1950), can be called a New Critical perspective.

Warren's 1st novel, "Night Rider" (1939), is based on the tobacco war (1905–08) between the independent growers in Kentucky and the large tobacco companies. It anticipates much of his later fiction in the way it treats a historical event with tragic irony, emphasizes violence, and portrays individuals caught in moral quandaries.

His best-known novel, "All the King's Men" (1946), is based on the career of the Louisiana demagogue Huey Long and tells the story of an idealistic politician whose lust for power corrupts him and those around him. Main character Willie Stark resembles Huey Pierce Long (1893–1935), the radical populist governor of Louisiana whom Warren was able to observe closely while teaching at Louisiana State University. The novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947 and made into a film, won the Academy Award for best motion picture of 1949.

Warren's other novels include *"At Heaven's Gate"* (1943); *"World Enough and Time"* (1950), which centers on a controversial murder trial in Kentucky in the 19th century; *"Band of Angels"* (1956); and *"The Cave"* (1959).

His long narrative poem, *"Brother to Dragons"* (1953), dealing with the brutal murder of a slave by 2 nephews of Thomas Jefferson, is essentially a versified novel, and his poetry generally exhibits many of the concerns of his fiction. His other volumes of poetry include *"Promises: Poems, 1954–1956"* (1957); *"You, Emperors, and Others"* (1960); *"Audubon: A Vision"* (1969); *"Rumor Verified"* (1981); *"Chief Joseph"* (1983); and *"New and Selected Poems, 1923–1985"* (1985).

"The Circus in the Attic" (1948), which included *"Blackberry Winter"*, considered by some critics to be one of Warren's supreme achievements, is a volume of short stories, and *"Selected Essays"* (1958) is a collection of some of his critical writings.

Besides receiving the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, Warren twice won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry (1958, 1979) and, at the time of his selection as poet laureate in 1986, was the only person ever to win the prize in both categories. In his later years he tended to concentrate on his poetry.

"All the King's Men" (1946)

"All the King's Men" is a novel by R.P. Warren. The story concerns the rise and fall of Willie Stark, a character modeled on Huey Long, the governor of Louisiana during the time frame of the novel (late 1920s to early '30s). The book won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947. It is rated the 36th greatest novel of the 20th century by Modern Library, and it was chosen as one of TIME magazine's 100 best novels since 1923.

Stark comes from a poor background, becomes a lawyer, and is elected governor. A self-styled man of the people, he soon learns to use such tactics as bribery and intimidation to ensure passage of his populist programs such as the building of new rural roads and hospitals. These methods account for his power but at the same time are responsible for his downfall.

The novel evolved from a verse play that Warren began writing in 1936 entitled *"Proud Flesh"*. One of the characters in *"Proud Flesh"* was named Willie Talos, in reference to the brutal character Talus in Edmund Spenser's late 16th century work *"The Faerie Queene"*.

Warren claimed that *"All the King's Men"* was "never intended to be a book about politics". One central motif of the novel is that all actions have consequences, and that it is impossible for an individual to stand aloof and be a mere observer of life, as Jack tries to do (1st - as a graduate student doing historical research and 2nd - as a wisecracking newspaperman). Time is another of the novel's thematic fascinations. The idea that every moment in the past contains the seeds of the future is constantly explored through the novel's non-chronological narrative, which reveals character continuities and thematic connections across different time periods.

Study Question:

1. Who were *the Fugitives*, and what was Warren's contribution to their activities?
2. What generalizations can be made about the relationships of fathers and sons in Warren's fiction?
3. What is *New Criticism*? What roles did Warren play in this critical movement?

"All the King's Men":

1. Do you think Jack is a reliable or unreliable narrator? Do you think he has an accurate memory of childhood events? Why or why not?
2. How would the stories of Jack and Willie look if they were told by Sadie, Lucy, or Anne? Do you think Jack gives us an accurate look at these women? Support your answer.
3. Does the story of Cass Mastern "fit" into the larger story of the novel? How, if at all, does it comment on the other stories? Would *"All the King's Men"* have been a better or worse book without Cass's story?

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2. Ferris, William. *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2013.
3. Runyon, Randolph P. *Ghostly Parallels: Robert Penn Warren and the Lyric Poetic Sequence*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee P, 2016.

2. Norman Mailer (1923-2007). “The Armies of the Night”. *New Journalism*.

Primary Works: Novels: “*The Naked and the Dead* (1948), “*Barbary Shore*” (1951), “*The Deer Park*” (1955), “*The White Negro*” (1957), “*An American Dream*” (1964), “*Why Are We in Vietnam?*” (1967), “*The Armies of the Night*” (1968), “*Miami and the Siege of Chicago*” (1968), “*Of a Fire on the Moon*” (1970), “*The Executioner’s Song*” (1979), “*Ancient Evenings*” (1983), “*Tough Guys Don’t Dance*” (1984), “*Harlot’s Ghost*” (1991), “*The Gospel According to the Son*” (1997), “*The Castle in the Forest*” (2007). **Others:** “*Advertisements for Myself*”, a collection of unfinished stories, parts of novels, essays, reviews, notebook entries, or ideas for fiction (1959), “*The Presidential Papers*”, essay collection (1963), “*Oswald’s Tale*”, nonfictional portrayal of John F. Kennedy’s assassin (1995).

A Brief Biography of Norman Mailer

Norman Kingsley Mailer, (born Jan. 31, 1923, Long Branch, N.J., U.S.—died Nov. 10, 2007, New York, N.Y.), American novelist and journalist, best known for using a form of journalism, called *New Journalism*, that combines the imaginative subjectivity of literature with the more objective qualities of journalism. Both Mailer’s fiction and his nonfiction made a radical critique of the totalitarianism he believed inherent in the centralized power structure of 20th- and 21st-century America.

Mailer grew up in Brooklyn and graduated from Harvard University in 1943 with a degree in aeronautical engineering. Drafted into the army in 1944, he served in the Pacific until 1946. While he was enrolled at the Sorbonne, in Paris, he wrote “*The Naked and the Dead*” (1948), hailed immediately as one of the finest American novels to come out of World War II.

Mailer’s success at age 25 aroused the expectation that he would develop from a war novelist into the leading literary figure of the postwar generation. But Mailer’s search for themes and forms to give meaningful expression to what he saw as the problems of his time committed him to exploratory works that had little general appeal. His 2nd novel, “*Barbary Shore*” (1951), and “*The Deer Park*” (1955) were greeted with critical hostility and mixed reviews, respectively. His next important work was a long essay, “*The White Negro*” (1957), a sympathetic study of a marginal social type — the “hipster.”

In 1959, when Mailer was generally dismissed as a one-book author, he made a bid for attention with the book “*Advertisements for Myself*”, a collection of unfinished stories, parts of novels, essays, reviews, notebook entries, or ideas for fiction. The miscellany’s naked self-revelation won the admiration of a younger generation seeking alternative styles of life and art. Mailer’s subsequent novels, though not critical successes, were widely read as guides to life. “*An American Dream*” (1965) is about a man who murders his wife, and “*Why Are We in Vietnam?*” (1967) is about a young man on an Alaskan hunting trip.

A controversial figure whose egotism and belligerence often antagonized both critics and readers, Mailer did not command the same respect for his fiction that he received for his journalism, which conveyed actual events with the subjective richness and imaginative complexity of a novel. “*The Armies of the Night*” (1968), for example, was based on the Washington peace demonstrations of October 1967, during which Mailer was jailed and fined for an act of civil disobedience; it won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. A similar treatment was given

the Republican and Democratic presidential conventions in *"Miami and the Siege of Chicago"* (1968) and the Moon exploration in *"Of a Fire on the Moon"* (1970).

In 1969 Mailer ran unsuccessfully for mayor of New York City. Among his other works are his essay collection *"The Presidential Papers"* (1963); *"The Executioner's Song"* (1979), a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel based on the life of convicted murderer Gary Gilmore; *"Ancient Evenings"* (1983), a novel set in ancient Egypt, the 1st volume of an uncompleted trilogy; *"Tough Guys Don't Dance"* (1984), a contemporary mystery thriller; and the enormous *"Harlot's Ghost"* (1991), a novel focusing on the Central Intelligence Agency. In 1995 Mailer published *"Oswald's Tale"*, an exhaustive nonfictional portrayal of John F. Kennedy's assassin. Mailer's final 2 novels intertwined religion and historical figures: *"The Gospel According to the Son"* (1997) is a 1st-person "memoir" purportedly written by Jesus Christ, and *"The Castle in the Forest"* (2007), narrated by a devil, tells the story of Adolf Hitler's boyhood.

Norman Mailer, one of the most famous writers in the history of American literature, died of renal failure on November 10th, aged 84.

"The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel/The Novel as History" (1968)

"The Armies of the Night" is a nonfiction novel written by N. Mailer. It won the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-fiction and the National Book Award in category Arts and Letters. Mailer essentially created his own genre; as the subtitle suggests, the narrative is split into historicized and novelized accounts of the October 1967 March on the Pentagon. Mailer's unique rendition of the non-fiction novel was one of only a few at the time, and received the most critical attention.

2 years before *"The Armies of the Night"* was published, *"In Cold Blood"* was written by Truman Capote, who had just been called by George Plimpton – the "inventor" of the nonfiction novel, claimed that the genre should exclude any mention of its subjectivity and refrain from the 1st person. While to some extent satirizing Capote's model, Mailer's role in center stage is quite objective, no matter how much personal experience of the author was used while creating so-called "nonfiction historical narratives". With *"The Armies of the Night"*, Mailer received the best reviews since the publication of *"The Naked and the Dead"*. Reviewers found his 3rd-person treatment of himself as a character utterly convincing. Mailer's narration seemed so credible because he dealt with all the important aspects of his character in conjunction with the complexity of events surrounding the march on the Pentagon.

"The Armies of the Night" is not only a brilliant product of the countercultural ferment of the late 1960's, but also an enduring attempt to challenge the categorical limits of nonfiction, which it shares with contemporary works by Truman Capote, Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, Hunter Thompson, and others.

Study Questions:

1. Do you find Mailer's use of himself as a 3rd-person participant effective or confusing?
2. *"The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel/The Novel as History"* has often been cited as an example of the "new journalism". But a similar point of view was used by Henry Adams in *"The Education of Henry Adams"* (1907), and the concept of a "nonfiction novel" dates back at least as far as Ernest Hemingway's *"Green Hills of Africa"* (1935). Does this relatively unusual form attract or repel you?

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2. Hughes, Evan. *Literary Brooklyn: The Writers of Brooklyn and the Story of American City Life*. NY: Holt, 2011.
3. Lennon, J. Michael. *Norman Mailer: A Double Life*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2013.

3. Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007). “Slaughterhouse-Five”. Postmodernism.

Primary Works: Novels: “*Player Piano*” (1952), *The Sirens of Titan*” (1959), “*Mother Night*” (1961), “*Cat’s Cradle*” (1963), “*God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*” (1965), “*Slaughterhouse-Five; or, The Children’s Crusade*” (1969), “*Breakfast of Champions; or, Goodbye Blue Monday!*” (1973), “*Slapstick; or, Lonesome No More!*” (1976; film 1982), “*Jailbird*” (1979), “*Deadeye Dick*” (1982), “*Galápagos*” (1985), “*Bluebeard*” (1987), “*Hocus Pocus*” (1990), “*Timequake*” (1997). **Plays:** “*Happy Birthday, Wanda June*” (1970), “*We Are What We Pretend to Be*”, novella (2012). **Nonfiction:** “*Wampeters, Foma & Granfalloon*” (1974), “*Armageddon in Retrospect*” (2008), “*Letters*” (2012). **Collections of short stories:** “*Welcome to the Monkey House*” (1968), “*Look at the Birdie*” (2009), “*While Mortals Sleep*” (2011). **Collection of essays and speeches:** “*A Man Without a Country: A Memoir of Life in George W. Bush’s America*” (2005).

A Brief Biography of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., (born November 11, 1922, Indianapolis, Indiana, U.S.—died April 11, 2007, New York, New York), American writer noted for his wryly satirical novels who frequently used postmodern techniques as well as elements of fantasy and science fiction to highlight the horrors and ironies of 20th-century civilization. Much of Vonnegut’s work is marked by an essentially fatalistic worldview that nonetheless embraces modern humanist beliefs.

Vonnegut grew up in a well-to-do family. As a teenager, Vonnegut wrote for his high school newspaper, and he continued the activity at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, where he majored in biochemistry before leaving in 1943 to enlist in the U.S. Air Force. Captured by the Germans during World War II, he was one of the survivors of the firebombing of Dresden, Germany, in February 1945. After the war Vonnegut took graduate courses in anthropology at the University of Chicago while working as a reporter. He was later employed as a public relations writer in upstate New York, but his reservations about what he considered the deceitfulness of the profession led him to pursue fiction writing full-time.

In the early 1950s Vonnegut began publishing short stories. Many of them were concerned with technology and the future, which led some critics to classify Vonnegut as a science fiction writer, though he resisted the label. His 1st novel, “*Player Piano*” (1952), elaborates on those themes, visualizing a completely mechanized and automated society whose dehumanizing effects are unsuccessfully resisted by the scientists and workers in a New York factory town. For his 2nd novel, “*The Sirens of Titan*” (1959), Vonnegut imagined a scenario in which the entire history of the human race is considered an accident attendant on an alien planet’s search for a spare part for a spaceship.

Vonnegut abandoned science fiction tropes altogether in “*Mother Night*” (1961; film 1996), a novel about an American playwright who serves as a spy in Nazi Germany. In “*Cat’s Cradle*” (1963) some Caribbean islanders, who practice a religion consisting of harmless trivialities, come into contact with a substance discovered by an atomic scientist that eventually destroys all life on Earth. The novel was particularly significant in its development of a slyly irreverent voice that constantly called attention to its own artifice; a similar “metafictional” style would characterize much of Vonnegut’s subsequent work.

“*God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater*” (1965) centers on the title character, an eccentric philanthropist, but also introduces the writer Kilgore Trout, a fictional alter ego of Vonnegut who appears throughout his oeuvre.

Although Vonnegut’s work had already gained a popular audience by the late 1960s, the publication of “*Slaughterhouse-Five; or, The Children’s Crusade*” (1969; film 1972) cemented his reputation. Explicitly drawing on his Dresden experience, Vonnegut crafted an absurdist nonlinear narrative in which the bombing raid serves as a symbol of the cruelty and destructiveness of war through the centuries. Critics lauded “*Slaughterhouse-Five*” as a modern-day classic.

"Breakfast of Champions; or, Goodbye Blue Monday!" (1973; film 1999) is about a Midwestern businessman who becomes obsessed with Trout's books. It is a commentary on writing, fame, and American social values, interspersed with drawings by Vonnegut. Though reviews were mixed, it quickly became a best seller.

Vonnegut's next 2 novels were less successful. *"Slapstick; or, Lonesome No More!"* (1976; film 1982) focuses on a pair of grotesque siblings who devise a program to end loneliness, and *"Jailbird"* (1979) is a postmodern pastiche rooted in 20th-century American social history.

While Vonnegut remained prolific throughout the 1980s, he struggled with depression and in 1984 attempted suicide. His later novels include *"Deadeye Dick"* (1982), which revisits characters and settings from *"Breakfast of Champions"*; *"Galápagos"* (1985), a fantasy of human evolution told from a detached future perspective, a brilliant look at Vonnegut's concerns that the "oversized human brain" was ironically leading mankind to possible extinction; *"Bluebeard"* (1987), the fictional autobiography of an aging painter; *"Hocus Pocus"* (1990), about a college professor turned prison warden; and *"Timequake"* (1997), a loosely structured meditation on free will. In his last novel, *"Timequake"*, Vonnegut powerfully expressed his sense that corporate greed, overpopulation and war would win out in the end over simple humanity. As he ruefully apologized to those who would come after him, "We could have saved the world, but we were just too damned lazy".

Vonnegut also wrote several plays, including *"Happy Birthday, Wanda June"* (1970; film 1971); several works of nonfiction, such as the collection *"Wampeters, Foma & Granfalloon"* (1974); and several collections of short stories, chief among which was *"Welcome to the Monkey House"* (1968). In 2005 he published *"A Man Without a Country: A Memoir of Life in George W. Bush's America"*, a collection of essays and speeches inspired in part by contemporary politics. Vonnegut's posthumously published works include *"Armageddon in Retrospect"* (2008), a collection of fiction and nonfiction that focuses on war and peace, and a number of previously unpublished short stories, assembled in *"Look at the Birdie"* (2009) and *"While Mortals Sleep"* (2011). *"We Are What We Pretend to Be"* (2012) comprised an early unpublished novella and a fragment of a novel unfinished at his death. A selection of his correspondence was published as *"Letters"* (2012).

Kurt Vonnegut died on April 11, 2007, after a fall on the steps of his New York brownstone. He was mourned the world over as one of the great American writers of the 2nd half of the 20th century.

"Slaughterhouse-Five" (1969)

"Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death" (1969) is deeply satirical novel, which blends science fiction with historical facts of World War II, notably Vonnegut's own experience as a prisoner of war in Dresden, Germany, during the Allied firebombing of that city in early 1945. It is generally recognized as Vonnegut's most influential and popular work.

The story is told in a nonlinear order and events become clear through flashbacks (or time travel experiences) from the unreliable narrator named Billy Pilgrim. While serving in the American army during World War II, Billy Pilgrim is captured and transported as slave labor to Dresden, where he and others are kept in a slaughterhouse, the most overt of Vonnegut's symbols of the destruction of war. Pilgrim becomes "unstuck in time" and then never knows which part of his life he is going to experience next. He is even kidnapped by aliens, the Tralfamadorians, and exhibited in a zoo on their planet. During his stay on their planet, he learns that they have a completely different concept of time: for them, every moment, whether in the past, present or future, has always existed, always will, and will occur over and over again. They are able to revisit any part of their lives at will, and so to them an individual's death does not matter as they are still alive in the past.

On Earth Billy preaches the fatalistic philosophy of the Tralfamadorians, who because they know the future also know about the inevitable demise of the universe. They are resigned to fate, unflinchingly responding to events with their catchphrase “So it goes”. They realize both the necessity of changing what is possible to change and the need to be wise enough to know the unchangeable. Pilgrim adopts this fatalism, eventually spreading it to millions of followers.

One of the most important events in Pilgrim’s life was witnessing the Allied carpet- and fire-bombing of Dresden during World War II (which leveled the city and killed some 25,000 civilians, though some inflated figures over the years have put the number at more than 100,000), and the descriptions of that horror bring home in gripping fashion Vonnegut’s eloquent antiwar message.

But despite its bleak message, “*Slaughterhouse-Five*” is also funny, filled with black humor, and it is often cited as Vonnegut’s best. The author’s simple, direct, and minimalist style of prose greatly facilitates understanding of the story’s nonlinear order and widespread settings, jumping from Pilgrim’s dull postwar life as an optometrist in the fictional town of Ilium to war-torn Dresden and the alien world of Tralfamadore.

Study Questions:

1. What is the relationship between the structure and the content of “*Slaughterhouse-Five*”?
2. Briefly discuss some of the consequences of a Tralfamadorian view of the universe for a human.
3. How does Vonnegut’s technique of time-shifting affect our understanding of the novel? Is there an advantage to structuring “*Slaughterhouse-Five*” in the “telegraphic schizophrenic manner”? If not, is it too random to allow a cohesive, linear story to emerge?
4. Many Vonnegut novels deal with traffickers of “useful lies”. Can the lessons of Tralfamadore be considered as useful lies? Why or why not?
5. Discuss the use of irony or black humor in “*Slaughterhouse-Five*”.
6. What does Vonnegut achieve by placing himself as a character in the story?

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2. Shields, Charles J. *And So It Goes. Kurt Vonnegut: A Life*. NY: Henry Holt, 2011.
3. Tally, Robert T., Jr. *Kurt Vonnegut and the American Novel: A Postmodern Iconography*. NY: Continuum, 2011.

4. Joseph Heller (1923-1999). “Catch-22”. Postmodernism.

Primary Works: Novels: “*Catch-22*” (1961), “*Something Happened*” (1974), “*Good as Gold*” (1979), “*God knows*” (1984), “*Closing time*” (1994), “*Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man*” (2000). **Autobiography:** “*Now and then: from Coney Island to here*” (1998). **Play:** “*We Bombed in New Haven*” (1968).

A Brief Biography of Joseph Heller

Joseph Heller, (born May 1, 1923, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.—died December 12, 1999, East Hampton, New York), American writer whose novel “*Catch-22*” (1961) was one of the most significant works of protest literature to appear after World War II. The satirical novel was a popular success, and a film version appeared in 1970.

During World War II, Heller flew 60 combat missions as a bombardier with the U.S. Air Force in Europe. After receiving an M.A. at Columbia University in 1949, he studied at the University of Oxford as a Fulbright scholar, taught English at Pennsylvania State University, worked as an advertising copywriter for the magazines *Time* and *Look*, and as promotion manager for *McCall’s*, meanwhile writing “*Catch-22*” in his spare time. Released to mixed reviews,

"*Catch-22*" developed a cult following with its dark surrealism. Centering on the antihero Captain John Yossarian, stationed at an airstrip on a Mediterranean island during World War II, the novel portrays the airman's desperate attempts to stay alive. The "catch" in "*Catch-22*" involves a mysterious Air Force regulation that asserts that a man is considered insane if he willingly continues to fly dangerous combat missions but, if he makes the necessary formal request to be relieved of such missions, the very act of making the request proves that he is sane and therefore ineligible to be relieved. The term "catch-22" thereafter entered the English language as a reference to a proviso that trips one up no matter which way one turns.

Heller's later novels, including "*Something Happened*" (1974), an unrelievedly pessimistic novel, "*Good as Gold*" (1979), a satire on life in Washington, D.C., and "*God Knows*" (1984), a wry, contemporary-vernacular monologue in the voice of the biblical King David, were less successful. "*Closing Time*", a sequel to "*Catch-22*", appeared in 1994. His final novel, "*Portrait of an Artist, as an Old Man*" (2000), was published posthumously. Heller also wrote an autobiography, "*Now and Then: From Coney Island to Here*" (1998), and his dramatic work includes the play "*We Bombed in New Haven*" (1968).

While Heller's place in 20th-century letters is assured with "*Catch-22*", he is also highly regarded for his other works, which present a comic vision of modern society with serious moral implications. Heller's tragicomic vision of modern life, found in all of his novels, focuses on the erosion of humanistic values and highlights the ways in which language obscures and confuses reality. A major theme throughout his writing is the conflict that occurs when individuals interact with such powerful institutions as corporations, the military, and the federal government. Heller's novels have displayed increasing pessimism over the inability of individuals to reverse society's slide toward corruption and degeneration. He renders the chaos and absurdity of contemporary existence through disjointed chronology, anachronistic and oxymoronic language, and repetition of events. In all his work, Heller emphasizes that it is necessary to identify and take responsibility for our social and personal evils and to make beneficial changes in our behavior.

"*Catch-22*" (1961)

"*Catch-22*" is a satirical novel by the American author Joseph Heller. He began writing it in 1953; the novel was 1st published in 1961. It is frequently cited as one of the greatest literary works of the 20th century. It uses a distinctive non-chronological 3rd-person omniscient narration, describing events from the points of view of different characters. The separate storylines are out of sequence so that the timeline develops along with the plot.

The novel is set during World War II, from 1942 to 1944. It mainly follows the life of Captain John Yossarian, a U.S. Army Air Forces B-25 bombardier. Most of the events in the book occur while the fictional 256th Squadron is based on the island of Pianosa, in the Mediterranean Sea, west of Italy. The novel looks into the experiences of Yossarian and the other airmen in the camp, who attempt to maintain their sanity while fulfilling their service requirements so that they may return home.

The novel's title refers to a plot device that is repeatedly invoked in the story. "*Catch-22*" starts as a set of paradoxical requirements whereby airmen mentally unfit to fly did not have to do so, but could not actually be excused. By the end of the novel it is invoked as the explanation for many unreasonable restrictions. The phrase "*Catch-22*" has since entered the English language, referring to a type of unsolvable logic puzzle sometimes called a double bind. According to the novel, people who were crazy were not obliged to fly missions; but anyone who applied to stop flying was showing a rational concern for his safety and, therefore, was sane.

The development of the novel can be split into segments. The 1st (chapters 1–11) broadly follows the story fragmented between characters, but in a single chronological time in 1943. The 2nd (chapters 12–20) flashes back to focus primarily on the "Great Big Siege of Bologna" before once again jumping to the chronological "present" of 1943 in the 3rd part (chapters 21–25). The 4th (chapters 26–28) flashes back to the origins and growth of Milo's syndicate, with the 5th part

(chapters 28–32) returning again to the narrative "present" but keeping to the same tone of the previous four. In the 6th and final part (chapters 32 on) remains in the "present" time but takes a much darker turn and spends the remaining chapters focusing on the serious and brutal nature of war and life in general.

Previously the reader had been cushioned from experiencing the full horror of events, but in the final section the events are laid bare. The horror begins with the attack on the undefended Italian mountain village, with the following chapters involving despair (Doc Daneeka and the Chaplain), disappearance in combat (Orr and Clevinger), disappearance caused by the army (Dunbar) or death of most of Yossarian's friends (Nately, McWatt, Mudd, Kid Sampson, Dobbs, Chief White Halfoat and Hungry Joe), culminating in the unspeakable horrors of Chapter 39, in particular the murder of Michaela, who represents pure innocence. In Chapter 41, the full details of the gruesome death of Snowden are finally revealed.

Despite this, the novel ends on an upbeat note with Yossarian learning of Orr's miraculous escape to Sweden and Yossarian's pledge to follow him there.

"*Catch-22*" is most often interpreted as an antiwar protest novel that foreshadowed the widespread resistance to the Vietnam War that erupted in the late 1960s. While Heller's later novels have received mixed reviews, "*Catch-22*" continues to be highly regarded as a trenchant satire of the big business of modern warfare.

Study Questions:

1. Define specific features of Heller's satire. Is it direct or indirect? What devices the writer uses to express satire in his works?
2. What was the influence of personal experience on the author's novels?

"Catch-22":

1. One of the most challenging aspects of "*Catch-22*" is piecing together the order in which events occur. How does Heller manipulate time, fragment the action, and confuse cause and effect? More important, how does this confusing form fit the function? In other words, how does the way in which this story is told fit with what is actually happening in the story?
2. How is insanity defined in "*Catch-22*"? What characteristics do "crazy" characters have? Is madness the norm or an exception during wartime?
3. Are there any purely "good" characters in the book? If so, who are they and how is their goodness expressed? On the other hand, how do the more flawed characters demonstrate their cynicism, deceit, blindness, or lust for power?
4. Do you consider the ending of "*Catch-22*" a happy or sad one? How might it be construed as a triumph for Yossarian? A defeat? Is it the only way out of the mad system of "*Catch-22*"?

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2. Heller, Erica. *Yossarian Slept Here: When Joseph Heller Was Dad, the Apthorp Was Home, and Life Was a Catch-22*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 2011.

5. Jerome David Salinger (1919-2010). "The Catcher in the Rye".

Primary Works: "*The Catcher in the Rye*", the only novel (1951), "*Hapworth 16, 1924*", novella (1965). **Stories:** "*This Sandwich Has No Mayonnaise*" (1945), "*I'm Crazy*" (1946), "*A Perfect Day for Bananafish*" (1948), "*For Esmé – with Love and Squalor*" (1950), "*Teddy*" (1953), "*Franny and Zooey*" (1961), "*Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction*" (1963). **Short story collections:** "*Nine Stories*" (1953).

A Brief Biography of Jerome David Salinger

Jerome David Salinger, (born January 1, 1919, New York, New York, U.S.—died January 27, 2010, Cornish, New Hampshire), American writer whose novel *“The Catcher in the Rye”* (1951) won critical acclaim and devoted admirers, especially among the post-World War II generation of college students. His corpus of published works also consists of short stories that were printed in magazines, including *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Esquire*, and *The New Yorker*.

Salinger grew up in New York City, attending public schools and a military academy. After brief periods at New York and Columbia universities, he devoted himself entirely to writing, and his stories began to appear in periodicals in 1940. After Salinger’s return from service in the U.S. Army (1942–1946), his name and writing style became increasingly associated with *The New Yorker* magazine, which published almost all of his later stories. Some of the best of these made use of his wartime experiences: *“For Esmé – with Love and Squalor”* (1950) describes a U.S. soldier’s poignant encounter with two British children; *“A Perfect Day for Bananafish”* (1948) concerns the suicide of the sensitive, despairing veteran Seymour Glass.

Major critical and popular recognition came with the publication of *“The Catcher in the Rye”*, whose central character, a sensitive, rebellious adolescent, relates in authentic teenage idiom his flight from the “phony” adult world, his search for innocence and truth, and his final collapse on a psychiatrist’s couch. The humor and colorful language of *“The Catcher in the Rye”* place it in the tradition of Mark Twain’s *“Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”* and the stories of Ring Lardner, but its hero, like most of Salinger’s child characters, views his life with an added dimension of precocious self-consciousness.

“Nine Stories” (1953), a selection of Salinger’s short stories, added to his reputation. Several of his published pieces feature the siblings of the fictional Glass family, beginning with Seymour’s appearance in *“A Perfect Day for Bananafish”*. In works such as *“Franny and Zooey”* (1961) and *“Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters and Seymour: An Introduction”* (1963), the introspective Glass children, influenced by their eldest brother and his death, navigate questions about spirituality and enlightenment.

The reclusive habits of Salinger in his later years made his personal life a matter of speculation among devotees, and his small literary output was a subject of controversy among critics. The last work Salinger published during his lifetime was a novella titled *“Hapworth 16, 1924”*, which appeared in *The New Yorker* in 1965. In 1974 *“The Complete Uncollected Short Stories of J.D. Salinger”*, an unauthorized 2-volume work of his early pieces, was briefly released to the public, but sales were halted when Salinger filed a lawsuit for copyright infringement.

J.D. Salinger passed away on January 27th, 2010.

“The Catcher in the Rye” (1951)

“The Catcher in the Rye”, the influential and widely acclaimed story, details 2 days in the life of the narrator and protagonist Holden Caulfield, an unstable 16-year-old boy who has just been expelled from prep school and sets off to explore New York before returning home. Confused and disillusioned, he searches for truth and rails against the “phoniness” of the adult world. He ends up exhausted and emotionally ill, in a psychiatrist’s office. The events are related after his recovery.

Contemporaneously set, Holden tells his own tale through a stream-of-consciousness to his doctor. He is always isolated; he has moved from school to school. The book depicts his relationships with a large number of characters: school friends, teachers, girlfriends, his siblings, and parents.

The mood of the novel is dark, bleak, gloomy, and depressing. Holden is a troubled, searching, frustrated, and alienated youth; since he is the narrator of the story, his personal mood colors everything in the novel. There is even a sense of impending danger, doom, and death throughout the plot since everything around him seems to confirm Holden’s troubled state of mind.

The recurrent themes are: 1) Alienation Within a Society. 2) Corruption of Society. 3) The Difficulty of Growing Up. 4) “Phoniness” in Life.

Holden speaks with his younger dead brother Allie — who died of leukemia 3 years before the story begins — and he is best understood by his 10-year-old sister, Phoebe, whom he adores and who exhibits more maturity than her older brother. His most positive fantasy is as a hero who saves children playing in a field of rye (portrayed as the ideal childhood) by preventing them from falling off a cliff, thereby losing their innocence and descending into the degenerate world of adults — a world of not growth but loss, shallowness, disappointment, and hypocrisy. This book exposes the universal fear of growing up, and it is a powerful, though at times unsettling, read.

Outside the Salinger canon, Holden Caulfield can be compared with the protagonist of Mark Twain's *"The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"*. Like Huck Finn, Holden is also seeking, though metaphorically, a home, a place where he can be accepted and truly belong. There is also a parallel between *"The Catcher in the Rye"* and William Saroyan's *"The Human Comedy"*. There is an orthographic as well as metrical similarity between the names of the 2 protagonists, Holden Caulfield and Homer Macanlay. They also have similar ages, for Holden is 16, and Homer passes as 16. Both works also have an objectionable character called Ackley. Both boys have trouble finding a place in which to fit. Holden Caulfield, however, is much more well-known than Homer Macanlay and becomes a symbol of sensitivity for the hippie cult movement in the 60's.

The novel was published to much critical and popular acclaim, although its content did invoke criticism, while some also deemed it boring and monotonous.

Study Questions:

1. What, in J.D. Salinger's life, most influenced his short stories? Are there any parallels between the themes of his stories and his personal life experience?
2. What are basic themes of Salinger's short stories?

"The Catcher in the Rye":

1. Holden narrates the story of *"The Catcher in the Rye"* while he is recovering from his breakdown. Do you think the promise of recovery that Holden experiences as he watches the carousel at the end of the novel has been fulfilled?
2. What is the significance of the carousel in Chapter 25?
3. Though Holden never describes his psychological breakdown directly, it becomes clear as the novel progresses that he is growing increasingly unstable. How does Salinger indicate this instability to the reader while protecting his narrator's reticence?
4. Analyze Holden's vision of the nature of childhood and adulthood.
5. The novel is structured around Holden's encounters and interactions with other people. Does any pattern seem to emerge, or does anything change in his interactions as the novel progresses? How do Holden's encounters with adults, children, women, and his peers evolve as the novel progresses?
6. Create a 5-song playlist that would represent the themes from *"The Catcher in the Rye"*.

Selected Sources 2014-Present:

1. Beller, Thomas. *J. D. Salinger: The Escape Artist*. NY: New Harvest, 2014.
2. Rakoff, Joanna. *My Salinger Year*. NY: Knopf, 2014.

Lecture 7. Beat Generation

Plan:

1. Basic Traits of Beat Generation Writers.
2. Jack Kerouac. "On the Road".
3. Allen Ginsberg. "Howl".

1. Basic Traits of Beat Generation Writers.

Major Writers of the Beat Generation: Ginsberg, Allen (1926-1997), Kerouac, Jack (1922-1969), Burroughs, William S. (1914-1997), Corso, Gregory (1930-2001), Ferlinghetti, Lawrence (1919-), Cassady, Neal (1926-1968), Solomon, Carl (1928-1993), Holmes, John Clellon (1926-1988), Johnson, Joyce (1935-), Kesey, Ken (1935-2001), Brautigan, Richard (1935-1984), Snyder, Gary (1930-).

Beat movement, also called **Beat Generation**, is American social and literary movement originating in the 1950s and centered in the bohemian artist communities of San Francisco's North Beach, Los Angeles' Venice West, and New York City's Greenwich Village. Its adherents, self-styled as "beat" (originally meaning "weary", but later also connoting a musical sense, a "beatific" spirituality, and other meanings) and derisively called "**beatniks**", expressed their alienation from conventional, or "square", society by adopting an almost uniform style of seedy dress, manners, and "hip" vocabulary borrowed from jazz musicians. Generally apolitical and indifferent to social problems, they advocated personal release, purification, and illumination through the heightened sensory awareness that might be induced by drugs, jazz, or the disciplines of Zen Buddhism.

The "founders" of the *Beat Generation* met at Columbia University in the early 1940s. Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg formed the core of this initial group, and they would remain bulwarks of the Beat sensibility for years to come. Lucien Carr, John Clellon Holmes, and Neal Cassidy were also original members of this coterie, though their clout was somewhat less than the others. Gregory Corso was the 1st wave Beat poet who Ginsberg met a bar.

For the *Beat Generation*, the shadowy underside of society could harbor every bit as much creative genius as the gilded halls of the academy. Despite their anti-establishment and anti-academy pretensions, the *Beats* were all well-educated and generally from middle class backgrounds.

It was Kerouac who coined the term "*Beat Generation*", and the name stuck. William S. Burroughs was another original Beat writer, though slightly older and more experienced than his contemporaries. Burroughs was found unfit to serve in the Army during World War II, and had spent several years wandering and doing odd jobs. It was pure serendipity that he and Kerouac and Ginsberg would enter each other's orbit, for their creative interchanges marked the true beginning of Beat literature.

The *Beat Generation* pulled from a variety of source materials to construct their particular vision of literature and culture. Several of the originators claim Romantic poets as major influences on their work. Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Blake are often cited as especially influential on the development of the Beat aesthetic. Interspersed with their Romantic influences were surrealist and absurdist tendencies. At the same time, the American Transcendental Movement of the 19th century was a powerful inspiration for the confrontational politics of the *Beats*. Henry David Thoreau was particularly revered as a symbol of protest. It was the Beats, in fact, who played a large role in rehabilitating Thoreau's reputation and elevating "*Walden*" to the status that it holds today. Conversely, the artistic production of the American Modernists was in many ways reviled by the Beats. The neo-classical formalism of T. S. Eliot was rejected as too much removed from

real life and experience. Eliot embraced his status as an academic, while to the *Beat Generation* he was simply 1 more elitist with pretensions of grandeur.

The elder statesman of the *Beat Generation* was the poet **Lawrence Ferlinghetti**. A son of immigrants, Ferlinghetti was a Navy veteran who worked with resistance movements during World War II. He settled in San Francisco after the war, where he opened the City Lights Bookstore. City Lights quickly become a hub of *Beat Generation*. Around the same time, Ferlinghetti also entered the publishing industry, bringing both lesser-known and established poets to the mainstream. In his own poetry, Ferlinghetti displayed a jazz-inspired rhythm and improvisational spirit. Much like the work of E. E. Cummings, his lines seemed almost thrown on the page, though underneath the seeming disorganization was careful planning and a deliberate effect. Ferlinghetti was known for his combination of humor and darkness, a perfect reflection of the state of America and the world at mid-century. He saw the decadence and prudery of American culture, and the destructive potential of capitalism gone awry, but his 1st response was to laugh at the absurdity of it all. Ferlinghetti's poetry, therefore, is less firmly rooted in the Beat aesthetic from which it sprang. His humor and humanity make his art more timeless, not as weighed down by the historical moment.

The publication of **Allen Ginsberg's** "*Howl*" in 1956 marks a turning point in the history of Beat literature, not to mention American literature in general. The long-form poem is intended to be read aloud, almost chanted, a sort of return to an oral tradition that had been neglected in literature for a long time. With "*Howl*", Ginsberg takes the reader/listener on a tour of the underside of America. There are drug-addicts, drifters, lost women, and swindlers. There is a visceral rage against the system that requires conformity and selling-out. Foul language and slang are common throughout the work, as well as drug use and criminality. All of these things were shocking to the 1950s establishment. But for Ginsberg, he was simply following the path of his inspiration. He cited Walt Whitman as 1 of his greatest influences, and one can certainly hear echoes of Whitman's primitivism throughout Ginsberg's corpus of work.

No *Beat Generation* novelist garnered more attention and adulation than **Jack Kerouac**, and none of their personal lives were more filled with conflict, confusion and crippling depression. Eventually dying from his alcoholism, Kerouac was never happy with the position that he attained as the de facto spokesperson for his generation. He was reportedly quite shy, and had a difficult time with the rejection that he faced early in his career. His single greatest success was "*On the Road*", a philosophical travel narrative which blends *stream of consciousness*, drug visions, and profound observations into a generational statement that resonates to this day. The book made him immediately famous. Even his *Beat Generation* cohorts were rather taken aback with the creativity and passion which emanated from the quiet Kerouac. In addition to novels and philosophy, he wrote a great deal about the craft of fiction, or at least his version of that craft. Kerouac's half-brilliant, half-incomprehensible meditations on the work of making literature are windows into the Beat consciousness. Inside, one finds great potential often hampered by disarray, and an unquenchable idealism which crashes hard against the bitter reality of American consumer culture. In a sense, Jack Kerouac was the most fragile of all the *Beat Generation* writers. He succumbed to the pressure of fame and attention. While Ginsberg deflected the weight of expectation, Kerouac carried it on his shoulders, and it eventually crushed him.

If **William S. Burroughs** had produced nothing else of note besides "*Naked Lunch*", he would still be considered one of the preeminent Beat writers. Perhaps more than his contemporaries, Burroughs embodied the spirit of reckless abandon for which the *Beat Generation* was known. In Mexico City, on a drunken spree, Burroughs accidentally shot his 1st wife Jane Vollmer in the head. The only reason he was in Mexico was to avoid possible imprisonment in the U.S. The near savagery of his life would naturally carry over into his artistic efforts. His greatest contribution to literary technique was what he called the "**cut-up**", a form which borrowed more from collage and cubism than traditional linear narrative. The blatant disregard for narrative

effectively mirrored Burroughs' mental state, as he forever struggled with alcohol and drug addictions. "*Naked Lunch*" is a difficult and sometimes terrifying novel to engage with, though readers continue to be drawn to it for its style, use of language, and innovation.

Criticism of the *Beat Generation*'s aesthetics and behavior came from many corners of society. The academic community derided the Beats as anti-intellectual and unrefined. Mainstream America was horrified by their supposed deviancy and illicit drug use. Established poets and novelists looked down upon the freewheeling abandon of Beat literature. Politicians identified elements of Beat ideology as a threat to the nation's security. The *Beat Generation* effectively absorbed all of these barbs without disintegrating. However, their relatively short time in the spotlight of literature and culture could be attributed to the amount of scorn heaped upon them. The original coinage of "Beat" was meant to imply a people beaten down and walked over, and in the early 1950s that interpretation was very apt.

With Ginsberg's "*Howl*", the notion of what was acceptable literature was broadened immensely. Censorship as a force for modulating public discourse, in the realm of literature at least, came to an end. Perhaps more importantly, the Beats propelled discussions of ecology and environmentalism into the mainstream. Before the 1950s, environmentalism as it is understood today did not really exist. The *Beat Generation*'s infatuation with Native American and

To summarize, *beat poets* sought to liberate poetry from academic preciousness and bring it "back to the streets". The *Beat Generation* faded from view as quickly as it appeared.

Study Questions:

1. What did the Beat generation writers, write about?
2. What were big influences on the *Beat generation* writers?
3. What did they write about?
4. What were some trends in writings in the *Beat generation*?
5. Who cemented the notion "*Beat generation*"?

Selected Sources 2016-Present:

1. Espartaco Carlos. *Eduardo Sanguinetti: The Experience of Limits*. Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone. Buenos Aires, 2016.
2. Knight, Arthur Winfield. Ed. *The Beat Vision*. Paragon House, 2017.
3. Phillips, Lisa. *Beat Culture and the New America 1950–1965*. - Whitney Museum of American Art, 2016.

2. Jack Kerouac (1922-1969). "On the Road".

Primary Works: Novels: "*The Town and the City*" (1950), "*On the Road*" (1957), "*The Dharma Bums*" (1958), "*The Subterraneans*" (1958), "*Maggie Cassidy: A Love Story*" (1959), "*Dr Sax*" (1959), "*Tristessa*" (1960), "*Lonesome Traveller*" (1960), "*Big Sur*" (1962), "*Visions of Gerard*" (1963), "*Desolation Angels*" (1965), "*Satori in Paris*" (1966), "*The Vanity of Duluo*" (1968), "*Pic*" (1971), "*Visions of Cody*" (1972). **Others:** "*Mexico City Blues*", poetry, 242 choruses (1959), "*Book of Dreams*", dream transcripts (1961), "*Scattered Poems*" (1971), "*Book of Blues*" (1995).

A Brief Biography of Jack Kerouac

Jack Kerouac (born Jean-Louis Lebris de K  rouac; March 12, 1922–October 21, 1969) was an American novelist and poet. He is considered a literary iconoclast and, alongside William S. Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg, a pioneer of the *Beat Generation*.

Kerouac is recognized for his method of spontaneous prose. Thematically, his work covers topics such as spirituality, jazz, promiscuity, Buddhism, drugs, poverty, and travel. He became an

underground celebrity and, with other beats, a progenitor of the hippie movement, although he remained antagonistic toward some of its politically radical elements.

The son of an impoverished French-Canadian family, Jack Kerouac also questioned the values of middle-class life. He met members of the "Beat" literary underground as an undergraduate at Columbia University in New York City. His fiction was much influenced by the loosely autobiographical work of southern novelist Tom Wolfe.

Kerouac's best-known novel, "*On the Road*" (1957), describes "beatniks" wandering through America seeking an idealistic dream of communal life and beauty through jazz and drug-induced visions. The book epitomizes the generation that Kerouac himself named as "beat". It is the tale of his adventures with Neal Cassady (the character Dean Moriarty), before he dropped out of the 'Beat' scene and withdrew into alcoholism.

"*The Dharma Bums*" (1958) also focuses on peripatetic counterculture intellectuals and their infatuation with Zen Buddhism. Kerouac also penned a book of poetry, "*Mexico City Blues*" (1959), and volumes about his life with such beatniks as experimental novelist William Burroughs and poet Allen Ginsberg.

Kerouac's books, which are in print today, include "*The Town and the City*", "*Doctor Sax*", "*The Subterraneans*", "*Desolation Angels*", "*Visions of Cody*", "*The Sea Is My Brother*", "*Big Sur*" and others.

In 1969, aged 47, Kerouac died from internal bleeding due to long-term alcohol abuse. Since his death, Kerouac's literary prestige has grown, and several previously unseen works have been published.

"On the Road" (1957)

"*On the Road*", novel by Jack Kerouac, written over the course of 3 weeks in 1951 and published in 1957.

The free-form book describes a series of frenetic trips across the U.S. by a number of penniless young people who are in love with life, beauty, jazz, entertainment, drugs, speed, and mysticism and who have absolute contempt for alarm clocks, timetables, road maps, mortgages, pensions, and all traditional American rewards for industry.

Basic themes of the novel are: 1. Sadness. 2. Dissatisfaction. 3. Madness. 4. Admiration. 5. Drugs and Alcohol. 6. Time. 7. Friendship. 8. Art and Culture. 9. Visions of America. 10. Wisdom and Knowledge.

Jack Kerouac's "*On the Road*" has become a classic text in American literary counterculture. Set in the aftermath of the World War II, Sal Paradise's account of his travels across America has become emblematic of the struggle to retain the freedom of the American dream in a soberer historical moment. Paradise's journey with the free and reckless Dean Moriarty (based on fellow Beat adventurer Neal Cassady) from the East to the West Coast of America is a celebration of the abundance, vitality, and spirit of American youth. The pair's rejection of domestic and economic conformity in favor of a search for free and inclusive communities and for heightened individual experiences were key constituents of the emerging Beat culture, of which Kerouac – along with literary figures such as Ginsberg and Burroughs – was soon to become a charismatic representative.

The book was one of the 1st novels associated with the *Beat movement* of the 1950s.

Study Questions:

1. What is Kerouac's role in the formation of *Beat literature*?
2. Some writers had influence on Kerouac's vision. Name these authors and reveal how exactly did they influence Kerouac's literary outlook.

"On the Road":

1. Is Dean a hero, a failure, or both?
2. What is Sal's attitude toward America?

3. What is Sal's idea of the West compared to his idea of the East? Does this change during the course of the novel?
4. How is "*On the Road*" written? Is it different from earlier, more traditional novels? What kind of effect does this have on traditional plot? Does the form help to express the themes of the novel?
5. Discuss the theme of race in the novel. Is Sal prejudiced?
6. Is Sal an honest narrator? Are there any inconsistencies in his narration? If so, what effect do they have on the story?
7. Discuss the theme of jazz music in "*On the Road*". How does jazz music relate to the novel thematically? Formally?

Selected Sources 2012-Present:

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2. Hunt, Tim. *The Textuality of Soulwork: Jack Kerouac's Quest for Spontaneous Prose*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2014.
3. Johnson, Joyce. *The Voice Is All: The Lonely Victory of Jack Kerouac*. NY: Viking, 2012.

3. Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997). "Howl".

Primary Works: "*Howl and Other Poems*" (1956), "*Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-60*" (1961), "*Empty Mirror*" (1961), "*Reality Sandwiches: 1953-1960*" (1963), "*Wichita Verses Sutra*" (1967), "*Planet News*" (1968), "*Iron Horse*" (1972), "*The Fall of America: Poems of These States, 1965-1971*" (1973), "*Mind Breaths: Poems*" 1972-1977 (1978), "*Collected Poems 1947-1980*" (1984), "*White Shroud, Poems 1980-1985*" (1986), "*Cosmopolitan Greetings: Poems 1986-1992*" (1995), "*Collected Poems, 1947-1997*" (2006), "*Wait Till I'm Dead: Uncollected Poems*" (2016).

A Brief Biography of Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg, (born June 3, 1926, Newark, New Jersey, U.S.—died April 5, 1997, New York, New York), American poet whose epic poem "*Howl*" (1956) is considered to be one of the most significant products of the *Beat movement*.

Ginsberg grew up in Paterson, New Jersey, where his father, Louis Ginsberg, himself a poet, taught English. Allen Ginsberg's mother, whom he mourned in his long poem "*Kaddish*" (1961), was confined for years in a mental hospital. Ginsberg was influenced in his work by the poet William Carlos Williams, particularly toward the use of natural speech rhythms and direct observations of unadorned actuality. While at Columbia University, where his anarchical proclivities pained the authorities, Ginsberg became close friends with Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs, who were later to be numbered among *the Beats*. After leaving Columbia in 1948, he traveled widely and worked at a number of jobs from cafeteria floor mopper to market researcher.

"*Howl*", Ginsberg's 1st published book, laments what he believed to have been the destruction by insanity of the "best minds of [his] generation". Dithyrambic and prophetic, owing something to the romantic bohemianism of Walt Whitman, it also dwells on drug addiction, Buddhism, and Ginsberg's revulsion from what he saw as the materialism and insensitivity of post-World War II America.

"*Empty Mirror*", a collection of earlier poems, appeared along with "*Kaddish and Other Poems*" in 1961, followed by "*Reality Sandwiches*" in 1963. "*Kaddish*", one of Ginsberg's most important works, is a long confessional poem in which the poet laments his mother's insanity and tries to come to terms with both his relationship to her and with her death.

In the early 1960s Ginsberg began a life of ceaseless travel, reading his poetry at campuses and coffee bars, traveling abroad. He became an influential guru of the American youth counterculture in the late 1960s. He acquired a deeper knowledge of Buddhism, and increasingly a religious element of love for all sentient beings entered his work.

His later volumes of poetry included *"The Fall of America: Poems of These States, 1965–1971"* (1972), which won the National Book Award; *"Mind Breaths: Poems 1972–1977"* (1978); *"White Shroud: Poems 1980–1985"* (1986); *"Collected Poems 1947–1980"* (1984). His *"Collected Poems, 1947–1997"* (2006) is the 1st comprehensive 1-volume collection of Ginsberg's published poetry. *"The Letters of Allen Ginsberg"* was published in 2008, and a collection edited by Bill Morgan and David Stanford that focuses on Ginsberg's correspondence with Kerouac was published as *"Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg: The Letters"* in 2010. *"Wait Till I'm Dead: Uncollected Poems"* (2016) compiled verse that Ginsberg had submitted to various publications and selected from his correspondence.

"Howl" (1956)

"Howl" is a poem written by Allen Ginsberg in 1955, published as part of his 1956 collection of poetry titled *"Howl and Other Poems"*, and dedicated to Carl Solomon. The poem consists of 3 parts, with an additional footnote. A denunciation of the weaknesses and failings of American society, *"Howl"* is a combination lamentation, jeremiad, and vision. The poem opens with a description of the despair and frustration of American youths: *...I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix...*

The poem was praised for its incantatory rhythms and raw emotion; critics noted the influences of Ginsberg's mentor William Carlos Williams (who wrote an introduction to the 1959 edition), Walt Whitman, and William S. Burroughs.

In terms of subject matter, *"Howl"* is exactly what the title suggests. It's a raw, aggressive, painful, sad shout directed at the culture that Ginsberg believed had destroyed many of his best friends. Chances are you have never read anything like it. The poem was never meant to be the kind of work that would be picked apart by scholars in universities. It was meant to be a shot of adrenaline straight into the listener's bloodstream. Many of the cultural issues it discusses remain controversial even today.

"Howl" is considered to be one of the great works of American literature. It came to be associated with the group of writers known as the Beat Generation.

Study Questions:

1. Allen Ginsberg's use of long lines was a deliberate experiment for him, the "long clanky statement" that permits "not the way you would say it, a thought, but the way you would think it, we think rapidly in visual images as well as words, and if each successive thought were transcribed in its confusion... you get a slightly different prosody than if you were talking slowly". Read *"Howl"* and pay particular attention to Ginsberg's use of the long line.

Selected Sources 2011-Present:

1. Mead-Brewer, Katherine C. *The Trickster in Ginsberg: A Critical Reading*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland; 2013.
2. Morgan, Bill. *Beat Atlas: A State by State Guide to the Beat Generation in America*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 2011.

Lecture 8. American Drama

Plan:

1. Basic Traits of American Drama.
2. Edward Albee. "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?".
3. Arthur Miller. "Death of a Salesman".
4. Tennessee Williams. "A Streetcar Named Desire".

1. Basic Traits of American Drama.

American Drama is a literature intended for performance, written by Americans in the English language. American drama begins in the American colonies in the 17th century and continues to the present. Clive Bloom states that American Drama is the most neglected part of the study of American literature.

Most American plays of the 18th and 19th centuries strongly reflected British influence. In fact, no New York City theater season presented more American plays than British plays until 1910. The reasons behind this phenomenon are complex, but a common language and the ready availability of British plays and British actors offer the most obvious explanation.

Although the British repertory dominated the American stage for so long, American drama had begun to diverge from British drama by the time of Andrew Jackson's presidency, from 1828 to 1836. British plays, which typically reflected the attitudes and manners of the upper classes, were by then in conflict with more egalitarian American values. Despite this growing divergence, British actors, theater managers, and plays continued to cross the Atlantic Ocean with regularity, and most American plays copied British models until the early 20th century. For this reason, some critics claim that American drama was not born until the end of World War I (1914-1918).

By the end of the 19th century American drama was moving steadily toward realism, illuminating the rough or seamy side of life and creating more believable characters. Realism remained the dominant trend of the 20th century in both comedies and tragedies. American drama achieved international recognition with the psychological realism of plays by Eugene O'Neill and their searing investigation of characters' inner lives. As the century advanced, the number of topics considered suitable for drama broadened to encompass race and gender, life and death.

An Outline History of American Drama

Colonial Drama:

1. The 1st American Play in English, possibly "*The Lost Lady*" (1641) by Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia.
2. 1st Play printed in America: "*Androborus*" (1714) by Robert Hunter.
3. 1st Play written by an American and performed in America by Professional Actors, "*The Prince of Parthia*" (1759) by Thomas Godfrey.
4. College Drama in the Colonies.
5. 1st Play to treat a native subject, "*Ponteach or The Savages of America*" (1766) by Robert Rogers.

Drama During the Revolution and the Post-Revolutionary Period to 1800:

1. Plays Reflecting Patriot Views during the Revolution.
2. Plays Reflecting Loyalist Views during the Revolution.
3. Nonpartisan Drama.
4. The Beginnings of American Comedy: Royall Tyler's "*The Contrast*" (1787) as the 1st comedy.
5. The Father of American Drama: William Dunlap (actually - melodrama).

Drama of a New Nation, 1800-1865:

1. Plays from the Town Crier: Nationalism on Stage.

2. Poetic Drama: The Serious Dramatist at Work.
3. Native American Character Types: Jonathan, Sambo, and Metamora.
4. A Mirror of the Times.
5. Yankee Originality: American's Contribution to World Theater.

American Drama from the Civil War to World War I:

1. The Rise of Realism in American Drama.
2. The Beginnings of Social Drama: Comment, Comedy, and Melodrama. Rachel Crothers.
3. The Age of Melodrama.
4. The Popular Farce.
5. Poetic Drama.
6. A New Seriousness.
7. Beginnings in Dramatic Criticism.

From World War I to World War II, 1914-1939:

1. Realism continued to be a primary form of dramatic expression in the 20th century.
2. Experimentation in both the content and the production of plays became increasingly important.
3. American expressionism was distinguished from its German forebears by a searching focus on the inner life of the central character, whose detailed depiction is in stark contrast to all other characters.
4. Eugene O'Neill. In 1936 O'Neill became the 1st American playwright to win a Nobel Prize for literature.
5. The plays of Lillian Hellman also displayed a social conscience.
6. The global scale of fears in the 1930s was reflected in the plays of Robert Sherwood, whose satirical attack on weapons manufacturers predicted the impending world cataclysm of World War II.

Postwar Drama: 1945-1960:

1. Arthur Miller. Miller combined realistic characters and a social agenda while also writing modern tragedy.
2. Tennessee Williams. One of America's most lyrical dramatists, contributed many plays about social misfits and outsiders.
3. The 1940s launched lighthearted musicals.
4. Realism continued strongly in the 1950s with character studies of society's forgotten people.
5. In the late 1950s African American playwriting received a tremendous boost.

The Mainstream Redefined: The 1960-1999:

1. The civil rights movement and antiwar protests of the mid-1960s exploded in drama as regional and experimental theaters.
2. Small-scale musicals, antiwar rock musical.
3. Sam Shepard and David Mamet.
4. By the 1980s many American playwrights found themselves tied to topics of current interest: AIDS crisis, suicide, Western civilization.
5. The 1990s also saw the return of exciting domestic drama by playwrights assumed by many to have finished their careers: Arthur Miller and Edward Albee.

Recent Trends:

1. Economic woes of regional and experimental theaters resulted in a multitude of plays with a single setting and no more than two or three characters.
2. Many playwrights appeared to write with a film or television adaptation in mind.
3. American theater had become too conservative in its mainstream and too specialized in its smaller venues.

Study Questions:

1. Generally, into what 2 periods the history of the development of American drama can be divided? Why?
2. What was more popular among dramatists before World War I – comedies or tragedies? Or both? Support your answer with historical details.
3. Characterize the development of American drama from 1914 to 1999.
4. What are recent trends in the development of American Drama?

Selected Sources 2014-Present:

1. Bigsby, Christopher W. *Modern American Drama: 1945-2000*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
2. Bloom, Clive. *American Drama*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2015.
3. Brietzke, Zander. *Aesthetics of Failure: Dynamic Structure in the Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2014.

2. Edward Albee (1928-2016). “Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”.

Primary Works: *“The Zoo Story”* (1959) - later expanded to *“Peter and Jerry”* (2004) - later expanded to *“At Home at the Zoo”* (2009), *“The Sandbox”* (1959), *“The American Dream”* (1961), *“Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?”* (1962), *“A Delicate Balance”* (1966), *“Tiny Alice”* (1965), *“All Over”* (1971), *“Seascape”* (1975), *“The Lady from Dubuque”* (1980), *“Three Tall Women”* (1994), *“The Play About the Baby”* (1998), *“The Goat; or, Who Is Sylvia?”* (2002), *“Occupant”* (2001), *“Me, Myself, & I”* (2007), *“Stretching My Mind”*, essays (2005).

A Brief Biography of Edward Albee

Edward Franklin Albee (born March 12, 1928, Washington, D.C., U.S.—died September 16, 2016, Montauk, New York), American dramatist and theatrical producer best known for his play *“Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”* (1962), which displays slashing insight and witty dialogue in its gruesome portrayal of married life.

Albee was the adopted child. He had a difficult relationship with his parents. Albee grew up in New York City and nearby Westchester county. He was educated at Choate School and at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. He wrote poetry and an unpublished novel but turned to plays in the late 1950s.

Among Albee's early 1-act plays, *“The Zoo Story”* (1959), *“The Sandbox”* (1959), and *“The American Dream”* (1961) were the most successful and established him as an astute critic of American values. But it is his 1st full-length play, *“Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”* (1962, film – 1966), that remains his most important work. In this play a middle-aged professor, his wife, and a younger couple engage 1 night in an unrestrained drinking bout that is filled with malicious games, insults, humiliations, betrayals, savage witticisms, and painful, self-revealing confrontations. The play won immediate acclaim and established Albee as a major American playwright.

It was followed by a number of full-length works, including *“A Delicate Balance”* (1966; Pulitzer Prize), which was based in part on his mother's witty alcoholic sister, and *“Three Tall Women”* (1994; Pulitzer Prize). The latter play deals with Albee's perceptions and feelings about his mother and is a remarkable portrait achieved by presenting the interaction of 3 women, who resemble each other, at different stages of life. Among his other plays are *“Tiny Alice”* (1965), which begins as a philosophical discussion between a lawyer and a cardinal; *“Seascape”* (1975; Pulitzer Prize), a poetic exploration of evolution; and *“The Play About the Baby”* (1998), on the mysteries of birth and parenthood.

Albee continued to dissect American morality in plays such as *“The Goat; or, Who Is Sylvia?”* (2002), which depicts the disintegration of a marriage in the wake of the revelation that the husband has engaged in bestiality. In *“Occupant”* (2001), Albee imagines the sculptor Louise Nevelson being interviewed after her death. Albee also expanded *“The Zoo Story”* into a 2-act play, called *“Peter and Jerry”* (2004). (The play was retitled *“At Home at the Zoo”* in 2009.) The absurdist *“Me, Myself, & I”* (2007) trenchantly analyzes the relationship between a mother and her twin sons.

In addition to writing, Albee produced a number of plays and lectured at schools throughout the country. He was awarded the National Medal of Arts in 1996. A compilation of his essays and personal anecdotes, *“Stretching My Mind”*, was published in 2005. That year Albee also received a Tony Award for lifetime achievement.

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” (1962)

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” is a play by E. Albee. It examines the breakdown of the marriage of a middle-aged couple, Martha and George. Late one evening, after a university faculty party, they receive an unwitting younger couple, Nick and Honey, as guests, and draw them into their bitter and frustrated relationship. The play is in 3 acts, normally taking a little less than 3 hours to perform, with 2 10-minute intermissions. The title is a pun on the song *“Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?”* from Walt Disney’s *“Three Little Pigs”* (1933), substituting the name of the celebrated English author Virginia Woolf. Martha and George repeatedly sing this version of the song throughout the play.

Themes of the play are: 1) Reality and illusion; 2) Critique of the societal expectations.

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” won both the 1963 Tony Award for Best Play and the 1962–1963 New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for Best Play. It is frequently revived on the modern stage. The dialogue in the 1st act of the play has been hailed by some critics as some of the greatest in all of the American theatre.

Study Questions:

1. Do research and divide all Albee’s plays into some groups according to themes revealed and ideas shared.

“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”:

1. Explain the significance of the title, *“Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”*
2. Why do you think George tells the story about his childhood friend who accidentally killed both of his parents? What implications could it have thematically?
3. What is the significance of everyone drinking so much?
4. Why is it important that George is a history professor, whereas Nick is a biologist?
5. How do these 2 disciplines relate to their characters?
6. Why would E. Albee set this play at a cocktail party (rather than at a family dinner or on a vacation or at an amusement park, etc.)?
7. What significance does Honey’s weakness and vomiting have? Why would Albee create her to be so often sick?

Selected Sources 2016-Present:

1. Debusscher, Gilbert. *Edward Albee: Tradition and Renewal*. Translated by Anne D. Williams. Brussels: American Studies Center, 2017.
2. Rutenberg, Michael E. *Edward Albee: Playwright in Protest*. 2nd edition. New York: DBS Publications, Inc., 2016.

3. Arthur Miller (1915-2005). “Death of a Salesman”.

Primary Works: Novels: *Focus* (1945). **Plays:** “*The Man Who Had All the Luck*” (1944), “*All My Sons*” (1947), “*Death of a Salesman*” (1949), “*The Crucible*” (1953), “*A Memory of Two Mondays*” (1955), “*A View from the Bridge*” (1955); “*After the Fall*” (1964), “*Incident at Vichy*” (1964), “*The Price*” (1968), “*The Creation of the World and Other Business*” (1972), “*The Archbishop’s Ceiling*” (1977), “*Playing for Time*” (1980), “*The American Clock*” (1980), “*The Ride Down Mount Morgan*” (1991), “*The Last Yankee*” (1993), “*Broken Glass*” (1994), “*Mr. Peters’ Connections*” (1998), “*Resurrection Blues*” (2002), “*Finishing the Picture*” (2004). **Short stories:** “*I Don’t Need You Any More*” (1967). **Autobiography:** “*Timebends*” (1987). **Screenplays:** “*The Misfits*” (1961), “*Everybody Wins*” (1990).

A Brief Biography of Arthur Miller

“. . . the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need be, to secure one thing - his sense of personal dignity”.

A. Miller. “*Tragedy and the Common Man*” (1949)

Arthur Asher Miller (born October 17, 1915, New York, New York, U.S.—died February 10, 2005, Roxbury, Connecticut), American playwright, who combined social awareness with a searching concern for his characters’ inner lives. He is best known for “*Death of a Salesman*” (1949).

Miller was shaped by the *Great Depression*, which brought financial ruin onto his father, a small manufacturer, and demonstrated to the young Miller the insecurity of modern existence. After graduation from high school he worked in a warehouse. With the money he earned he attended the University of Michigan (B.A., 1938), where he began to write plays. His 1st public success was with “*Focus*” (1945; filmed 1962), a novel about anti-Semitism. “*All My Sons*” (1947; filmed 1948), a drama about a manufacturer of faulty war materials that strongly reflects the influence of Henrik Ibsen, was his 1st important play. It won Miller a Tony Award, and it was his 1st major collaboration with the director Elia Kazan, who also won a Tony Award.

Miller’s next play, “*Death of a Salesman*”, became 1 of the most famous American plays of its period. It is the tragedy of Willy Loman, a man destroyed by false values that are in large part the values of his society.

Miller based “*The Crucible*” (1953) on the witchcraft trials in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692–1693, a series of persecutions that he considered an echo of the McCarthyism of his day, when investigations of alleged subversive activities were widespread. Though not as popular as “*Death of a Salesman*”, it won a Tony for best play.

“*A Memory of Two Mondays*” and another short play, “*A View from the Bridge*”, about an Italian-American longshoreman whose passion for his niece destroys him, were staged on the same bill in 1955. “*After the Fall*” is concerned with failure in human relationships and its consequences, large and small, by way of McCarthyism and the Holocaust; it opened in January 1964, and it was understood as largely autobiographical, despite Miller’s denials. “*Incident at Vichy*”, which began a brief run at the end of 1964, is set in Vichy France and examines Jewish identity. “*The Price*” (1968) continued Miller’s exploration of the theme of guilt and responsibility to oneself and to others by examining the strained relationship between 2 brothers.

“*The Archbishop’s Ceiling*”, produced in 1977, dealt with the Russian treatment of dissident writers. “*The American Clock*”, a series of dramatic vignettes based on Studs Terkel’s “*Hard Times*” (about the *Great Depression*), was produced in 1980. Miller’s later plays included “*The Ride Down Mount Morgan*” (1991), “*Mr. Peters’ Connections*” (1998) and “*Resurrection Blues*” (2002).

Miller also wrote a screenplay, “*The Misfits*”, for his 2nd wife, the actress Marilyn Monroe; they were married from 1956 to 1961. “*The Misfits*”, released in 1961, its filming served as the basis for Miller’s final play, “*Finishing the Picture*” (2004). “*I Don’t Need You Any More*”, a

collection of his short stories, appeared in 1967 and a collection of theatre essays in 1977. His autobiography, *"Timebends"*, was published in 1987.

Winner of many literary and dramatic award, Miller is an important force in American drama. His major characters are ordinary and suffering individuals seemingly trapped by naturalistic circumstances. And yet, Miller points out, they have dignity if not human greatness. Critical debate centers on the use or misuse of applying the norms of Aristotelian tragedy to a twentieth century democratic society. Miller has argued forcefully that a "lowman" is capable of a heroic status.

"Death of a Salesman" (1949)

"Death of a Salesman" is a play by A. Miller. It was the recipient of the 1949 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and Tony Award for Best Play. The play premiered on Broadway in February 1949, running for 742 performances, and has been revived on Broadway 4 times, winning 3 Tony Awards for Best Revival. It is widely considered to be one of the greatest plays of the 20th century.

Themes of the play are: 1) reality and illusion; 2) the American Dream.

Miller had been exploring the ideas underlying *"Death of a Salesman"* since he was a teenager, when he wrote a story about a Jewish salesman; he also drew on memories of an uncle.

"Death of a Salesman" is a tragedy about the differences between the Loman family's dreams and the reality of their lives. The play is a scathing critique of the American Dream and of the competitive, materialistic American society of the late 1940s. The storyline features Willy Loman, an average guy who attempts to hide his averageness and failures behind increasingly delusional hallucinations as he strives to be a "success." Thus, the play addresses loss of identity and a man's inability to accept change within himself and society. The play is a montage of memories, dreams, confrontations, and arguments, all of which make up the last 24 hours of Willy Loman's life. The play concludes with Willy's suicide and subsequent funeral.

For Miller, it was important to place "the common man" at the center of a tragedy. As he wrote in 1949: "The quality in such plays that does shake us... derives from the underlying fear of being displaced, the disaster inherent in being torn away from our chosen image of what and who we are in this world. Among us today this fear is as strong, and perhaps stronger, than it ever was. In fact, it is the common man who knows this fear best".

Study Questions:

1. Critics have disagreed as to whether *"Death of a Salesman"* can be called a tragedy. Most of the debate centers on whether or not Willy Loman has the stature of a tragic hero. What admirable characteristics does Willy have? Could any of his desires or motivations be called noble? Consider particularly Willy's motivations in committing suicide. Can they be proved? In what respect are they mistaken? Does Willy make any "discovery" before his death? If so, does it involve an increase in his self-knowledge?
2. Critics generally agree that the theme of *"The Crucible"* emerges from the drama implicit in the play. What, in your view, is the theme of the play? The contemporary appeal of the play can hardly be attributed to the Salem witch-hunt and of the 1950s. Why then has *"The Crucible"* held up so well? What makes it still worth reading and performing?

Selected Sources 2011-Present:

1. Martin, Robert A., ed. *Arthur Miller*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2012.
2. Martine, James J. *Critical Essays on Arthur Miller*. Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 2011.

4. Tennessee Williams (1911-1983). "A Streetcar Named Desire".

Primary Works: Plays: *"American Blues"* (1939), *"The Glass Menagerie"* (1944), *"Battle of Angels"* (1945), *"A Streetcar Named Desire"* (1947), *"Summer and Smoke"* (1948), *"The Rose*

Tattoo” (1951), “*Camino Real*” (1953), “*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*” (1955), “*Baby Doll*” (1956), “*Orpheus Descending*” (1958), “*The Fugitive Kind*” (1958), “*Suddenly Last Summer*” (1958), “*Sweet Bird of Youth*” (1959), “*Period of Adjustment*” (1960), “*The Night of the Iguana*” (1961), “*Kingdom of Earth*” (1967), “*Dragon Country*” (1970), “*Out Cry*” (1973), “*Vieux Carré*” (1977), “*A Lovely Sunday for Crève Coeur*” (1978–79), “*Clothes for a Summer Hotel*” (1980), “*Something Cloudy, Something Clear*” (1981). **Novels:** “*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*” (1950), “*Moise and The World of Reason*” (1975). **Poems:** “*In the Winter of Cities*” (1956). **Autobiography:** “*Memoirs*” (1975).

A Brief Biography of Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams, original name Thomas Lanier Williams (born March 26, 1911, Columbus, Miss., U.S.—died Feb. 25, 1983, New York City), American dramatist whose plays reveal a world of human frustration in which passion and violence underlie an atmosphere of romantic gentility.

Williams became interested in playwriting while at the University of Missouri (Columbia) and Washington University (St. Louis) and worked at it even during the *Great Depression* while employed in a St. Louis shoe factory. Little theatre groups produced some of his work, encouraging him to study dramatic writing at the University of Iowa, where he earned a B.A. in 1938.

His 1st recognition came when “*American Blues*” (1939), a group of 1-act plays, won a Group Theatre award. Williams, however, continued to work at jobs ranging from theatre usher to Hollywood scriptwriter until success came with “*The Glass Menagerie*” (1944). In it, Williams portrayed a declassed Southern family living in a tenement. The play is about the failure of a domineering mother, Amanda, living upon her delusions of a romantic past, and her cynical son, Tom, to secure a suitor for Tom’s crippled and painfully shy sister, Laura, who lives in a fantasy world with a collection of glass animals.

Williams’ next major play, “*A Streetcar Named Desire*” (1947), won a Pulitzer Prize. It is a study of the mental and moral ruin of Blanche Du Bois, another former Southern belle, whose genteel pretensions are no match for the harsh realities symbolized by her brutish brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski.

In 1953, “*Camino Real*”, a complex work set in a mythical, microcosmic town whose inhabitants include Lord Byron and Don Quixote, was a commercial failure, but his “*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*” (1955), which exposes the emotional lies governing relationships in the family of a wealthy Southern planter, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize and was successfully filmed, as was “*The Night of the Iguana*” (1961), the story of a defrocked minister turned sleazy tour guide, who finds God in a cheap Mexican hotel. “*Suddenly Last Summer*” (1958) deals with lobotomy and cannibalism, and in “*Sweet Bird of Youth*” (1959), the gigolo hero is castrated for having infected a Southern politician’s daughter with venereal disease.

Williams was in ill health frequently during the 1960s, compounded by years of addiction to sleeping pills and liquor, problems that he struggled to overcome after a severe mental and physical breakdown in 1969. His later plays were unsuccessful, closing soon to poor reviews. They include “*Vieux Carré*” (1977), about down-and-outs in New Orleans; “*A Lovely Sunday for Crève Coeur*” (1978–79), about a fading belle in St. Louis during the *Great Depression*; and “*Clothes for a Summer Hotel*” (1980), centering on Zelda Fitzgerald, wife of novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald, and on the people they knew.

Williams also wrote 2 novels, “*The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*” (1950) and “*Moise and the World of Reason*” (1975), essays, poetry, film scripts, short stories, and an autobiography, “*Memoirs*” (1975). His works won 4 Drama Critics’ awards and were widely translated and performed around the world.

A gifted writer and recipient of many literary awards, T. Williams is now recognized as an innovator of the new American drama after the end of World War II. Many of his plays have

shocked audiences; they display violence, alcoholism and fetishism in terms that were never before seen on the American stage. His pervasive theme is the inescapable loneliness of human condition. His characters are faded men and women, consumed by time and decay; many (like Amanda, Laura, and Tom Wingfield, Jim O'Connor, Big Daddy, Big Mama, Brick and Maggie), have become memorable.

“A Streetcar Named Desire” (1947)

“*A Streetcar Named Desire*” ensured that T. Williams’ name would never leave the ranks of the playwright elite even decades after his death. The play, which tells the story of an aging Southern belle’s difficult relationship with her aggressive brother-in-law, was successful both commercially and critically. It opened in December of 1947 on Broadway and ran for over 2 full years, earning 2 Tony awards for the stage production and the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

The structure of this play is best seen through a series of confrontations between Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski. In the 1st scene the confrontation is not so severe, but it increases in severity until 1 of the 2 must be destroyed. To understand fully the scenes of confrontations, readers should have a good understanding of what is at stake in each encounter. That is, they should understand some of the differences between the DuBois world and the Kowalski world. Thus the play is structured on the principle of presenting the 2 worlds, establishing what each world believes in, and then placing these worlds in a series of direct confrontations until 1 is destroyed.

Study Questions:

1. Williams is really a moral symbolist who projects the tradition of Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, and Faulkner into the present. More than any of these writers, however, he has made the mystery of his central metaphor. Explain.
2. Williams instinctively understands the loneliness of a human being - his or her constant and desperate attempt to escape the reality that is their loneliness - and their subsequent failure to do so. Find the proof in his plays.
3. In what way does Williams make the audience consider some of his plays "tragic"?

Selected Sources 2015-Present:

1. Spoto, Donald. *The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2015.
2. Williams, Tennessee. *Memoirs*. New York: Doubleday, 2015.

Lecture 9. American Science Fiction

Plan:

1. Basic Traits of American Science Fiction.
2. Ray Bradbury. "Fahrenheit 451".
3. Isaac Asimov. "I, Robot".
4. Stephen King. "The Man in the Black Suit".

1. Basic Traits of American Science Fiction.

Science fiction (SF), a literary genre in which a background of science or pseudoscience is an integral part of the story. Although SF is a form of fantastic literature, many of the events recounted are within the realm of future possibility, e.g., robots, space travel, interplanetary war, invasions from outer space.

SF is generally considered to have had its beginnings in the late 19th century with the romances of Jules Verne and the novels of H.G. Wells.

In the U.S., SF developed in the 1920's along the lines of scientific and technical predictions (H. Gernsback) and space adventures (E. Smith, E. Hamilton, and E. Burroughs). The best works of American postwar SF, foreshadowed in the 1930's by the works of J. Campbell, rose to the level of serious social criticism and philosophical generalization (for example, the works of R. Bradbury, W. Tenn, F. Pohl, C. Kornbluth, R. Heinlein, R. Sheckley, and K. Vonnegut), paralleling, as it were, the literature of critical realism and the political-warning novel. However, in the late 1960's and early 1970's, this trend was replaced by a "new wave" of sci-fi writers (S. Delany, R. Zelazny) who reflected the modernist concern with innovative forms. The works of these writers have fantastic descriptions of the "inner space" of the human mind.

In 1926, Hugo Gernsback founded the pulp magazine *Amazing Stories*, devoted exclusively to SF, particularly to serious explorations into the future. Good writing in the field was further encouraged when John W. Campbell, Jr., founded *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1937. In that magazine much attention was paid to literary and dramatic qualities, theme, and characterization; Campbell "discovered" and popularized many important sci-fi writers, including Isaac Asimov, Frederic Brown, A. E. van Vogt, Lewis Padgett, Eric Frank Russell, Clifford Simak, Theodore Sturgeon, Fritz Leiber, Murray Leinster, Robert Heinlein, Raymond F. Jones, and Robert Sheckley.

SF has established itself as a legitimate branch of literature. C.S. Lewis's "*Out of the Silent Planet*" (1938) used SF as a vehicle for theological speculation, and works such as Aldous Huxley's "*Brave New World*" (1932), George Orwell's "*Nineteen Eighty-four*" (1949), Ray Bradbury's "*Fahrenheit 451*" (1953), and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.'s "*Cat's Cradle*" (1963) demonstrate the particular effectiveness of the genre as an instrument of social criticism. Sci-fi literature anticipates and comments on political and social concerns, and a variety of SF subgenres have emerged: feminist SF; disaster novels and novels treating the world emerging from a disaster's wake; stories postulating alternative worlds; fantastic voyages to "inner space"; and "cyberpunk" novels set in "cyberspace," a realm where computerized information possesses three dimensions in a "virtual reality".

The rich variety of notable sci-fi writing to emerge since the "classic" work of Asimov, Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, and Ray Bradbury includes Frank Herbert's "*Dune*" (1965) and its sequels, which conjured up a desert world where issues of ecology, ethics, and human destiny and evolution were played out; Philip K. Dick's satirical and philosophical vision of post-nuclear war southern California in novels such as "*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*" (1968) and "*Valis*" (1981); the apocalyptic disaster fiction of J. G. Ballard, including "*The Crystal World*" (1966) and

"*Vermilion Sands*" (1971); the rigorously science-based works of Poul Anderson, such as "*Tau Zero*" (1970) and "*The Boat of a Million Years*" (1989); Michael Crichton's best-selling sci-fi suspense novels, particularly "*The Andromeda Strain*" (1969) and "*Jurassic Park*" (1990); William Gibson's evocations of urban "cyberpunk" desolation in novels such as "*Count Zero*" (1986) and "*Mona Lisa Overdrive*" (1988); Doris Lessing's "*Canopus in Argos: Archives*", a series of 4 novels (1979–1983) that explores the possibilities of a feminist utopia; and the writing of Ursula Le Guin, who has imagined ecological utopias in works such as "*Always Coming Home*" (1985) and "*The Word for World is Forest*" (1986).

Over recent decades, SF has become popular in the nonliterary media, including film, television, and electronic games. "*Star Wars*" (1977) and its sequels and prequel, "*Close Encounters of the Third Kind*" (1977), and "*E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*" (1982) were among the most financially successful motion pictures ever produced.

Study Questions:

1. What's the line that distinguishes the SF genre from other genres such as speculative fiction or fantasy? What elements does SF have in common with these other genres? And how does it differ from them?
2. Is SF "serious" literature? Can we include the best SF works along with other canonical literary works, like those by writers such as Leo Tolstoy, Jane Austen and William Faulkner? Or is SF necessarily an "inferior" genre?
3. SF is closely associated with the novel and the short story form, given that the most famous works of SF have been written in these forms. That said, do you think that we can have a science fiction poem?
4. Why is SF so obsessed with time, and specifically the future? How does Sci-Fi's treatment of time challenge some of the conventional ideas we have about time? How does SF's depiction of non-human or semi-human characters challenge or redefine what we mean by the "human"?
5. How do authors use the conventions of the sci-fi genre to say something about our own time and place? Why do you think SF lends itself to being used in this allegorical way?
6. Why do you think male writers are overrepresented in the sci-fi genre? Why don't we have more women writing science fiction?
7. Is SF "entertainment" or is it "literature"? How does "entertainment" overlap with "literature" and how does it diverge from it?
8. Why is the idea of the journey or the voyage so central to SF?
9. What's up with Sci-Fi's obsession with outer space? Why is it that sci-fi writers find this realm so fascinating, and why do they like writing about it so much?

Selected Sources 2011-Present:

1. Aldiss, B. *Billion Year Spree: The History of Science Fiction*. –NY: Doubleday, 2013.
2. Barron, N. *Anatomy of Wonder*. –Boston: TC Press, 2011.
3. Gunn, J. *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*. –NY: Doubleday, 2016.
4. Harrison, H., Aldiss, B.W. *Astounding-Analog Reader*. –NY: Doubleday, 2013.
5. James, E., Mendelsohn, F. *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. –NY: Doubleday, 2013.
6. Rabkin, E., *Science Fiction*. –NY: MacMillan, 2013.
7. Stableford, B. *Masters of Science Fiction*. –NY: MacMillan, 2011.

2. Ray Bradbury (1920-2012). "Fahrenheit 451".

Primary Works: Short stories: "*Hollerbochen's Dilemma*" (1938), "*Pendulum*" (1941), "*The Veldt*" (1951), "*The Golden Apples of the Sun*" (1953), "*The Fog Horn*" (1953), "*A Sound of*

Thunder" (1953), *"All Summer in a Day"* (1959), *"Death Is a Lonely Business"* (1985), *"A Graveyard for Lunatics"* (1990), *"Let's All Kill Constance"* (2002). **Short story collections:** *"Dark Carnival"* (1947), *"The Illustrated Man"* (1951), *"A Medicine for Melancholy"* (1959), *"The Machineries of Joy"* (1964), *"I Sing the Body Electric!"* (1969), *"The October Country"* (1970). **Novels:** *"Fahrenheit 451"* (1953), *"Dandelion Wine"* (1957), *"Something Wicked This Way Comes"* (1962), *"Green Shadows, White Whale"* (1992), *"Farewell Summer"* (2006). **Series of short stories:** *"The Martian Chronicles"* (1950). **Collection of short plays:** *"The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics"* (1963).

A Brief Biography of Ray Bradbury

Ray Douglas Bradbury, (born August 22, 1920, Waukegan, Illinois, U.S.—died June 5, 2012, Los Angeles, California), American author best known for his highly imaginative short stories and novels that blend a poetic style, nostalgia for childhood, social criticism, and an awareness of the hazards of runaway technology.

As a child, Bradbury loved horror films such as *"The Phantom of the Opera"* (1925); the books of L. Frank Baum and Edgar Rice Burroughs, and the 1st sci-fi magazine, *Amazing Stories*. Bradbury's family moved to Los Angeles in 1934. In 1937 Bradbury joined the Los Angeles Science Fiction League, where he received encouragement from young writers such as Henry Kuttner, Edmond Hamilton, Robert Heinlein, and Leigh Brackett, who met weekly with him. Bradbury published his 1st short story, *"Hollerbochen's Dilemma"* (1938), in the league's "fanzine" *Imagination!* In 1939 Bradbury traveled to the 1st World Science Fiction convention, in New York City, where he met many of the genre's editors. He made his 1st sale to a professional SF magazine in 1941, when his short story *"Pendulum"* (written with Henry Hasse) was published in *Super Science Stories*. Many of Bradbury's earliest stories, with their elements of fantasy and horror, were published in *Weird Tales*. Most of these stories were collected in his 1st book of short stories, *"Dark Carnival"* (1947). Bradbury's style, with its rich use of metaphors and similes, stood out from the more utilitarian work that dominated pulp magazine writing.

In the mid-1940s Bradbury's stories started to appear in major magazines. *"The Martian Chronicles"* (1950), a series of short stories, depicts Earth's colonization of Mars, which leads to the extinction of an idyllic Martian civilization. However, in the face of an oncoming nuclear war, many of the settlers return to Earth, and after Earth's destruction, a few surviving humans return to Mars to become the new Martians. The short-story collection *"The Illustrated Man"* (1951) included one of his most famous stories, *"The Veldt"*, in which a mother and father are concerned about the effect their house's simulation of lions on the African veldt is having on their children.

Bradbury's next novel, *"Fahrenheit 451"* (1953), is regarded as his greatest work. In a future society where books are forbidden, Guy Montag, a "fireman" whose job is the burning of books, takes a book and is seduced by reading. *"Fahrenheit 451"* has been acclaimed for its anti-censorship themes and its defense of literature against the encroachment of electronic media.

The collection *"The Golden Apples of the Sun"* (1953) contained *"The Fog Horn"*, about 2 lighthouse keepers' terrifying encounter with a sea monster; the title story, about a rocket's dangerous journey to scoop up a piece of the Sun; and *"A Sound of Thunder"*, about a safari back to the Mesozoic to hunt a Tyrannosaurus. In 1954 Bradbury spent 6 months in Ireland with director John Huston working on the screenplay for the film *"Moby Dick"* (1956), an experience Bradbury later fictionalized in his novel *"Green Shadows, White Whale"* (1992). After the release of *Moby Dick*, Bradbury was in demand as a screenwriter in Hollywood and wrote scripts for Playhouse 90, Alfred Hitchcock Presents, and The Twilight Zone.

One of Bradbury's most personal works, *"Dandelion Wine"* (1957), is an autobiographical novel about a magical but too brief summer of a 12-year-old boy in Green Town, Illinois (a fictionalized version of his childhood home of Waukegan). His next collection, *"A Medicine for Melancholy"* (1959), contained *"All Summer in a Day"*, a poignant story of childhood cruelty on

Venus, where the Sun comes out only every 7 years. The Midwest of his childhood was once again the setting of *"Something Wicked This Way Comes"* (1962), in which a carnival comes to town run by the mysterious and evil Mr. Dark. The next year, he published his 1st collection of short plays, *"The Anthem Sprinters and Other Antics"*.

In the 1970s Bradbury no longer wrote short fiction at his previous pace, turning his energy to poetry and drama. Earlier in his career he had sold several mystery short stories, and he returned to the genre with *"Death Is a Lonely Business"* (1985), an homage to the detective stories of writers such as Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett mixed with an autobiographical setting of 1949 Venice, California, where Bradbury lived at the time. 2 sequels, *"A Graveyard for Lunatics"* (1990) and *"Let's All Kill Constance"* (2002), mined his experiences in 1950s and '60s Hollywood. His final novel, *"Farewell Summer"* (2006), was a sequel to *"Dandelion Wine"*.

Bradbury was often considered a sci-fi author, but he said that his only SF book was *"Fahrenheit 451"*. Strictly speaking, much of his work was fantasy, horror, or mysteries. He said, "I use a scientific idea as a platform to leap into the air and never come back". He received many honors for his work including an Emmy for his animated adaptation of *"The Halloween Tree"* (1994) and the National Medal of Arts (2004). In 2007 the Pulitzer Prize Board awarded Bradbury a Special Citation for his distinguished career. In all, Bradbury has published more than thirty books, close to 600 short stories, and numerous poems, essays, and plays. His short stories have appeared in more than 1,000 school curriculum "recommended reading" anthologies.

"Fahrenheit 451" (1953)

"Fahrenheit 451" is a dystopian novel. It is regarded as one of his best works. The novel presents a future American society where books are outlawed and "firemen" burn any that are found.

The story of fireman Guy Montag 1st appeared in *"The Fireman"*, a short story by Ray Bradbury published in *Galaxy Science Fiction* in 1951. Montag's story was expanded 2 years later, in 1953, and was published as *"Fahrenheit 451"*. The novel is divided into 3 parts: "The Hearth and the Salamander", "The Sieve and the Sand", and "Burning Bright".

"Fahrenheit 451", which takes its title from the temperature at which paper burns, takes place in a sterile, futuristic society in which firemen burn books because the state has decided that books make people unhappy. Suspected readers are arrested. Instead of reading, people listen to "seashells", tiny radios that fit in the ear, and watch insipid television shows projected on wall-to-wall screens. In school, students play sports and learn nothing. Fast driving is encouraged, and pedestrians are arrested. Indiscriminate drug use, suicide, overpopulation, and war are rampant. In this world lives Guy Montag, the main character, who smilingly and unquestioningly accepts his job as a fireman. Guy's wife, Mildred, watches endless hours of television and overdoses on narcotics. Early in the novel, a young neighbor, Clarisse, shocks Guy by asking whether he ever reads the books he burns and whether he is happy.

The novel has been the subject of interpretations focusing on the historical role of book burning in suppressing dissenting ideas. In a 1956 radio interview, Bradbury stated that he wrote *Fahrenheit 451* because of his concerns at the time (during the McCarthy era) about the threat of book burning in the U.S. In later years, he stated his motivation for writing the book in more general terms.

In 1954, *"Fahrenheit 451"* won the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature and the Commonwealth Club of California Gold Medal. It has since won the Prometheus "Hall of Fame" Award in 1984 and a 1954 "Retro" Hugo Award, 1 of only 4 Best Novel Retro Hugos ever given, in 2004. Bradbury was honored with a Spoken Word Grammy nomination for his 1976 audiobook version.

Study Questions:

1. What literary genres are favorite for Bradbury? Give examples.

2. What was the role of scientific idea in Bradbury's works?

"Fahrenheit 451":

1. How plausible is the future envisioned in this novel? Specifically, do you think the author provides a convincing account of how censorship became so rampant in this society?
2. Why do you think Beatty hates books?
3. Read the poem "*Dover Beach*" by Matthew Arnold. In what ways is it significant that Montag reads this particular poem to Mildred and her friends?
4. How does Faber define the value of books? Does his definition of "quality" apply to media other than printed books? Do you think his definitions are accurate or not? Explain.
5. Discuss Montag's relationship with Mildred. Is this a typical marital relationship in their culture? Discuss the role of family in the characters' lives, particularly in relation to the TV parlor "families" and their nature and function.
6. Describe Clarisse's effect on Montag and her function in the novel. How and why does she change him? Why does she vanish from the novel?
7. Discuss the use of quotations from literature in "*Fahrenheit 451*". Which works are quoted and to what effect? Pay specific attention to "*Dover Beach*" and quotes from William Shakespeare.

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2. Nolan, William F. *Nolan on Bradbury: Sixty Years of Writing about the Master of Science Fiction*. NY: Hippocampus, 2013.
3. Weller, Sam. *Listen to the Echoes: The Ray Bradbury Interviews*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House, 2010.

3. Isaac Asimov (1920-1992). "I, Robot".

Primary Works: *The Robot Series*: "*The Caves of Steel*" (1954), "*The Naked Sun*" (1957), "*The Robots of Down*" (1983), "*Robots and Empire*" (1985). *Galactic Empire Novels*: "*The Currents of Space*" (1952), "*The Stars, Like Dust*" (1951), "*Pebble in the Sky*" (1950). *Foundation Trilogy*: *Prequels*: "*Prelude to Foundation*" (1988), "*Forward the Foundation*" (1993), *Original Trilogy*: "*Foundation*" (1951), "*Foundation and Empire*" (1952), "*Second Foundation*" (1953), *Sequels*: "*Foundation's Edge*" (1982), "*Foundation and Earth*" (1986). "*Lucky Starr*" Series (1952-1958), "*Norby*" *Chronicles* (1983-1991), "*The End of Eternity*" (1955), "*Fantastic Voyage*" (1966), "*The Gods Themselves*" (1972), "*Fantastic Voyage II: Destination Brain*" (1987), "*Nemesis*" (1989), "*Nightfall*" (1989), "*The Bicentennial Man*" (1976). *Short Story Collections*: "*I, Robot*" (1950), "*Asimov's Mysteries*" (1968), "*The Complete Robot*" (1982), "*Robot Dreams*" (1986). "*Black Widowers*" Series (1974-2003).

A Brief Biography of Isaac Asimov

Isaac Asimov, (born January 2, 1920, Petrovichi, Russia—died April 6, 1992, New York, New York, U.S.), American author and biochemist, a highly successful and prolific writer of SF and of science books for the layperson. He published about 500 volumes.

Asimov was brought to the U.S. at age 3. He grew up in Brooklyn, New York, graduating from Columbia University in 1939 and taking a Ph.D. there in 1948. He then joined the faculty of Boston University, with which he remained associated thereafter.

Asimov began contributing stories to sci-fi magazines in 1939 and in 1950 published his 1st book, "*Pebble in the Sky*". His trilogy of novels, "*Foundation*", "*Foundation and Empire*", and "*Second Foundation*" (1951–53), which recounts the collapse and rebirth of a vast interstellar empire in the universe of the future, is his most famous work of SF. In the short-story collection

"I, Robot" (1950; filmed 2004), he developed a set of ethics for robots and intelligent machines (his "Three Laws of Robotics") that greatly influenced other writers' treatment of the subject.

His other novels and collections of stories included *"The Stars, like Dust"* (1951), *"The Currents of Space"* (1952), *"The Caves of Steel"* (1954), *"The Naked Sun"* (1957), *"Earth Is Room Enough"* (1957), *"Foundation's Edge"* (1982), and *"The Robots of Dawn"* (1983). His *"Nightfall"* (1941) is thought by many to be the finest SF short story ever written.

Among Asimov's books on various topics in science, written with lucidity and humor, are *"The Chemicals of Life"* (1954), *"Inside the Atom"* (1956), *"The World of Nitrogen"* (1958), *"Life and Energy"* (1962), *"The Human Brain"* (1964), *"The Neutrino"* (1966), *"Science, Numbers, and I"* (1968), *"Our World in Space"* (1974), and *"Views of the Universe"* (1981). He also published 2 volumes of autobiography.

"I, Robot" (1950)

"I, Robot" is a collection of 9 short stories by sci-fi writer Isaac Asimov. The stories 1st appeared in sci-fi magazines between 1940 and 1950, the year they 1st appeared together in book form.

The stories are linked by a framing narrative involving an interview between a reporter and retired robopsychologist Susan Calvin, who relates her work with dysfunctional robots and the problems inherent in human-robot interactions. The 9 stories include: *"Robbie"* (1940, 1950), *"Runaround"* (1942), *"Reason"* (1941), *"Catch That Rabbit"* (1944), *"Liar!"* (1941), *"Little Lost Robot"* (1947), *"Escape!"* (1945), *"Evidence"* (1946), *"The Evitable Conflict"* (1950).

Although the stories can be read separately, they share a theme of the interaction of humans, robots, and morality, and when combined they tell a larger story of Asimov's fictional history of robotics.

It is in these stories that Asimov took the fundamental step of treating robots not like Frankenstein's monster, something created by mad scientists that eventually threatens its creator (what Asimov termed the "Frankenstein complex"), but as aware entities with their own set of programmed ethics. In the story *"Runaround,"* Asimov sets forth his famed *Three Laws of Robotics*:

1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.

2) robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the 1st Law.

3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the 1st or 2nd Law.

Asimov deliberately left loopholes in these injunctions, and each of the tales is a detective story of sorts in which Calvin or her colleagues at the U.S. Robotics and Mechanical Men Inc. - Donovan and Powell - discover which ambiguity or conflict between the laws is causing the robot to behave in an unexpected way.

The stories are arranged chronologically with the development of "positronic robots" (Asimov's term for increasingly human-like creations). The 1st robot to appear is Robbie, the perfect playmate for a young girl, who because of him becomes isolated from other children. Other robots include Nestor-10, whose programming conflict can only be solved by adjusting the 1st Law so he can allow his employers to put themselves at risk in order to do their work.

Asimov's *Three Laws* have spread throughout SF, and almost every robot in books or film is now created with these governing laws in mind.

Study Questions:

1. Do research on Asimov's 1st novels. What themes and ideas are discussed in these novels? Are there any similar characters?
2. What are specific features of Asimov's trilogy *"Foundation"*?

3. Do these *Three Laws* really make robots safer for people? Asimov goes through a few problems with these laws in his stories, but are there any other problems that you think he leaves out? And why does he wait until the 2nd story to spell out the *Three Laws*?
4. Does the Frankenstein Complex still exist – are people still afraid about technology and what it might lead to? Are people still afraid of robots today? If Asimov were alive today, what technology do you think he would want to write about to show us that we shouldn't be afraid?

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4. Olander, Joseph D., Greenberg, Martin H. *Isaac Asimov*. NY: Doubleday, 2015.
5. Patrouch, Joseph F. *The Science Fiction of Isaac Asimov*. Garden City, Interview, 2017.
6. Touponce, William F. *Isaac Asimov*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 2012.
7. White, Michael. *Asimov: The Unauthorized Life*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2014.
8. White, Michael. *Isaac Asimov: A Life of the Grand Master of Science Fiction*. Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2015.

4. Stephen King (1947-). “The Man in the Black Suit”.

Primary Works: Novels: “Salem’s Lot” (1975), “Rage” (1977), “The Shining” (1977), “The Stand” (1978), “The Dead Zone” (1979), “The Long Walk” (1979), “Firestarter” (1980), “The Way Station” (1980), “Cujo” (1981), “Roadwork” (1981), “The Running Man” (1982), “Christine” (1983), “Thinner” (1984), “It” (1986), “Misery” (1987), “The Tommyknockers” (1987), “The Dark Half” (1989), “Needful Things” (1991), “Dolores Claiborne” (1993), “Insomnia” (1994), “The Green Mile” (1996), “Bag of Bones” (1998), “Dreamcatcher” (2001), “Cell” (2006), “Lisey’s Story” (2006), “The Mist” (2007), “Duma Key” (2008), “Under the Dome” (2009), “11/22/63” (2011), “Joyland” (2013), “Doctor Sleep” (2013), “The Dark Man” (2013), “Revival” (2014), trilogy about Bill Hodges: “Mr. Mercedes” (2014) - “Finders Keepers” (2015) - “End of Watch” (2016). **Short fiction:** “Night Shift” (1978), “Nightmares and Dreamscapes” (1993), “The Man in the Black Suit” (1994), “Hearts in Atlantis” (1999), “Just After Sunset” (2008), “The Bazaar of Bad Dreams” (2015).

A Brief Biography of Stephen King

Stephen Edwin King, (born September 21, 1947, Portland, Maine, U.S.), American novelist and short-story writer whose books were credited with reviving the genre of horror fiction in the late 20th century.

King graduated from the University of Maine in 1970 with a bachelor’s degree in English. While writing short stories he supported himself by teaching and working as a janitor, among other jobs. His 1st published novel, “Carrie”, about a tormented teenage girl gifted with telekinetic powers, appeared in 1974 and was an immediate popular success.

“Carrie” was the 1st of many novels in which King blended horror, the macabre, fantasy, and SF. Among such works were “Salem’s Lot” (1975); “The Shining” (1977); “The Stand” (1978); “The Dead Zone” (1979); “Firestarter” (1980); “Cujo” (1981); “The Running Man” (1982); “Christine” (1983); “Thinner” (1984); “It” (1986); “Misery” (1987); “The Tommyknockers” (1987); “The Dark Half” (1989); “Needful Things” (1991); “Dolores Claiborne” (1993); “Dreamcatcher” (2001); “Cell” (2006); “Lisey’s Story” (2006); “Duma Key” (2008); “Under the Dome” (2009); “11/22/63” (2011); “Joyland” (2013); “Doctor Sleep” (2013), a sequel to “The Shining”; and “Revival” (2014). Most of these novels were filmed.

King published several of those works, including *"The Dead Zone"* and *"The Running Man"*, under the pseudonym Richard Bachman. A collection of the 1st 4 Bachman novels, *"The Bachman Books"* (1985), contains the essay *"Why I Was Bachman"*. *"Mr. Mercedes"* (2014), *"Finders Keepers"* (2015), and *"End of Watch"* (2016) formed a trilogy of hard-boiled crime novels centering on retired detective Bill Hodges.

King also wrote a serial novel, *"The Dark Tower"*, whose 1st installment, *"The Gunslinger"*, appeared in 1982; an 8th volume was published in 2012. A film adaptation of the series was released in 2017.

In his books King explored almost every terror-producing theme imaginable, from vampires, rabid dogs, deranged killers, and a pyromaniac to ghosts, extrasensory perception and telekinesis, biological warfare, and even a malevolent automobile.

In his later fiction, exemplified by *"Dolores Claiborne"*, King departed from the horror genre to provide sharply detailed psychological portraits of his protagonists, many of them women, who confront difficult and challenging circumstances. Though his work was sometimes disparaged as undisciplined and inelegant, King was a talented storyteller whose books gained their effect from realistic detail, forceful plotting, and the author's undoubted ability to involve and scare the reader. His work consistently addressed such themes as the potential for politics and technology to disrupt or even destroy an individual human life. Obsession, the forms it can assume, and its power to wreck individuals, families, and whole communities was a recurring theme in King's fiction, driving the narratives of *"Christine"*, *"Misery"*, and *"Needful Things"*.

By the early 1990s King's books had sold more than 100 million copies worldwide, and his name had become synonymous with the genre of horror fiction. His short fiction was collected in such volumes as *"Night Shift"* (1978), *"Nightmares and Dreamscapes"* (1993), *"Hearts in Atlantis"* (1999), *"Just After Sunset"* (2008), and *"The Bazaar of Bad Dreams"* (2015). He wrote several motion-picture screenplays.

King explored both his own career and the craft of writing in *"On Writing"* (2000), a book he completed as he was recovering from severe injuries received after being struck by a car. King experimented with different forms of book distribution: *"The Plant: Zenith Rising"* was released in 2000 solely as an e-book, distributed via the Internet, with readers asked but not required to pay for it, and the novella *"UR"* was made available in 2009 only to users of the Kindle electronic reading device. The short story *"Drunken Fireworks"* was released in 2015 as an audiobook prior to its print publication.

King received a lot of awards. Moreover, his novella *"Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption"* was the basis for the movie *"The Shawshank Redemption"* which is widely regarded 1 of the greatest films of all time. His novella *"The Way Station"* (1980) was a Nebula Award novelette nominee. His short story *"The Man in the Black Suit"* (1994) received the O. Henry Award.

"The Man in the Black Suit" (1994)

"The Man in the Black Suit" is a short story by S. King. It was originally published in the October 31, 1994 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. In 1995, it won the World Fantasy Award and the O. Henry Award for Best Short Fiction.

"The Man in the Black Suit" is a frame story. The frame consists of a decrepit old man resolving to erase his haunting memory of meeting the devil when he was nine years old. Writing it down, he believes, will give him release; and writing it in a book marked Diary and placing it by his bedside will ensure that someday someone will read his story after he is gone.

Although this short story is not formally divided into parts, it is as skillfully constructed as a well-made play, the action inside the frame unfolding organically in 5 stages. 1st, the milieu of the town of Motton in the early years of the 20th century is re-created. The world was different then. There were no neighborhoods; farms were separated by long distances and the land was largely forests and swamp. "In those days there were ghosts everywhere". 2nd, Gary's close

relationship with his parents is provided along with a vivid word picture of his mother kneading bread in her kitchen. The 3rd stage consists of Gary's journey through the woods, catching 2 fine trout, meeting the devil, and narrowly escaping with his life. Stage 4 is his joyous reunion with his father, and the 5th stage is their going back to Castle Stream to retrieve Gary's fishing gear and the father instinctively sensing that something is terribly wrong.

This is a retrospective story, the action occurring more than 80 years in the past, and yet King is able to create such convincing characters and clearly realized settings as to make the story as immediate as the present. Verisimilitude is essential to all literature, but it is especially vital to literature of the supernatural. King achieves this quality of believability by creating a narrator of unimpeachable integrity; by references to familiar places, and by a kind of matter-of-fact style of narration. The story is filled with striking images and metaphors, one of the most memorable being the narrator's comparison of his body to a child's sand castle soon to be washed away by the incoming tide.

Study Question:

1. Horror is often based on unintended consequences for well-intentioned people. How does this bear out in Stephen King's works?
2. Explore connections in the King "universe" and how it influences the reading of his novel.
3. Is there a discernible pattern to when King seeks justice in his fiction and to when he does not?
4. Explore King's use of pop culture in his writing. How he approaches it stylistically and the ways in which it enriches his work thematically.
5. In King's novels, human frailty often plays a role in the furtherance of evil. Find specific examples and trace their development in the course of his stories.
6. What do readers learn about the life of writers in King's work? How is creativity both a gift and a bane to King's characters?
7. Consider how horror unfolds in a specific King work. How does foreshadowing help lay the groundwork? What surprises occur suddenly? What twists upend expectations? In terms of technique, how successful is King when he tries to create fear?

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3. Collings, Michael R. *The Annotated Guide to Stephen King: A Primary and Secondary Sources of the Works of America's Premier Horror Writer*. Starmont House, 2016.
4. Collings, Michael R. *The Films of Stephen King*. Starmont House, 2016.

Lecture 10. American Detective Stories

Plan:

1. Modern American Detective Genre.
2. Samuel Dashiell Hammett. "The Maltese Falcon".

1. Modern American Detective Genre.

Detective fiction is a branch of crime fiction in which a detective (or detectives), either professional or amateur, investigates a crime, often murder. Detective fiction is a kind of crime fiction that focuses on the heroic detective as much as the crime itself. Though the genre is often said to have originated with writers like E.A. Poe and Steen Steensen Blicher, detective stories have been around since ancient times. Since the genre's official recognition in the 1800s, detective fiction has evolved in different ways, including adjustments to the personalities of the heroes and changes to the tone. There are also many variations on detective stories, including some that are almost like adventure stories, and others that are more like horror.

In the 1930s, the private eye genre was adopted wholeheartedly by American writers. The tough, stylish detective fiction of Dashiell Hammett, Jonathan Latimer, Erle Stanley Gardner and others explored the "mean streets" and corrupt underbelly of the U.S. Their style of crime fiction came to be known as "hardboiled", which encompasses stories with similar attitudes concentrating not on detectives but gangsters, crooks, and other committers or victims of crimes. "Told in stark and sometimes elegant language through the unemotional eyes of new hero-detectives, these stories were an American phenomenon".

In the late 1930s, Raymond Chandler updated the form with his private detective Philip Marlowe, who brought a more intimate voice to the detective than the more distanced "operatives report" style of Hammett's Continental Op stories. Despite struggling through the task of plotting a story, his cadenced dialogue and cryptic narrations were musical, evoking the dark alleys and tough thugs, rich women and powerful men about whom he wrote. Several feature and television movies have been made about the Philip Marlowe character. James Hadley Chase wrote a few novels with private eyes as the main hero, including "*Blonde's Requiem*" (1945), "*Lay Her Among the Lilies*" (1950), and "*Figure It Out for Yourself*" (1950). Heroes of these novels are typical private eyes very similar to Philip Marlowe.

Ross Macdonald, pseudonym of Kenneth Millar, updated the form again with his detective Lew Archer. Archer, like Hammett's fictional heroes, was a camera eye, with hardly any known past. "Turn Archer sideways, and he disappears", one reviewer wrote. 2 of Macdonald's strengths were his use of psychology and his beautiful prose, which was full of imagery. Like other 'hardboiled' writers, Macdonald aimed to give an impression of realism in his work through violence and confrontation. The 1966 movie "*Harper*" starring Paul Newman was based on the 1st Lew Archer story "*The Moving Target*" (1949). Newman reprised the role in "*The Drowning Pool*" in 1976.

Michael Collins, pseudonym of Dennis Lynds, is generally considered the author who led the form into the Modern Age. His PI, Dan Fortune, was consistently involved in the same sort of David-and-Goliath stories that Hammett, Chandler, and Macdonald wrote, but Collins took a sociological bent, exploring the meaning of his characters' places in society and the impact society had on people. Full of commentary and clipped prose, his books were more intimate than those of his predecessors, dramatizing that crime can happen in one's own living room.

Study Questions:

1. Do research. Define the terms “detective story”, “crime fiction” and “hard-boiled literature”. What are similarities and differences of these terms?
2. Find roots of Modern American crime fiction in previous works of American writers.
3. What realistic traits can be found in crime fiction? How do writers of detective stories achieve realistic atmosphere of their works?

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2. Samuel Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961). “The Maltese Falcon”.

Primary Works: Novels: “*Red Harvest*” (1929), “*The Dain Curse*” (1929), “*The Maltese Falcon*” (1930), “*The Glass Key*” (1931), “*The Thin Man*” (1934). **Short fiction:** “*The Barber and his Wife*” (1922); “*The Great Lovers*” (1922), “*Holiday*” (1923), “*The Crusader*” (1923), “*The Green Elephant*” (1923), “*Itchy*” (1924), “*Ber-Bulu*” (1925), “*Nightmare Town*” (1924), “*The Girl with the Silver Eyes*” (1924), “*The Big Knockover*” (1927), “*Fly Paper*” (1929), “*The Farewell Murder*” (1930), “*A Man Called Spade*” (1932), “*Two Sharp Knives*” (1934), “*Night Shade*” (1933), “*A Man Called Thin*” (1961).

A Brief Biography of Samuel Dashiell Hammett

Samuel Dashiell Hammett, (born May 27, 1894, St. Mary’s County, Md., U.S.—died Jan. 10, 1961, New York City), American writer who created the hard-boiled school of detective fiction.

Hammett left school at 13 and worked at a variety of low-paying jobs before working 8 years as a detective for the Pinkerton agency. He served in World War I, contracted tuberculosis, and spent the immediate postwar years in army hospitals. He began to publish short stories and novelettes in pulp magazines and in 1929 published 2 novels: “*Red Harvest*” and “*The Dain Curse*”, before writing “*The Maltese Falcon*” (1930), generally considered his finest work. It introduced Sam Spade, Hammett’s fictional detective creation, which became a classic of its genre.

From 1929 to 1930 Dashiell was romantically involved with Nell Martin, an author of short stories and several novels. He dedicated “*The Glass Key*” to her, and in turn, she dedicated her novel “*Lovers Should Marry*” to Hammett.

He also wrote “*The Glass Key*” (1931) and “*The Thin Man*” (1934), which initiated a motion picture and later a television series built around his detecting couple, Nick and Nora Charles. Nora was based on the playwright Lillian Hellman, with whom he formed a romantic alliance in 1930 that lasted until his death. Her “*Pentimento*” (1973) has an account of their life together.

After 1934 Hammett devoted his time to left-wing political activities and to the defense of civil liberties. He served in World War II as an enlisted man. In 1951 he went to jail for 6 months

because he refused to reveal the names of the contributors to the bail bond fund of the Civil Rights Congress, of which he was a trustee.

On January 10, 1961, Hammett died in New York City's Lenox Hill Hospital, of lung cancer, diagnosed just two months before. As a veteran of two World Wars, he was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

“The Maltese Falcon” (1930)

“*The Maltese Falcon*”, detective novel by D. Hammett. The story has been adapted several times for the cinema. The main character, Sam Spade, appears in this novel only and in 3 lesser known short stories, yet is widely cited as the crystallizing figure in the development of the hard-boiled private detective genre.

Raymond Chandler's character Philip Marlowe, for instance, was strongly influenced by Hammett's Spade. Spade was a departure from Hammett's nameless detective, The Continental Op. Sam Spade combined several features of previous detectives, most notably his cold detachment, keen eye for detail, and unflinching determination to achieve his own justice.

The novel's sustained tension is created by vivid scenes and by the pace and sparseness of the author's style. The other major attraction of the novel is its colorful cast of characters; they include the antiheroic detective Sam Spade; Brigid O'Shaughnessy, a deceptive beauty; Joel Cairo, an effeminate Levantine whose gun gives him courage; the very fat and jovial but sinister Casper Gutman; and Gutman's brigand, Wilmer, who is eager to be feared. All of them are looking for the Maltese falcon, a fabulously valuable 16th-century artifact.

The concluding chapter, in which Spade explains his uncorrupt, even if sometimes accommodating moral code, is among the most influential pieces of writing in American crime fiction, and antiheroes in the Spade mold came to dominate subsequent hard-boiled mysteries.

In 1998, the Modern Library ranked “*The Maltese Falcon*” 56th on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

Study Question:

1. Reveal the contribution of Hammett to the so-called “hard-boiled” literature.
2. What is typical in the novels by D. Hammett? Characters? Plot? Structure? Background? Prove your answer using examples taken from novels.

“The Maltese Falcon”:

1. Sam Spade's personal motivations are often difficult to decipher. Is Spade committed to his profession? Does he follow a moral code of conduct, or does he operate mostly on self-interest? Is he a hero or an antihero?
2. In what ways do money and greed motivate the characters in the novel? What might Hammett be saying about the relentless pursuit of wealth?
3. Lies and deceit abound in “*The Maltese Falcon*”. How does Spade figure out who he can trust if loyalties shift at the drop of a dime? Does Spade demonstrate loyalty to anyone? Is loyalty something that can be bought?
4. San Francisco in the 1930s as treacherous place run by ruthless tough guys. How does the setting contribute to the overall tone and atmosphere of the novel?

Selected Sources 2005-Present:

1. Layman, Richard. *Clues: A Journal of Detection; Theme Issue: Dashiell Hammett*, Winter Heldref Publications. Washington D.C. 2005
2. Thompson, George J. “*Rhino*”. *Hammett's Moral Vision*, Vince Emery Productions. San Francisco. 2007
3. Herron, Don. *The Dashiell Hammett Tour: Thirtieth Anniversary Guidebook*. Vince Emery Productions, San Francisco. 2009

Lecture 11. American Books for Children

Plan:

1. E.B. White. “Charlotte’s Web”.
2. Lyman Frank Baum. “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz”.

1. E.B. White. “Charlotte’s Web”.

Primary Works: Novels: “*The Orchard Keeper*” (1965), “*Outer Dark*” (1968), “*Child of Dark*” (1974), “*Suttree*” (1979), “*Blood Meridian*” (1985), “*The Border Trilogy*”: “*All the Pretty Horses*” (1992), “*The Crossing*” (1994), “*Cities of the Plain*” (1998), “*No Country for Old Men*” (2005; film 2007), “*The Road*” (2006; film 2009). **Plays:** “*The Stonemason*” (2001), “*The Sunset Limited*” (2006; television movie 2011). **Screenplay:** “*The Counselor*” (2013).

A Brief Biography of E.B. White

E.B. White, in full Elwyn Brooks White, (born July 11, 1899, Mount Vernon, New York, U.S.—died October 1, 1985, North Brooklin, Maine), American essayist, author, and literary stylist, whose eloquent, unaffected prose appealed to readers of all ages.

White graduated from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1921 and worked as a reporter and freelance writer before joining *The New Yorker* magazine as a writer and contributing editor in 1927. He married Katherine Sergeant Angell, *The New Yorker*’s 1st fiction editor, in 1929, and he remained with the weekly magazine for the rest of his career. White’s essays for *The New Yorker* quickly garnered critical praise. Written in a personal, direct style that showcased an affable sense of humor, his witty pieces contained musings about city life, politics, and literature, among other subjects. White also wrote poems, cartoon captions, and brief sketches for the magazine, and his writings helped establish its intellectual and cosmopolitan tone. In 1941 White edited with his wife “*A Subtreasury of American Humor*”. His 3 books for children – “*Stuart Little*” (1945, film 1999), “*Charlotte’s Web*” (1952, film 1973 and 2006), and “*The Trumpet of the Swan*” (1970) – are considered classics, featuring lively animal protagonists who seamlessly interact with the human world. In 1959 he revised and published a book by the late William Strunk, Jr., “*The Elements of Style*”, which became a standard style manual for writing in English. Among White’s other works is “*Points of My Compass*” (1962). “*Letters of E.B. White*”, edited by D.L. Guth, appeared in 1976, his collected essays in 1977, and “*Poems and Sketches of E.B. White*” in 1981. He was awarded a Presidential Medal of Freedom (1963) and a Pulitzer Prize special citation (1978).

“Charlotte’s Web” (1952)

“*Charlotte’s Web*”, classic children’s novel by E.B. White, published in 1952, with illustrations by Garth Williams. The widely read tale takes place on a farm and concerns a pig named Wilbur and his devoted friend Charlotte, the spider who manages to save his life by writing about him in her web.

Summary. Eight-year-old Fern Arable is devastated when she hears that her father is going to kill the runt of his pig’s new litter. Persuading him that the piglet has a right to life and promising to look after it, she saves the animal and names him Wilbur. When Wilbur becomes too large, Fern is forced to sell him to her uncle, Homer Zuckerman, whose barn is filled with animals who shun the newcomer.

When Wilbur discovers that he will soon be slaughtered for Christmas dinner, he is horribly distraught. He sits in the corner of the barn crying, “I don’t want to die.” Charlotte—the hairy barn spider who lives in the rafters above his sty—decides to help him. With the assistance of a sneaky rat named Templeton and some of the other animals in the barn, she writes a message in her web:

“Some Pig.” More strange messages appear in the web, sparking people from miles around to visit these “divine” manifestations and the pig that inspired them. Charlotte accompanies Wilbur to the county fair, where she spins her last note: “Humble.” Wilbur wins a special prize, and his survival is ensured.

It becomes apparent, however, that Charlotte is unwell. After laying hundreds of eggs, she is too weak to return to the Zuckerman’s farm. A saddened Wilbur takes the egg sac, leaving the dying Charlotte behind. Once home, he keeps a watchful eye on the eggs. Although most leave after hatching, three stay behind in the barn, and they and subsequent generations of Charlotte’s offspring comfort Wilbur for many years to come.

Analysis. “*Charlotte’s Web*” earned critical acclaim upon its release – Eudora Welty notably called it “just about perfect” – and it quickly became a beloved children’s classic. While humorous and charming, the novel also contains important lessons. For example, Fern’s caring for Wilbur teaches her responsibility, and she realizes that if she stands up for what she believes in she can make a difference in the world. Charlotte and Wilbur’s friendship, despite their differences in nature, teaches tolerance. As he grows up, like any child, Wilbur learns to cope with fear, loss, mortality, and loneliness. Although a story of life and death, it is also full of warmth, with silly characters such as the geese and the snobby sheep. In addition, “*Charlotte’s Web*” contains a wealth of detail about spiders and other animals, which White drew from his own life on a farm. Wilbur was allegedly inspired by an ailing pig that White tried unsuccessfully to nurse back to health. The incident served as the basis for the essay “*Death of a Pig*,” which was published in 1948, 4 years before the release of “*Charlotte’s Web*”.

2. Lyman Frank Baum (1856-1919). “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz”.

Primary Works: *Fairy Tales*: “*Father Goose*” (1899), “*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*” (1900).

A Brief Biography of Lyman Frank Baum

L. Frank Baum, in full Lyman Frank Baum, (born May 15, 1856, Chittenango, New York, U.S.—died May 6, 1919, Hollywood, California), American writer known for his series of books for children about the imaginary land of Oz.

Baum began his career as a journalist, initially in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and then in Chicago. His 1st book, “*Father Goose*” (1899), was a commercial success, and he followed it the next year with the even more popular “*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*”. A modern fairy tale, it tells the story of Dorothy, a Kansas farm girl who is blown by a cyclone to the land of Oz, where she is befriended by such memorable characters as the Tin Woodman, the Scarecrow, and the Cowardly Lion. A successful stage adaptation of the book opened in 1902 in Chicago. Its film version, in 1939, became a cinema classic and was made familiar to later generations of children through frequent showings on television.

Baum wrote 13 more Oz books, and the series was continued by another after his death. Using a variety of pseudonyms as well as his own name, Baum wrote some 60 books, the bulk of them juveniles that were popular in their day.

“The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” (1900)

“*The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*” is a modern fairy tale with a distinctly American setting, a delightfully levelheaded and assertive heroine, and engaging fantasy characters, the story was enormously popular and became a classic of children’s literature. However, by the late 20th century the 1939 film “*The Wizard of Oz*” had become more familiar than the book on which it was based.

Summary. Dorothy is a young girl who lives in a one-room house in Kansas with the careworn Uncle Henry and Aunt Em; the joy of her life is her dog, Toto. A sudden cyclone strikes, and, by the time Dorothy catches Toto, she is unable to reach the storm cellar. They are still in the house when the cyclone carries it away for a long journey. When at last the house lands, Dorothy

finds that she is in a beautiful land inhabited by very short, strangely dressed people. The Witch of the North informs her that she is in the land of the Munchkins, who are grateful to her for having killed the Wicked Witch of the East (the house having landed on the witch), thus freeing them. The Witch of the North gives Dorothy the silver shoes of the dead witch and advises her to go to the City of Emeralds to see the Great Wizard Oz, who might help her return to Kansas. The witch sends Dorothy off along the yellow brick road with a magical kiss to protect her from harm.

On the long journey to the Emerald City, Dorothy and Toto are joined by the Scarecrow, who wishes he had brains; the Tin Woodman, who longs for a heart; and the Cowardly Lion, who seeks courage. They face many trials along their route, but they overcome them all, often because of the Scarecrow's good sense, the Tin Woodman's kindness, and the bravery of the Cowardly Lion. At last they reach the Emerald City, where the Guardian of the Gates outfits them with green-lensed glasses and leads them to the Palace of Oz. Oz tells them that no favors will be granted until the Wicked Witch of the West has been killed.

The companions head to the land of the Winkies, ruled by the Wicked Witch of the West. The witch sends wolves, crows, bees, and armed Winkies to stop them, all to no avail. So she uses her Golden Cap to summon the Winged Monkeys. The Winged Monkeys destroy the Scarecrow and the Tin Woodman and cage the Cowardly Lion, but they bring Dorothy and Toto to the witch, who enslaves Dorothy. The witch wants Dorothy's shoes, which she knows carry powerful magic. She contrives to make Dorothy trip and fall, so she can grab one of the shoes. An angered Dorothy throws a bucket of water at the witch, who then melts away to nothing. Dorothy frees the Cowardly Lion and engages the help of the now free Winkies in repairing and rebuilding the Tin Woodman and the Scarecrow, and the friends return to Oz.

Oz does not summon them for several days, and, when he does admit them into his presence, he seems reluctant to grant their wishes. Toto knocks over a screen, revealing that Oz is only a common man. However, he fills the Scarecrow's head with bran and pins and needles, saying that they are brains; he puts a silk-and-sawdust heart into the Tin Woodman; and he gives the Cowardly Lion a drink that he says is courage. He and Dorothy make a balloon to carry them out of the Land of Oz, but the balloon flies away before Dorothy can board; Oz leaves the Scarecrow in charge of the Emerald City.

At the suggestion of a soldier, Dorothy and her friends go to seek the help of Glinda, the Witch of the South. They encounter several obstacles but at last reach Glinda's Castle. Glinda summons the Winged Monkeys so that they can take the Tin Woodman back to rule the Winkies, the Scarecrow back to Emerald City, and the Cowardly Lion to the forest to be king of the beasts. Then she tells Dorothy how to use the silver shoes to take her back to Kansas. Dorothy gathers up Toto, clicks her heels together three times, and says, "Take me home to Aunt Em!" She is transported back to the farm in Kansas.

Analysis. As well as being a wonderful and exciting adventure for children, the novel shows that each of the travelers already possessed what they had thought they lacked. Dorothy's pluck and the fully realized Land of Oz won over young readers, who were eager to see more adventures set in Oz. Baum wrote 13 more Oz books, and the series was continued by another writer after his death. A successful stage adaptation of the book opened in Chicago in 1902 and moved to Broadway the following year, and the 1939 musical film version starring Judy Garland became a cinema classic, made famous to later generations of children through frequent showings on television. *"The Wiz"* (1978), which starred Diana Ross as Dorothy and exchanged Kansas for New York City, was another notable adaptation.

Lecture 12. Modern American Literature.

Multicultural Literature

Plan:

1. John Gardner. "Grendel".
2. John Updike. Rabbit Series. "Rabbit, Run".
3. Ken Kesey. "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest".
4. Suzanne Collins. "Hunger Games".
5. Multicultural Literature.

1. John Gardner (1933-1982). "Grendel".

Primary Works: Novels: *"The Resurrection"* (1966), *"The Wreckage of Agathon"* (1970), *"Grendel"* (1971), *"The Sunlight Dialogues"* (1972), *"October Light"* (1976), *"Freddy's Book"* (1980), *"Mickelsson's Ghosts"* (1982). **Essay:** *"On Moral Fiction"* (1978). **Books on the raft of writing:** *"On Becoming a Novelist"* (1983), *"The Art of Fiction"* (1984). **Translation:** *"Gilgamesh: translated from the Sîn-leqi-unninn version"* (1984).

A Brief Biography of John Gardner

John Champlin Gardner, Jr., (born July 21, 1933, Batavia, N.Y., U.S.—died Sept. 14, 1982, near Susquehanna, Pa.), American novelist and poet whose philosophical fiction reveals his characters' inner conflicts.

Gardner attended Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri (A.B., 1955), and the University of Iowa (M.A., 1956; Ph.D., 1958) and then taught at various colleges and universities throughout the U.S., including Oberlin (Ohio) College, Bennington (Vermont) College, and the University of Rochester, New York.

Gardner published 2 novels, *"The Resurrection"* (1966) and *"The Wreckage of Agathon"* (1970), before his reputation was established with the appearance of *"Grendel"* (1971), a retelling of the Beowulf story from the point of view of the monster. His next novel, *"The Sunlight Dialogues"* (1972), is an ambitious epic with a large cast of characters and about a brooding, disenchanted policeman who is asked to engage a madman fluent in classical mythology. Later novels by Gardner include *"October Light"* (1976; National Book Critics Circle Award) – about an aging and embittered brother and sister living and feuding together in rural Vermont, *"Freddy's Book"* (1980), and *"Mickelsson's Ghosts"* (1982). He died in a motorcycle accident.

Gardner was also a gifted poet and a critic who published several books on Old and Middle English poetry. He expressed his views about writing in *"On Moral Fiction"* (1978), in which he deplored the tendency of many modern writers toward pessimism. His 2 books on the craft of writing fiction – *"On Becoming a Novelist"* (1983) and *"The Art of Fiction"* (1984) – are considered classics. Gardner was famously obsessive with his work, and acquired a reputation for advanced craft, smooth rhythms, and careful attention to the continuity of the fictive dream. At one level or another, his books nearly always touched on the redemptive power of art.

"Grendel" (1971)

"Grendel" is a novel by J. Gardner, retelling of part of the Old English poem *"Beowulf"* from the perspective of the antagonist, Grendel. Gardner's retelling presents the story from the existentialist view of Grendel, exploring the history of the characters before Beowulf arrives. Beowulf himself plays a relatively small role in the novel, but he is still the only human hero that can match and kill Grendel. The dragon plays a minor part as an omniscient and bored character, whose wisdom is limited to telling Grendel "to seek out gold and sit on it"; his one action in the

novel is to endow Grendel with the magic ability to withstand attacks by sword (a quality Gardner found in the original).

Pulitzer Prize winning author Jane Smiley suggests that John Gardner uses Grendel as a metaphor for the necessity for a dark side to everything; where a hero is only as great as the villain he faces. Using Grendel's perspective to tell at least part of the story of Beowulf in more contemporary language allows the story to be seen in a new light not only in terms of the point of view but also brings it into the modern era. Where Grendel is portrayed mainly as a physical creature in the original work, here a glimpse into his psyche is offered. Grendel lives in isolation and loneliness with his mother who in her old age is unable to provide any real companionship to her child. As the only being of his kind, he has no one to relate to and feels the need to be understood or have some connection. Grendel has a complex relationship with the humans who hate and fear him. He feels that he is somehow related to humanity and despite his desire to eat them, he can be moved by them and their works. His long life grants him the ability to act as a witness to how their lives transpire and their behavior and logic bewilders him. He is cursed to a life of solitude, also being portrayed as having eternal life, which furthers his plight and loneliness as he can only fall in battle and he is immune to all human weapons. He is only freed from his tormented life through his encounter with Beowulf.

Thus, Grendel is portrayed as an antihero. The novel deals with finding meaning in the world, the power of literature and myth, and the nature of good and evil.

In a 1973 interview, Gardner said: "In *Grendel* I wanted to go through the main ideas of Western Civilization – which seemed to me to be about... twelve? – and go through them in the voice of the monster, with the story already taken care of, with the various philosophical attitudes (though with Sartre in particular), and see what I could do, see if I could break out". On another occasion he noted that he "us[ed] Grendel to represent Sartre's philosophical position" and that "a lot of *Grendel* is borrowed from sections of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*".

Grendel has become one of Gardner's best known and reviewed works.

Study Questions:

1. How does Grendel narrating his own story influence how the audience might respond to it?
2. What is the role of humor in Grendel?

Selected Sources 2012-Present:

1. Nutter, Ronald G. *A Dream of Peace: Art and Death in the Fiction of John Gardner*. NY: Peter Lang. 2017.
2. Winther, Per. *The Art of John Gardner: Instruction and Exploration*. Albany: State U of New York P, 2012.

2. John Updike (1932-2009). Rabbit Series.

Primary Works: Poetry collections: *"The Carpentered Hen and Other Tame Creatures"* (1958), *"Endpoint, and Other Poems"* (2009), *"Selected Poems"* (2015). **Novels:** *"The Poorhouse Fair"* (1958), *"The Centaur"* (1963), *"Of the Farm"* (1965), *"The Angels"* (1968), *"Couples"* (1968), *"Picked-Up Pieces"* (1975), *"A Month Of Sundays"* (1975), *"Marry Me"* (1977), *"The Coup"* (1978), *"Beloved"* (1982), *"The Witches Of Eastwick"* (1984), *"Jester's Dozen"* (1984), *"The Witches of Eastwick"* (1984), *"Soft Spring Night In Shillington"* (1986), *"Roger's Version"* (1986), *"Out On The Marsh"* (1988), *"S"* (1988), *"Brazil"* (1994), *"In the Beauty of the Lilies"* (1996), *"Deadly Sins"* (1996), *"Toward The End Of Time"* (1997), *"Golf Dreams"* (1998), *"Gertrude and Claudius"* (2000), *"Seek My Face"* (2002), *"Terrorist"* (2006), *"The Widows of Eastwick"* (2008). **Rabbit series:** *"Rabbit, Run"* (1960) - *"Rabbit Redux"* (1971) - *"Rabbit Is Rich"* (1981) - *"Rabbit at Rest"* (1990) - *"Rabbit Remembered"* (2001). **Bech series:** *"Bech: A*

Book" (1970) - "*Bech Is Back*" (1982) - "*Bech at Bay*", a quasi-novel (1998). **Collections of short stories:** "*The Same Door*" (1959), "*Pigeon Feathers*" (1962), "*Museums and Women*" (1972), "*Problems*" (1979), "*To Far to Go*" (1979), "*Trust Me*" (1987), "*The Afterlife*" (1994), "*My Father's Tears, and Other Stories*" (2009). **Criticism:** "*Assorted Prose*" (1965), "*Picked-Up Pieces*" (1975), "*Hugging the Shore*" (1983), "*Odd Jobs*" (1991). **Essays:** "*Just Looking: Essays on Art*" (1989), "*Still Looking: Essays on American Art*" (2005), "*Always Looking: Essays on Art*" (2012). **Commentaries:** "*Due Considerations*" (2007) "*Higher Gossip*" (2011).

A Brief Biography of John Updike

John Hoyer Updike (born March 18, 1932, Reading, Pennsylvania, U.S.—died January 27, 2009, Danvers, Massachusetts), American writer of novels, short stories, and poetry, known for his careful craftsmanship and realistic but subtle depiction of "American small-town middle-class" life.

Updike grew up in Shillington, Pennsylvania, and many of his early stories draw on his youthful experiences there. He graduated from Harvard University in 1954. In 1955 he began an association with *The New Yorker* magazine, to which he contributed editorials, poetry, stories, and criticism throughout his prolific career. His poetry – intellectual, witty pieces on the absurdities of modern life – was gathered in his 1st book, "*The Carpentered Hen and Other Tame Creatures*" (1958), which was followed by his 1st novel, "*The Poorhouse Fair*" (1958).

About this time, Updike devoted himself to writing fiction full-time, and several works followed. "*Rabbit, Run*" (1960), which is considered to be one of his best novels, concerns a former star athlete who is unable to recapture success when bound by marriage and small-town life and flees responsibility. 3 subsequent novels, "*Rabbit Redux*" (1971), "*Rabbit Is Rich*" (1981), and "*Rabbit at Rest*" (1990) – the latter 2 winning Pulitzer Prizes – follow the same character during later periods of his life. "*Rabbit Remembered*" (2001) returns to characters from those books in the wake of Rabbit's death. "*The Centaur*" (1963) and "*Of the Farm*" (1965) are notable among Updike's novels set in Pennsylvania.

Updike continued to explore the issues that confront middle-class America, such as fidelity, religion, and responsibility. "*In the Beauty of the Lilies*" (1996) Updike draws parallels between religion and popular obsession with cinema, while "*Gertrude and Claudius*" (2000) offers conjectures on the early relationship between Hamlet's mother and her brother-in-law. In response to the cultural shifts that occurred in the U.S. after the September 11 attacks, Updike released "*Terrorist*" (2006).

Updike often expounded upon characters from earlier novels, eliding decades of their lives only to place them in the middle of new adventures. "*The Witches of Eastwick*" (1984; filmed 1987), about a coven of witches, was followed by "*The Widows of Eastwick*" (2008), which trails the women into old age. "*Bech: A Book*" (1970), "*Bech Is Back*" (1982), and "*Bech at Bay*" (1998) humorously trace the tribulations of a Jewish writer.

Updike's several collections of short stories include "*The Same Door*" (1959), "*Pigeon Feathers*" (1962), "*Museums and Women*" (1972), "*Problems*" (1979), "*Trust Me*" (1987), and "*My Father's Tears, and Other Stories*" (2009), which was published posthumously. A substantial portion of his short fiction oeuvre was published as the 2-volume "*John Updike: The Collected Stories*" (2013).

He also wrote nonfiction and criticism, much of it appearing in *The New Yorker*. It has been collected in "*Assorted Prose*" (1965), "*Picked-Up Pieces*" (1975), "*Hugging the Shore*" (1983), and "*Odd Jobs*" (1991). Essays examining art and its cultural presentation were featured in "*Just Looking: Essays on Art*" (1989), "*Still Looking: Essays on American Art*" (2005), and "*Always Looking: Essays on Art*" (2012). "*Due Considerations*" (2007) collects commentary spanning art and literature.

Updike also continued to write poetry, usually light verse. *“Endpoint, and Other Poems”*, published posthumously in 2009, collects poetry Updike had written between 2002 and a few weeks before he died; it takes his own death as its primary subject. *“Selected Poems”* (2015) broadly surveys his poetic career. *“Higher Gossip”*, a collection of commentaries, was released in 2011.

Rabbit Series. “Rabbit, Run” (1960)

Updike's most famous work is his Rabbit series: the novels *“Rabbit, Run”*; *“Rabbit Redux”*; *“Rabbit Is Rich”*; *“Rabbit at Rest”*; and the novella *“Rabbit Remembered”*. The novels chronicle the life of the middle-class everyman Harry “Rabbit” Angstrom over the course of several decades, from young adulthood to death. Both *“Rabbit Is Rich”* (1982) and *“Rabbit at Rest”* (1990) were recognized with the Pulitzer Prize.

“Rabbit, Run” is a 1960 novel by John Updike. The novel depicts three months in the life of a 26-year-old former high school basketball player named Harry ‘Rabbit’ Angstrom, and his attempts to escape the constraints of his life. It spawned several sequels.

Updike employs the present tense in his novel, a powerful literary technique which was somewhat unusual for the time. The sense is that readers are living Rabbit's life along with him, that no one knows when and where this running will lead. This technique establishes an immediacy that pulls the reader along, as in the opening: “Boys are playing basketball around a telephone pole with a backboard bolted to it. Legs, shouts”. And of course, in the conclusion: “...he runs. Ah: runs. Runs”. Movement is a central theme of the novel.

Another Updike technique, which echoes the chaos of Rabbit's life, is the use of a dense narrative, with few official interruptions of the action. Rabbit rarely pauses to think before he acts, so this format echoes the main character's sensibilities.

Study Questions:

1. Characterize Updike’s poetry. Compare it to some prolific pieces of American poetry.
2. Reveal specific features of Updike’s short stories by analyzing one of them.

“Rabbit, Run”:

1. Is Rabbit an honest person? Can we think of any instances in the novel when he lies? If we can or can’t, does that surprise us? Why or why not?
2. How does the novel’s idea depend on Updike’s picking a “rabbit” as an animal for Harry Angstrom? Does Harry’s being a “rabbit” make him more or less sympathetic to the reader?
3. Why doesn’t anyone talk about going to college in this book?
4. How do members of the society depicted in the novel treat each other?

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1. Begley, Adam. *Updike*. NY: HarperCollins, 2014.
2. De Bellis, Jack. *John Updike's Early Years*. Cranbury, NJ: Lehigh UP, 2013.
3. Mazzeno, Laurence W. *Becoming John Updike: Critical Reception, 1958-2010*. NY: Camden House, 2013.
4. Morley, Catherine. *The Quest for Epic in Contemporary American Fiction: John Updike, Philip Roth and Don DeLillo*. NY: Routledge, 2009.

3. Ken Kesey (1935-2001). “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”.

Primary Works: Novel: *“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”* (1962; film, 1975), *“Sometimes a Great Notion”* (1964), *“Caverns”* (1990), *“Sailor Song”* (1992), *“Last Go Round”* (1994). **Nonfiction:** *“Garage Sale”* (1973), *“Demon Box”* (1986), *“The Further Inquiry”* (1990). **Book for Children:** *“Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear”* (1988).

A Brief Biography of Ken Kesey

Ken Kesey, in full Ken Elton Kesey, (born September 17, 1935, La Junta, Colorado, U.S.—died November 10, 2001, Eugene, Oregon), American writer who was a hero of the countercultural revolution and the hippie movement of the 1960s.

Kesey was educated at the University of Oregon and Stanford University. At a Veterans Administration hospital in Menlo Park, California, he was a paid volunteer experimental subject, taking mind-altering drugs and reporting on their effects. This experience and his work as an aide at the hospital served as background for his best-known novel, *“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”* (1962; film, 1975), which is set in a mental hospital. He further examined values in conflict in *“Sometimes a Great Notion”* (1964).

In the nonfiction Kesey’s *“Garage Sale”* (1973), *“Demon Box”* (1986), and *“The Further Inquiry”* (1990), Kesey wrote of his travels and psychedelic experiences with the Merry Pranksters, a group that traveled together in a bus during the 1960s. Tom Wolfe recounted many of their adventures in *“The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test”* (1968). In 1967 Kesey fled to Mexico to avoid prosecution for possession of marijuana. He returned to California, served a brief sentence, and then moved to a farm near Eugene, Oregon.

In 1988 Kesey published a children’s book, *“Little Tricker the Squirrel Meets Big Double the Bear”*. With 13 of his graduate students in creative writing at the University of Oregon, he wrote a mystery novel, *“Caverns”* (1990), under the joint pseudonym of O.U. Levon, which read backward is “novel U.O. (University of Oregon).” In *“Sailor Song”* (1992), a comedy set in an Alaskan fishing village that becomes the backdrop for a Hollywood film, Kesey examined environmental crises and the end of the world. Subsequently, with the collaboration of Ken Babbs, he wrote a neo-western, *“Last Go Round”* (1994).

“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” (1962)

“One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest”, novel by Ken Kesey, first published in 1962. At a Veterans Administration hospital in Menlo Park, California, Kesey had been a paid volunteer and experimental subject, taking mind-altering drugs and recording their effects, and this experience and his work as an aide at the hospital served as fodder for this novel, his best-known work, which is set in a mental hospital. The book’s film adaptation (1975), starring Jack Nicholson as the main character, became the 1st movie since *“It Happened One Night”* (1934) to win all 5 major Academy Awards: best picture, best actor (Nicholson), best actress (Louise Fletcher), best director (Miloš Forman), and best screenplay (Bo Goldman and Lawrence Hauben).

SUMMARY: Ken Kesey’s novel depicts a mental asylum in which repeated attempts to diagnose the patients as insane are conceived as part of a larger scheme to produce pliant, docile subjects across the U.S. A key text for the antipsychiatry movement of the 1960s, it addresses the relationship between sanity and madness, conformity and rebellion. The novel remains finely balanced throughout. It is never clear, for example, whether the so-called “Combine” is, in actuality, a boundless authority designed to ensure social control across the whole population, or a projection of the narrator Chief Bromden’s paranoid imagination. Also, the question of whether insanity, to quote R. D. Laing, “might very well be a state of health in a mad world,” or at least an appropriate form of social rebellion, is raised but never quite answered.

Into the sterile, hermetically sealed world of the asylum wanders Randall P. McMurphy, a modern-day “cowboy” with a “sideshow swagger” who disrupts the ward’s smooth running and challenges the near total authority of the steely Nurse Ratched. Insofar as McMurphy’s acts of rebellion assume mostly self-interested forms, the novel’s efforts at political mobilization fall short, and there remains something uneasy about its racial and gender politics. It takes the “cowboy” McMurphy to save the “Indian” Bromden and, in the era of civil rights and feminism, the white male patients are painted as “victims of a matriarchy,” ably supported by a cabal of black orderlies.

In the end, Kesey's impressive attempts to come to grips with the amorphous nature of modern power—a power not necessarily tied to leaders or even institutions—make this a prescient, foreboding work. If McMurphy's fate is what awaits those who push too hard against the system, then Bromden's sanity depends on not turning a blind eye to injustice and exploitation.

4. Suzanne Collins (1962-). “Hunger Games”.

Primary Works: Children's novels: “*Gregor the Overlander*” (2003), “*Underland Chronicles*” (2004-2007), “*When Charlie McButton Lost Power*” (2005), “*Year of the Jungle: Memories from the Home Front*” (2013). “**Hunger Games**” **trilogy:** “*The Hunger Games*” (2008), “*Catching Fire*” (2009), “*Mockingjay*” (2010).

A Brief Biography of Suzanne Collins

Suzanne Collins, (born August 10, 1962, Hartford, Connecticut, U.S.), American author and screenwriter, best known for the immensely popular “*Hunger Games*” trilogy of young-adult novels (2008-2010).

Collins was the youngest of 4 children. Because her father was a career officer in the U.S. Air Force, the family moved frequently, and she spent time in Indiana and Belgium before graduating from high school in Birmingham, Alabama. After studying theatre and telecommunications at Indiana University (B.A., 1985), Collins received an M.F.A. in dramatic writing from New York University (1989). In the 1990s she wrote primarily for television, 1st for the short-lived sitcom *Hi Honey, I'm Home!* and then for several youth-oriented series (such as *Clarissa Explains It All*). She later served as head writer of the PBS animated children's show *Clifford's Puppy Days*.

While continuing to work in television, Collins conceived the children's novel “*Gregor the Overlander*” (2003), about an 11-year-old boy in New York City drawn into a fantastic subterranean world where humans coexist with giant anthropomorphic sewer dwellers such as rats and cockroaches. The book was commended for its vivid setting and sense of adventure, and 4 additional installments (2004-2007) in what became known as the “*Underland Chronicles*” soon followed. Despite the series' intended audience, Collins – influenced by the lessons her father had taught her as a military historian and a Vietnam War veteran – straightforwardly introduced to its narrative such grim “adult” issues as genocide and biological warfare.

Brutal combat and its consequences were also central concerns of “*The Hunger Games*” (2008), a dystopian tale in which two dozen adolescents are compelled by a futuristic authoritarian state to fight to the death in a televised competition. Inspired equally by reality television and Classical mythology, the novel, aimed at teenage readers, attracted intense interest in the plight of its headstrong 16-year-old heroine, Katniss Everdeen. As Collins extended the narrative with “*Catching Fire*” (2009) and “*Mockingjay*” (2010), the series became a mainstay on best-seller lists, especially in the U.S., and also caught on with adults, a development that provoked comparisons to the broadly popular “*Harry Potter*” and “*Twilight*” novels. Critics as well as fans admired Collins's ability to sustain a gripping plot, which was stimulated in part by an ongoing love triangle, while also engaging in a meaningful social critique of power and violence.

A film adaptation of “*The Hunger Games*”, for which Collins wrote much of the screenplay, enjoyed enormous commercial success upon its release in 2012. By that time more than 30 million copies of the trilogy were in print in the U.S. alone, and e-book sales were particularly robust. Adaptations of the remaining books appeared in 2013, 2014, and 2015; the 3rd book was released in 2 parts. In addition, Collins was the author of the children's books “*When Charlie McButton Lost Power*” (2005) and “*Year of the Jungle: Memories from the Home Front*” (2013).

“The Hunger Games” (2008-2010)

"The Hunger Games" is a trilogy of young adult dystopian novels. The series is set in specific universe, and follows young characters Katniss Everdeen and Peeta Mellark.

The novels in the trilogy are titled *"The Hunger Games"* (2008), *"Catching Fire"* (2009), and *"Mockingjay"* (2010). The novels have all been developed into films starring Jennifer Lawrence, with the film adaptation of *Mockingjay* split into 2 parts. The 1st two books in the series were both New York Times best sellers, and *"Mockingjay"* topped all U.S. bestseller lists upon its release. By the time the film adaptation of *"The Hunger Games"* was released in 2012, the publisher had reported over 26 million trilogy books in print, including movie tie-in books.

The Hunger Games universe is a dystopia set in Panem, a country consisting of the wealthy Capitol and 12 districts in varying states of poverty. Every year, children from the districts are selected to participate in a compulsory televised battle royale death match called *The Hunger Games*.

The novels were all well received. In August 2012, the series ranked 2nd, exceeded only by the *"Harry Potter"* series in NPR's poll of the top 100 teen novels, which asked voters to choose their favorite young adult books. On August 17, 2012, Amazon announced the trilogy as its top seller, surpassing the record previously held by the *"Harry Potter"* series. As of 2014, the trilogy has sold more than 65 million copies in the U.S. alone (more than 28 million copies of the 1st novel, more than 19 million copies of the 2nd novel, and more than 18 million copies of the 3rd novel). The trilogy has been sold into 56 territories in 51 languages to date.

Setting. The Hunger Games trilogy takes place in an unspecified future time, in the dystopian, post-apocalyptic nation of Panem, located in North America. The country consists of a wealthy Capitol city, located in the Rocky Mountains, surrounded by twelve (originally thirteen) poorer districts ruled by the Capitol. The Capitol is lavishly rich and technologically advanced, but the districts are in varying states of poverty. The trilogy's narrator and protagonist Katniss Everdeen, lives in District 12, the poorest region of Panem, located in Appalachia, where people regularly die of starvation. As punishment for a past rebellion against the Capitol (called the "Dark Days"), in which District 13 was supposedly destroyed, one boy and one girl from each of the twelve remaining districts, between the ages of 12 and 18, are selected by lottery to compete in an annual pageant called *The Hunger Games*. The Games are a televised event in which the participants, called "tributes", are forced to fight to the death in a dangerous public arena. The winning tribute and his/her home district are then rewarded with food, supplies, and riches. The purposes of *The Hunger Games* are to provide entertainment for the Capitol and to remind the districts of the Capitol's power and lack of remorse, forgetfulness, and forgiveness for the failed rebellion of the current competitors' ancestors.

The Hunger Games. *"The Hunger Games"* is the 1st book in the series and was released on September 14, 2008. It follows 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a girl from District 12 who volunteers for the 74th Hunger Games in place of her younger sister Primrose Everdeen. Also selected from District 12 is Peeta Mellark. They are mentored by their district's only living victor, Haymitch Abernathy, who won 24 years earlier and has since led a solitary life of alcoholism. Peeta confesses his longtime secret love for Katniss in a televised interview prior to the Games. This revelation stuns Katniss, who harbors feelings for Gale Hawthorne, her friend and hunting partner. Haymitch advises her to feign feelings for Peeta in order to gain wealthy sponsors who can provide crucial supplies to the "star-crossed lovers" during the Games. In the arena, Katniss allies with Rue, a young tribute from District 11 who reminds Katniss of her kid sister. When Rue is killed, Katniss places flowers around her body as an act of defiance toward the Capitol. Then the remaining tributes are alerted to a rule change that allows tributes from the same district to win as a team. Katniss finds a seriously wounded Peeta and nurses him back to health. When all of the other tributes are dead, the rule change is abruptly revoked. With neither willing to kill the other, Katniss comes up with a solution: a double suicide by eating poisonous berries. This forces the authorities to concede just in time to save their lives. During and after the Games, Katniss develops

genuine feelings for Peeta and struggles to reconcile them with what she feels for Gale. Haymitch warns her that the danger is far from over. The authorities are furious at being made fools of, and the only way to try to allay their anger is to pretend that her actions were because of her love for Peeta. On the journey home, Peeta is dismayed to learn of the deception.

Catching Fire. "*Catching Fire*" is the 2nd installment in the series, released on September 1, 2009. In the book, which begins 6 months after the conclusion of "*The Hunger Games*", Katniss learns that her defiance in the previous novel has started a chain reaction that has inspired rebellion in the districts. President Snow threatens to harm Katniss' family and friends if she does not help to defuse the unrest in the districts and marry Peeta. Meanwhile, Peeta has become aware of Katniss' disingenuous love for him, but he has also been informed of Snow's threats, so he promises to help keep up the act to spare the citizens of District 12. Katniss and Peeta tour the districts as victors and plan a public wedding. While they follow Snow's orders and keep up the ruse, Katniss inadvertently fuels the rebellion, and the mockingjay pin she wears becomes its symbol. District by district, the citizens of Panem begin to stage uprisings against the Capitol. Snow announces a special 75th edition of The Hunger Games – known as the Quarter Quell – in which Katniss and Peeta are forced to compete with other past victors, effectively canceling the wedding. At Haymitch's urging, the pair teams up with several other tributes, and manages to destroy the arena and escape the Games. Katniss is rescued by the rebel forces from District 13, and Gale informs her that the Capitol has destroyed District 12, and captured both Peeta and their District 7 ally, Johanna Mason. Katniss ultimately learns – to her surprise – that she had inadvertently been an integral part of the rebellion all along; her rescue had been jointly planned by Haymitch, Plutarch Heavensbee, and Finnick Odair, among others. After some hesitation Katniss joins the rebels.

Mockingjay. "*Mockingjay*", the 3rd and final book in "*The Hunger Games*" series, was released on August 24, 2010. Most of the districts have rebelled against the Capitol, led by District 13 and its President Alma Coin. The Capitol lied about the district being destroyed in the Dark Days. After a Mexican standoff with the Capitol, the District 13 residents took to living underground and rebuilding their strength. The District 12 survivors find shelter with them. Katniss, after seeing first-hand the destruction wrought on her district, agrees to become the "*Mockingjay*", the symbol of the rebellion. She sets conditions, however. Peeta, Johanna Mason, Annie Cresta, and Enobaria, fellow Games victors captured by the Capitol, are to be granted immunity. Katniss also demands the privilege of killing Snow, but Coin only agrees to flip for the honor. For her sake, a rescue mission is mounted that succeeds in rescuing Peeta, Johanna and Annie. However, Peeta has been brainwashed to kill Katniss, and he tries to choke her to death upon their reunion. He undergoes experimental treatment to try to cure him. After she recovers, Katniss and a team known as the Star Squad, composed of Gale, Peeta, Finnick, a camera crew, and various other soldiers, are assigned to film propaganda in relatively quiet combat zones. Katniss, however, decides to go to the Capitol to kill Snow, pretending that Coin gave her that mission. Most of the squad are killed along the way, including recently married Finnick. As Katniss approaches Snow's mansion, she sees a group of Capitol children surrounding it as human shields. Suddenly a hovercraft drops silver parachutes on the children, who reach for them, hoping they bear food. Some of the parachutes explode, creating carnage. The advancing rebels send in medics, including Prim. Then the rest of the parachutes blow up, killing Prim, just as she spots her sister. Later, Katniss, also injured, awakens from a coma to learn that the rebels have won, and Snow is awaiting execution at her hands. When she meets Snow by chance, he claims that it was Coin who secretly ordered the bombings in order to strip away the support of his remaining followers. Coin then asks the surviving victors to vote on a final Hunger Games, involving the children of high-ranking Capitol officials (including Snow's granddaughter). Katniss and Haymitch cast the deciding votes in favor of the scheme. However, at what is supposed to be Snow's execution, Katniss instead kills Coin with her bow. Snow laughs, then dies. Katniss is tried, but the jury believes she was mentally unfit, and she is sent home to District 12. Both Katniss'

mother and Gale take jobs in other districts. Peeta regains his sanity. Katniss settles down with him, and after many years of persuasion by him, she finally agrees to have children. They have a girl and then a boy.

5. Multicultural Literature

Since 1970 American literature has been characterized by an extraordinary proliferation of imaginative writing, a good deal of it by African, Native, Asian, and Latino Americans who have found success in all literary genres: fiction, poetry, memoir, autobiography and drama. Many of these works appear on best-seller lists and are featured as required reading for colleges and secondary schools. While this body of texts continues to grow, scholars have been looking backward to recover and recuperate lost or forgotten works, some of them non-English-language texts or those that were transmitted orally, including songs of enslaved African Americans or Asians imported for their labor, Hawaiian chants, the graffiti poems of Angel Island detainees, Native American orations, and travel accounts by Spanish explorers, some dating back to the 16th century.

With such diversity, one could argue that American literature has always been multicultural, perhaps even “global”; expressions of literary multiculturalism and globalization, however, do not merely involve acknowledging the presence of writers with diverse backgrounds and histories. Understanding multiculturalism merely as the existence of “minority” groups or as “a synonym of pluralism” divests it of its connection to movements for social justice and change embodied by the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Acknowledging cultural diversity not only uncovers a rich literary history; it brings into focus the monocultural or racist thinking that had been and is responsible for the erasure of works, while also helping us to reconsider how we interpret “canonical” works that had never been neglected or lost – those by writers such as Mark Twain, T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and William Faulkner. Thinking in multicultural or global terms helps not only to expand the American literary canon but also to transform the way it is interpreted. While writing of the 1970s focused on defining overlooked and marginalized literary traditions, history, and identity, over time literary study has expanded to encompass transnationalism, comparative race and ethnic studies, and Postmodernist / poststructuralist ideas.

The increasing attention to and availability of multicultural literary texts in the 1970s were a reflection of the social movements of the previous decades. In this and the preceding decade, writers sought to define separate literary traditions associated with their different racial and ethnic groups. Many Americans insisted that all blacks were alike, as were Asians, Latinos, and Indians, that they were non-American regardless of ancestry and nativity, bound together by cultural otherness and their inability or unwillingness to assimilate. To combat invisibility and resist stereotypes, many wrote autobiographies and coming-of-age novels, emphasizing their historical presence in the U.S. as well as ethnic or cultural pride. For instance, the title character of **Nicholas Mohr**’s “*Nilda*” (1973) feels the humiliation of being Puerto Rican and poor in New York City; yet, the use of Spanglish and portrayals of an extended family and community in the autobiographical novel express a vibrant cultural synthesis. In **Tomás Rivera**’s Spanish-language novel “...y no se lo tragó la tierra” (1971; translated as “...and the Earth Did Not Devour Him”, 1987), **Rudolfo A. Anaya**’s “*Bless Me, Ultima*” (1972), and Rolando **Hinojosa-Smith**’s “*Estampas del valle y otras obras*” (1973; translated as “*Sketches of the Valley and Other Works*”; rewritten in English as “*The Valley*”, 1983) the writers draw a connection between Chicanos and the landscape of the Southwestern U.S., a part of Mexico until the mid-19th century. Likewise, in “*Homebase*” (1979) **Shawn Wong** traces the contributions of four generations of a Chinese immigrant family to American history as agricultural workers and builders of the cross-continental railroad.

The struggle to define an alternative identity and positive presence in American letters led to a type of cultural nationalism that promoted strict and usually narrow visions of identity. For some, insisting on a unitary identity, however, seemed the only effective, albeit limited, means of opposing and defending oneself against marginalization.

Wong, Jeffery Paul Chan, Frank Chin, and Lawson Fusao Inada, the editors of “*Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers*” (1974) and its expanded 1991 version, “*The Big Aiiieeeee!*”, posited the notion of an “Asian universal knowledge” embedded in “Cantonese operas and Kabuki” and other “artistic enterprises” of Asian immigrants. In the anthology and their respective works, these writers focused on American-born male writers; in addition, they identified writers only of Chinese and Japanese descent, the most established Asian American groups.

Likewise, works by **Chicanos** (a category of Hispanic American writing) tended to define identity narrowly. **Luis Valdez**, in plays such as “*Los Vendidos*” (1976) and in his work with the grassroots theater company “*El Teatro Campesino*”, for example, distinguished Chicano identity as “exclusively working-class, Spanish-speaking or bilingual, rurally oriented, and with a strong heritage of pre-Columbian culture”. Representations of other Latinos or Asian ethnic groups were obviously excluded by these definitions, as were female and gay experiences. Even in their later expanded anthology, **Chan** and his colleagues singled out their contemporaries **Maxine Hong Kingston** and **Amy Tan** for what they considered to be “fake” versions of Chinese culture and history and described **David Henry Hwang’s** “*M. Butterfly*” (1988) as stereotype based on gender in addition to race. Chicanas such as **Gloria Anzaldúa** and **Cherrie Moraga**, too, felt the sting of cultural nationalism when they “were identified as man haters, frustrated women, and ‘agringadas,’ Anglicized”.

Just as it is impossible to speak of American literature as a singular entity, it is impossible to describe the literary traditions of various racial or ethnic groups as homogenous. Writers emerging after the early attempts to establish cultural literary traditions began to recognize the limitations of narrowly defined Latino, black, Native American, or Asian American identity. While cultural nationalisms formed a critical response to the racism and ethnocentrism of the dominant culture, they failed to recognize that ethnic and racial identity has always been linked to class, gender, orientation, national origin, and age. The diversity within racial and ethnic categories became increasingly more obvious as writers added their voices. Arte Público Press, founded in 1979, for example, brought attention to both Cuban American and Puerto Rican, or “**Nuyorican**” literature in addition to Chicano/a writers. Works by Puerto Rican American writers represent the 2nd largest contributions to Hispanic American literature and include writers **Judith Ortiz Cofer**, **Sandra María Esteves**, **Victor Hernández Cruz**, **Tato Laviera**, **Esmeralda Santiago**, **Piri Thomas**, and **Ed Vega**. The next largest belongs to Cuban Americans, who include **Gustavo Pérez Firmat**, **Cristina García**, and **Oscar Hijuelos**, the 1st Hispanic American to be awarded the Pulitzer Prize, for “*The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*” (1989). Asian Americans are equally diverse; among them are writers whose ancestors come from China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Burma. **Hwang** and **Gish Jen** are Chinese Americans; **Theresa Hak Kyung Cha** and **Chang-rae Lee** are Korean American writers; **Jessica Hagedorn** is Filipino American; Japanese Americans include **Kimiko Hahn**, **Garrett Kaoru Hongo**, **Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston**, and **Janice Mirikitani**; Americans with roots in India include **Meena Alexander**, **Bharati Mukherjee**, and **Jhumpa Lahiri**. Writers with Asian heritage who grew up in Hawaii, described as “local,” are **Nora Okja Keller**, **Chris McKinney**, **Cathy Song**, and **Lois-Ann Yamanaka**.

Since the 1990s works by ethnic Americans have brought increasing attention to international factors that affect the cultural makeup of the U.S.

Political instability in the Dominican Republic is represented in the works of **Julia Alvarez** and **Junot Díaz**, as is the exile experience of Vietnamese immigrants in works by **Lan Cao** and **Andrew X. Pham**. Other changes also affect the cultural landscape of America. **Steven George**

Salaita notes that since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Arab Americans “are being analyzed widely and systematically as a discrete ethnic community”. Literary works by Arab Americans resist orientalist stereotypes while also revealing the diversity of their authors. In terms of religion, for example, Arab America is not monolithic. As Salaita notes, they “are Muslim (Shia, Sunni, Alawi, Isma’ili), Christian, Jewish, Druze, Bahai immigrants and 5th-generation Americans religious and secular, White and Black, Latin American and Canadian”. And, he adds, “Sometimes [they] are non-Arabs such as Circassians, Armenians, Berbers, Kurds, and Iranians”. Arab American poetry has a long tradition in American letters and includes works by **Naomi Shihab Nye** and **Agha Shahid Ali**. Arab American fiction writers include **Kathryn K. Abdul-Baki**, **Diana Abu-Jaber**, **Rabih Alameddine**, **Laila Halaby**, and **Laila Lalami**.

While the lines between foreign nationals, immigrants, and those born in America (1st-generation vs. 2nd-generation, Asian vs. Asian American, or **Chicano** vs. **Mexican**, for example) were important to writers in the 1960s and 1970s, those lines are increasingly being blurred as writers adopt transnational perspectives, exploring Pan-Pacific, transatlantic, and other cross-cultural connections and identities. Writers in all genres continue to address issues of identity, assimilation, and cultural heritage, but they do so with increased attention to craft and experimentation with form. Although more-recent writers are less inclined to focus on the social inequities that earlier generations wrote about, they are not blind to them. Their inclination, however, is to focus on the creative possibilities of hybridity in culture as well as form. The dynamic process of identity formation is reflected in the fragmentation of **Cha**’s “*Dictee*” (1982), which combines prose and poetry interspersed with photographs, diagrams, and documents. Linguistic play, a mixture of Spanish, English, and Spanglish, in the poetry of **Alberto Ríos** and the fiction of **Díaz** and **Ana Castillo** transforms literary English to suggest the multiple textures of different cultural perspectives. **Kiana Davenport** includes legends and rituals as markers of a Hawaiian identity rooted in place rather than in the images on tourist postcards. Within the narrative of “*Dog eaters*” (1990), **Hagedorn** interweaves poetry, excerpts from letters and other works, news items, and a gossip column to get at different perspectives of postcolonial Filipinos.

These works and others continually remind readers of the changing nature of America’s cultural negotiations and the continuities between the U.S. and other nations.

The emphasis on considering race and ethnicity as a central subject of interest has also led to a reexamination of the social, political, and economic conditions which historically shaped (and continue to shape) identity in literary works by Americans with Jewish, Italian, and Irish backgrounds. More recently, “whiteness” has become a focus for studying racial formation. **Toni Morrison**’s “*Playing in the Dark*” (1992), for example, suggests how the social and political category of “white” has been constructed and protected in relation to those defined as racial “others”.

The richness of works by writers of different cultural backgrounds makes it impossible to speak of American literature as a monolithic or unified entity. Any interpretation needs to situate ethnic American literature within the historical and cultural contexts of its cultural tradition while also working through parallels and connections to other ethnic American discourses. The emphasis must always be on plurality. Although this makes the categorization and analysis of American literature a more complicated task, it is ultimately more rewarding than accepting the illusion of homogeneity.

Study Questions:

1. What is Multiculturalism in American Literature? In regards to the themes, problems, ethnic groups of writers, etc.
2. How has multiculturalism affected American Literature since the Civil War?
3. Assess the purpose of multicultural literature.

4. In Maxine Hong Kingston's *"The Woman Warrior"* (1976) the narrator protests stereotypical and racist labels, "'chink' words and 'gook' words" because, as she says, "they do not fit my skin". Other ethnic American writers have sought to dismantle shallow stereotypes through their works by presenting complex characters in particular social and historical situations. Students interested in exploring how writers resist racist images might begin with an investigation of stereotypes about particular ethnic groups. Good starting points are offered in *"The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature"* (2005) entries *"African American Stereotypes"*, *"Arab American Stereotypes"*, *"Chinese American Stereotypes"*, *"Italian American Stereotypes"*, *"Jewish American Stereotypes"*, *"Mexican American Stereotypes"*, and *"Native American Stereotypes"*. Are these stereotypes reflected or addressed in literary works? Do writers challenge the stereotype? If so, in what ways? How do writers represent his/her cultural or ethnic identity?
5. Coming-of-age novels trace the development of the protagonist from childhood or adolescence into adulthood and usually involve disillusionment as he or she moves from innocence to experience, ignorance to knowledge, or idealism to realism. The identities of ethnic American adolescents are shaped by the culture(s) of their families as well as by dominant society. The volatility of adolescence combined with cultural negotiations that ethnic Americans undertake make the genre particularly powerful and appealing to American writers of diverse cultural backgrounds. Analyzing coming-of-age novels draws out the unique challenges that race and ethnicity impose on the development of nonwhite protagonists. What happens when characters realize that their skin color, religion, food, and habits are different from those of their friends? How does this awareness affect their sense of self and/or their attitudes toward their family members and root culture? How is the process of growing up complicated by the realization of "minority" status in a predominantly white society? Is the awareness of cultural difference empowering or disabling to the individual? Why or why not?
6. Compare a coming-of-age novel from the 1970s to one written more recently, paying close attention to attitudes about race and ethnicity. Do you see a change in attitude on the part of the protagonists? What social or historical reasons might there be for differences/similarities? Another way to approach this topic is to consider the way ethnic American writers use the coming-of-age novel to counteract historical and social marginalization. In other words, how does the act of self-definition challenge those who would define them stereotypically? Some suggested works and comparisons: Kingston's *"The Woman Warrior"* (1976) or Wong's *"Homebase"* (1979) with Chin's *"Donald Duk"* (1991) or Gish Jen's *"Mona in the Promised Land"* (1996); Tan's *"The Joy Luck Club"* (1989) with Keller's *"Comfort Woman"* (1997); Mukherjee's *"Jasmine"* (1989) with Lahiri's *"The Namesake"* (2003); Houston's *"Farewell to Manzanar"* (1973) with Julie Otsuka's *"When the Emperor Was Divine"* (2002); Rivera's *"...yno se lo trágó la tierra"* (1971), Anaya's *"Bless Me, Ultima"* (1972), or Mohr's *"Nilda"* (1973) with Alvarez's *"How the García Girls Lost Their Accents"* (1991), Helena María Viramontes's *"Under the Feet of Jesus"* (1995), or Díaz's *"The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao"* (2007).
7. The British Indian writer Salman Rushdie has described magical realism as the "commingling of the improbable and the mundane". An important aspect in contemporary fiction, magical realism is a term applied to realistic narratives that include "magical" and supernatural happenings as accepted and integrated aspects of everyday life. In her introduction to *"Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative"* (2004) Wendy Faris offers this definition: "Very briefly defined, magical realism combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them. Furthermore, that combination of realistic and fantastical narrative, together with the inclusion of different cultural traditions, means that magical realism reflects, in both its narrative mode and its cultural environment, the hybrid nature of much postcolonial society. Thus the mode is multicultural". Examine the elements of magical realism of a particular work. How do these elements challenge or revise Western European notions of reality? How do magical realist

techniques help writers to bridge cultural differences and gaps? How do writers “integrate them into contemporary American culture in order to enrich or remedy it?” Works to consider include (but are not limited to) Sherman Alexie’s *“Reservation Blues”* (1995), Rudolfo Anaya’s *“Bless Me, Ultima”* (1972), Ana Castillo’s *“So Far from God”* (1993), Kiana Davenport’s *“Shark Dialogues”* (1994), E.L. Doctorow’s *“Loon Lake”* (1980), Cristina García’s *“Dreaming in Cuban”* (1992), Chitra Divakaruni’s *“Mistress of Spices”* (1997), Toni Morrison’s *“Song of Solomon”* (1977), Gloria Naylor’s *“Mama Day”* (1988), and Charles Johnson’s *“Middle Passage”* (1990).

8. In his introduction to *“MultiAmerica”* (1996) Ishmael Reed challenges readers to imagine “a new, inclusive definition of the common [American] culture” that takes into consideration cultural, racial, and ethnic differences. He writes: “I think that a new definition of a common culture is possible, and that because of their multicultural status, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans with knowledge of their own ethnic histories and cultures as well as those of European cultures are able to contribute to the formation of a new, inclusive definition”. Analyze the works by ethnic Americans. How does the particular work contribute to “a new, inclusive definition” of American literature? How does the work insist upon a broader definition of American identity that includes racial and ethnic difference? Another way to approach this topic would be to focus on the forms and narrative techniques that ethnic American writers use. A common feature is the use of multiple forms and genres in a single work. As Maria Lauret notes in the introductory essay to *“Beginning Ethnic American Literature”* (2001), “frequently autobiography functions as theory, prose is shot through with poetry and song, narrative is also (counter-) historiography. Linguistic mixtures occur too, most obviously in the bilingual texts of Chicano/a writers, but also when African American writers make use of the black vernacular as a ‘native tongue,’ or when Asian Americans and Native Americans intersperse their English with words and phrases from their 1st language”. How do writers use these techniques and mixtures to challenge and revitalize monocultural definitions of American literature and identity? How does form express cultural hybridity? In analyzing a work, consider whether a writer is calling for the inclusion of ethnic American writers as part of mainstream America or is challenging the very definition of America.

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2. Hollinger, David. *Postethnic America*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.
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Lecture 13. American Poetry

Plan:

1. Tyehimba Jess (1965-). “Olio”.
2. Peter Balakian (1951-). “Ozone Journal”.

1. Tyehimba Jess (1965-). “Olio”.

Primary Works: “*Olio*” (2016), “*Leadbelly*” (2005).

Tyehimba Jess (born 1965 in Detroit) is an American poet. His book “*Olio*” received the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Tyehimba Jess was born Jesse S. Goodwin. He grew up in Detroit, where his father worked in that city's Department of Health. His father later became the first vice president of Detroit's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Jess's mother was a teacher and nurse, who founded a nursing school at Wayne County Community College in 1972.

According to Jess, he started writing poetry at age 16. Within just a few years, when he was 18, he had won second prize for poetry at an NAACP academic competition. He graduated from high school in 1984. Next, he enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he intended to be an English major and pursue his poetry writing. However, he soon abandoned this as an option, and dropped out of the university in 1987. During this time, to support himself, Jess worked as an intern at a bank, as a community organizer, and as substitute teacher in the public school system in Chicago.

In 1989, he returned to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), and by this time had switched his major to Public Policy. But Jess says that after he began to take classes at UIC with the poet and scholar Sterling Plumpp, who became a mentor, he realized that his real passion was for poetry. Plumpp's classes focused on literary figures from the Harlem Renaissance and the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and '70s. And although he was just a few credits shy of a degree in Public Policy, Jess felt inspired enough to again switch back to poetry. He graduated from the University of Chicago in 1991, with a BA degree in Public Policy. He later pursued a MFA degree at New York University which he received in 2004.

As of 2017, Jess teaches poetry and fiction as an associate professor of English at the College of Staten Island of the City University of New York. He is also the faculty adviser for *Caesura*, the college's literary arts magazine.

Jess's first book of poetry, *leadbelly* (Wave Books, 2005), was chosen by Brigit Pegeen Kelly as a winner in the 2004 National Poetry Series competition. *Library Journal* and *Black Issues Book Review* both named it one of the “Best Poetry Books of 2005”.

In April 2016, Jess released his second full-length poetry collection, titled *Olio*. This work has been described as “part fact, part fiction... sonnet, song and narrative to examine the lives of mostly unrecorded African-American performers....” In his book he writes some poems in reference to Edmonia Lewis, John William Boone, Henry Box Brown, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Fisk Jubilee Singers, Ernest Hogan, Sissieretta Jones, Scott Joplin, Millie and Christine McKoy, Booker T. Washington, Blind Tom Wiggins, Bert Williams and George Walker.

His work appeared in “*Soul Fires*”: *Young Black Men on Love and Violence*, *Obsidian III: Literature in the African Diaspora*, *Power Lines: Ten Years of Poetry from Chicago's Guild Complex*, and *Slam: The Art of Performance Poetry*.

Jess' inspiration for writing stems from his drive to express history through expression and performance. In Tyehimba Jess's “*Olio*”, a new book length performance of poetry, song, collage

and art object, musical knowledge is channeled back to its source—before the wax cylinders of antiquated recording technology, before Alan Lomax and W.C. Handy, to the 19th century of black musicians. Jess's poetic concentration is so absolute, dithyrambic, multimodal, encyclopedic, that it defies categorization as much as the early music of gospel singers and jazz pioneers, blues artists and vaudeville performers he describes and celebrates. History as song; as expression; as freedom. That is, a living history that follows the great migration of African-Americans between the Civil War and World War I who undertook journeys across thousands of miles as well as musical history. The result is one of the most profound portraits I know of how artists have redefined their very being in the world. Jess, though an author who has a voice that cannot be mistaken, acts more as a gentle tour guide through a period of black artistry that is often represented differently than it is here.

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2. <http://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-year/2017>

2. Peter Balakian (1951-). "Ozone Journal".

Primary Works: *"Father Fisheye"* (1979), *"Sad Days of Light"* (1983), *"Ziggurat"* (2010), *"Ozone Journal"* (2015).

Peter Balakian (Armenian: Փիթըր Բալաքեան, born June 13, 1951) is an Armenian American poet, writer and academic, the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of Humanities at Colgate University. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2016.

Balakian was born in 1951 in Teaneck, New Jersey to an Armenian family. He is the nephew of Anna Balakian and the great-grandnephew of Grigoris Balakian. He was raised in Teaneck and Tenafly, New Jersey, and after attending the Tenafly Public Schools, he graduated from Englewood School for Boys (which since merged with other area schools and is now known as Dwight-Englewood School). He earned a B.A. from Bucknell University, an M.A. from New York University, and a PhD in American Civilization from Brown University. He has taught at Colgate University since 1980. He is the Donald M. and Constance H. Rebar Professor of the Humanities in the Department of English, and director of Colgate's creative writing program. He was the first director of Colgate's Center for Ethics and World Societies.

Balakian is the author of seven books of poems, including, most recently, *"Ozone Journal"* (2015). His other books are *"Father Fisheye"* (1979), *"Sad Days of Light"* (1983), *"Reply from Wilderness Island"* (1988), *"Dyer's Thistle"* (1996), *"June-tree: New and Selected Poems 1974-2000"* (2000), *"Ziggurat"* (2010), and several fine limited editions. His poems have appeared widely in American magazines and journals such as *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Antaeus*, *Partisan Review*, *Poetry*, *AGNI*, and *The Kenyon Review*; and in anthologies such as *"New Directions in Prose and Poetry"*, *"The Morrow Anthology of Younger American Poets"*, *"Poetry's 75th Anniversary Issue"* (1987), *"The Wadsworth Anthology of Poetry"* and others.

Balakian's memoir *"Black Dog of Fate"* (1997) received the PEN/Albrand Prize for memoir and a New York Times Notable Book. *"The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response"* (2003) received the 2005 Raphael Lemkin Prize and was a New York Times Notable Book and New York Times and national bestseller. Balakian is also the author of *"Theodore Roethke's Far Fields"* (Louisiana State University Press, 1989). His essays on poetry, culture, and art have appeared in many publications including *Ararat*, *Art in America*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *American Quarterly*, *American Book Review*, and *Poetry*.

Balakian was co-founder and co-editor (with Bruce Smith) of the poetry magazine *Graham House Review*, which was published from 1976 to 1996. He is the translator (with Nevart Yaghlian) of *Bloody News from My Friend* by the Armenian poet Siamanto (Wayne State University Press, 1996).

Balakian's prizes and awards include a Guggenheim Fellowship, 1999; National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, 2004; PEN/Martha Albrand Award for the Art of the Memoir, 1998; Raphael Lemkin Prize, 2005 (best book in English on the subject of human rights and genocide); New Jersey Council for the Humanities Book Award, 1998; Daniel Varujan Prize, New England Poetry Club, 1986; Anahid Literary Prize, Columbia University Armenian Center, 1990, and the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry in Poetry for "Ozone Journal", 2016. According to the Pulitzer board, Balakian's work "bear witness to the old losses and tragedies that undergird a global age of danger and uncertainty." He is also a recipient of the Khorenatsi medal. 2016 he was awarded Armenia's 2015 Presidential Award for significant contribution to the process of the recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

The Press of Appletree Alley (Lewisburg, PA) published four limited editions of Balakian's poems. Translations and editions of Balakian's books appear in Armenian, Bulgarian, Dutch, German, Greek, Russian, and Turkish. Balakian has lectured widely in the United States and abroad and has appeared often on national television and radio.

In 2017, Balakian was prominently featured in the critically acclaimed Joe Berlinger documentary "Intent to Destroy" about the Armenian Genocide.

In 2018, the New York Times published his piece, "My Armenia," which was his description of his return to his ancestral homeland.

Study Questions:

1. Identify the role of T. Jess and P. Balakian in the development of cultural identity of contemporary American poetry.
2. Analyze the "Olio" by T. Jess and reveal the most vivid characteristics of the poem.

Selected Sources 2018-Present:

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Lecture 14. Specific Literary Style in American Literature

Plan:

1. New Trends in American Fiction According to Genre.
2. New Trends in American Fiction According to Geographic Placement

The United States is one of the most diverse nations in the world. Its dynamic population of about 300 million boasts more than 30 million foreign-born individuals who speak numerous languages and dialects. Some one million new immigrants arrive each year, many from Asia and Latin America.

Literature in the United States today is likewise dazzlingly diverse, exciting, and evolving. New voices have arisen from many quarters, challenging old ideas and adapting literary traditions to suit changing conditions of the national life. Social and economic advances have enabled previously underrepresented groups to express themselves more fully, while technological innovations have created a fast-moving public forum. Reading clubs proliferate, and book fairs, literary festivals, and "poetry slams" (events where youthful poets compete in performing their poetry) attract enthusiastic audiences. Selection of a new work for a book club can launch an unknown writer into the limelight overnight.

On a typical Sunday the list of best-selling books in the New York Times Book Review testifies to the extraordinary diversity of the current American literary scene. In January, 2006, for example, the list of paperback best-sellers included "genre" fiction - steamy romances by Nora Roberts, a new thriller by John Grisham, murder mysteries - alongside nonfiction science books by the anthropologist Jared Diamond, popular sociology by The New Yorker magazine writer Malcolm Gladwell, and accounts of drug rehabilitation and crime. In the last category was a reprint of Truman Capote's groundbreaking *In Cold Blood*, a 1965 "nonfiction novel" that blurs the distinction between high literature and journalism and had recently been made into a film.

Books by non-American authors and books on international themes were also prominent on the list. Afghan-American Khaled Hosseini's searing novel, *The Kite Runner*, tells of childhood friends in Kabul separated by the rule of the Taliban, while Azar Nafisi's memoir, *Reading Lolita in Teheran*, poignantly recalls teaching great works of Western literature to young women in Iran. A third novel, Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha* (made into a movie), recounts a Japanese woman's life during World War II.

In addition, the best-seller list reveals the popularity of religious themes. According to Publishers Weekly, 2001 was the first year that Christian-themed books topped the sales lists in both fiction and nonfiction. Among the hardcover best-sellers of that exemplary Sunday in 2006, we find Dan Brown's novel *The DaVinci Code* and Anne Rice's tale *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt*.

Beyond the Times' best-seller list, chain bookstores offer separate sections for major religions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and sometimes Hinduism.

1. New Trends in American Fiction According to Genre.

Post-Feminist Fiction. In the Women's Literature section of bookstores one finds works by a "Third Wave" of feminists, a movement that usually refers to young women in their 20s and 30s who have grown up in an era of widely accepted social equality in the United States. Third Wave feminists feel sufficiently empowered to emphasize the individuality of choices women make. Often associated in the popular mind with a return to tradition and child-rearing, lipstick, and "feminine" styles, these young women have reclaimed the word "girl" - some decline to call

themselves feminist. What is often called "chick lit" is a flourishing offshoot. Nonfiction writers also examine the phenomenon of post-feminism. The Mommy Myth (2004) by Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels analyzes the role of the media in the "mommy wars," while Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards' lively ManifestA: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future (2000) discusses women's activism in the age of the Internet. Caitlin Flanagan, a magazine writer who calls herself an "anti-feminist," explores conflicts between domestic life and professional life for women. Her 2004 essay in *The Atlantic*, "How Serfdom Saved the Women's Movement," an account of how professional women depend on immigrant women of a lower class for their childcare, triggered an enormous debate. It is clear that American literature at the turn of the 21st century has become democratic and heterogeneous. Regionalism has flowered, and international, or "global," writers refract U.S. culture through foreign perspectives. Multiethnic writing continues to mine rich veins, and as each ethnic literature matures, it creates its own traditions. Creative nonfiction and memoir have flourished. The short story genre has gained luster, and the "short" short story has taken root. A new generation of playwrights continues the American tradition of exploring current social issues on stage. There is not space here in this brief survey to do justice to the glittering diversity of American literature today. Instead, one must consider general developments and representative figures.

Postmodernism. "Postmodernism" suggests fragmentation: collage, hybridity, and the use of various voices, scenes, and identities. Postmodern authors question external structures, whether political, philosophical, or artistic. They tend to distrust the master-narratives of modernist thought, which they see as politically suspect. Instead, they mine popular culture genres, especially science fiction, spy, and detective stories, becoming, in effect, archaeologists of pop culture.

Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, structured in 40 sections like video clips, highlights the dilemmas of representation: "Were people this dumb before television?" one character wonders. David Foster Wallace's gargantuan (1,000 pages, 900 footnotes) *Infinite Jest* mixes up wheelchair-bound terrorists, drug addicts, and futuristic descriptions of a country like the United States. In *Galatea 2.2*, Richard Powers interweaves sophisticated technology with private lives.

Influenced by Thomas Pynchon, postmodern authors fabricate complex plots that demand imaginative leaps. Often they flatten historical depth into one dimension; William Vollmann's novels slide between vastly different times and places as easily as a computer mouse moves between texts.

Creative Nonfiction: Memoir and Autobiography. Many writers hunger for open, less canonical genres as vehicles for their postmodern visions. The rise of global, multiethnic, and women's literature - works in which writers reflect on experiences shaped by culture, color, and gender - has endowed autobiography and memoir with special allure. While the boundaries of the terms are debated, a memoir is typically shorter or more limited in scope, while an autobiography makes some attempt at a comprehensive overview of the writer's life.

Postmodern fragmentation has rendered problematic for many writers the idea of a finished self that can be articulated successfully in one sweep. Many turn to the memoir in their struggles to ground an authentic self. What constitutes authenticity, and to what extent the writer is allowed to embroider upon his or her memories of experience in works of nonfiction, are hotly contested subjects of writers' conferences.

Writers themselves have contributed penetrating observations on such questions in books about writing, such as *The Writing Life* (1989) by Annie Dillard. Noteworthy memoirs include *The Stolen Light* (1989) by Ved Mehta. Born in India, Mehta was blinded at the age of three. His account of flying alone as a young blind person to study in the United States is unforgettable. Irish American Frank McCourt's mesmerizing *Angela's Ashes* (1996) recalls his childhood of poverty, family alcoholism, and intolerance in Ireland with a surprising warmth and humor. Paul Auster's *Hand to Mouth* (1997) tells of poverty that blocked his writing and poisoned his soul.

The Short Story: New Directions. The story genre had to a degree lost its luster by the late 1970s. Experimental metafiction stories had been penned by Donald Barthelme, Robert Coover, John Barth, and William Gass and were no longer on the cutting edge. Large-circulation weekly magazines that had showcased short fiction, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, had collapsed. It took an outsider from the Pacific Northwest - a gritty realist in the tradition of Ernest Hemingway - to revitalize the genre. Raymond Carver (1938-1988) had studied under the late novelist John Gardner, absorbing Gardner's passion for accessible artistry fused with moral vision. Carver rose above alcoholism and harsh poverty to become the most influential story writer in the United States. In his collections *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* (1976), *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981), *Cathedral* (1983), and *Where I'm Calling From* (1988), Carver follows confused working people through dead-end jobs, alcoholic binges, and rented rooms with an understated, minimalist style of writing that carries tremendous impact.

Linked with Carver is novelist and story writer Ann Beattie (1947-), whose middle-class characters often lead aimless lives. Her stories reference political events and popular songs, and offer distilled glimpses of life decade by decade in the changing United States. Recent collections are *Park City* (1998) and *Perfect Recall* (2001).

Inspired by Carver and Beattie, writers crafted impressive neorealist story collections in the mid-1980s, including Amy Hempel's *Reasons to Live* (1985), David Leavitt's *Family Dancing* (1984), Richard Ford's *Rock Springs* (1987), Bobbie Ann Mason's *Shiloh and Other Stories* (1982), and Lorrie Moore's *Self-Help* (1985). Other noteworthy figures include the late Andre Dubus, author of *Dancing After Hours* (1996), and the prolific John Updike, whose recent story collections include *The Afterlife and Other Stories* (1994).

Today, as is discussed later in this chapter, writers with ethnic and global roots are informing the story genre with non-Western and tribal approaches, and storytelling has commanded critical and popular attention. The versatile, primal tale is the basis of several hybridized forms: novels that are constructed of interlinking short stories or vignettes, and creative nonfictions that interweave history and personal history with fiction.

The Short Short Story: Sudden or Flash Fiction. The short short is a very brief story, often only one or two pages long. It is sometimes called "flash fiction" or "sudden fiction" after the 1986 anthology *Sudden Fiction*, edited by Robert Shapard and James Thomas. In short short stories, there is little space to develop a character. Rather, the element of plot is central: A crisis occurs, and a sketched-in character simply has to react. Authors deploy clever narrative or linguistic patterns; in some cases, the short short resembles a prose poem. Supporters claim that short shorts' "reduced geographies" mirror postmodern conditions in which borders seem closer together. They find elegant simplicity in these brief fictions. Detractors see short shorts as a symptom of cultural decay, a general loss of reading ability, and a limited attention span. In any event, short shorts have found a certain niche: They are easy to forward in an e-mail, and they lend themselves to electronic distribution. They make manageable in-class readings and models for writing assignments.

Drama. Contemporary drama mingles realism with fantasy in postmodern works that fuse the personal and the political. The exuberant Tony Kushner (1956-) has won acclaim for his prize-winning *Angels in America* plays, which vividly render the AIDS epidemic and the psychic cost of closeted homosexuality in the 1980s and 1990s. *Part One: Millennium Approaches* (1991) and its companion piece, *Part Two: Perestroika* (1992), together last seven hours. Combining comedy, melodrama, political commentary, and special effects, they interweave various plots and marginalized characters.

Women dramatists have attained particular success in recent years. Prominent among them is Beth Henley (1952-), from Mississippi, known for her portraits of southern women. Henley gained national recognition for her *Crimes of the Heart* (1978), which was made into a film in 1986, a warm play about three eccentric sisters whose affection helps them survive disappointment and

despair. Later plays, including *The Miss Firecracker Contest* (1980), *The Wake of Jamey Foster* (1982), *The Debutante Ball* (1985), and *The Lucky Spot* (1986), explore southern forms of socializing -- beauty contests, funerals, coming-out parties, and dance halls.

Wendy Wasserstein (1950-2006), from New York, wrote early comedies including *When Dinah Shore Ruled the Earth* (1975), a parody of beauty contests. She is best known for *The Heidi Chronicles* (1988), about a successful woman professor who confesses to deep unhappiness and adopts a baby. Wasserstein continued exploring women's aspirations in *The Sisters Rosensweig* (1991), *An American Daughter* (1997), and *Old Money* (2000).

Younger dramatists such as African-American Suzan-Lori Parks (1964-) build on the successes of earlier women. Parks, who grew up on various army bases in the United States and Germany, deals with political issues in experimental works whose timelessness and ritualism recall Irish-born writer Samuel Beckett. Her best-known work, *The America Play* (1991), revolves around the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. She returns to this theme in *Topdog/Underdog* (2001), which tells the story of two African-American brothers named Lincoln and Booth and their lifetime of sibling rivalry.

2. New Trends in American Fiction According to Geographic Placement

A pervasive regionalist sensibility has gained strength in American literature in the past two decades. Decentralization expresses the postmodern U.S. condition, a trend most evident in fiction writing; no longer does any one viewpoint or code successfully express the nation. No one city defines artistic movements, as New York City once did. Vital arts communities have arisen in many cities, and electronic technology has de-centered literary life. As economic shifts and social change redefine America, a yearning for tradition has set in. The most sustaining and distinctively American myths partake of the land, and writers are turning to the Civil War South, the Wild West of the rancher, the rooted life of the midwestern farmer, the southwestern tribal homeland, and other localized realms where the real and the mythic mingle. Of course, more than one region has inspired many writers; they are included here in regions formative to their vision or characteristic of their mature work.

The Northeast. The scenic Northeast, region of lengthy winters, dense deciduous forests, and low rugged mountain chains, was the first English-speaking colonial area, and it retains the feel of England. Boston, Massachusetts, is the cultural powerhouse, boasting research institutions and scores of universities. Many New England writers depict characters that continue the Puritan legacy, embodying the middle-class Protestant work ethic and progressive commitment to social reform. In the rural areas, small, independent farmers struggle to survive in the world of global marketing.

Novelist Joyce Carol Oates sets many of her gothic works in upstate New York. Richard Russo (1949-), in his appealing *Empire Falls* (2001), evokes life in a dying mill town in Maine, the state where Stephen King (1947-) locates his popular horror novels.

The bittersweet fictions of Massachusetts-based Sue Miller (1943-), such as *The Good Mother* (1986), examine counterculture lifestyles in Cambridge, a city known for cultural and social diversity, intellectual vitality, and technological innovation. Another writer from Massachusetts, Anita Diamant (1951-), earned popular acclaim with *The Red Tent* (1997), a feminist historical novel based on the biblical story of Dinah.

Russell Banks (1940-), from poor, rural New Hampshire, has turned from experimental writing to more realistic works, such as *Affliction* (1989), his novel about working-class New Hampshire characters. For Banks, acknowledging one's roots is a fundamental part of one's identity. In *Affliction*, the narrator scorns people who have "gone to Florida, Arizona, and California, bought a trailer or a condo, turned their skin to leather playing shuffleboard all day and

waited to die." Banks's recent works include *Cloudsplitter* (1998), a historical novel about the 19th-century abolitionist John Brown.

The striking stylist Annie Proulx (1935-) crafts stories of struggling northern New Englanders in *Heart Songs* (1988). Her best novel, *The Shipping News* (1993), is set even further north, in Newfoundland, Canada. Proulx has also spent years in the West, and one of her short stories inspired the 2006 movie "Brokeback Mountain."

William Kennedy (1928-) has written a dense and entwined cycle of novels set in Albany, in northern New York State, including his acclaimed *Ironweed*. The title of his insider's history of Albany gives some idea of his gritty, colloquial style and teeming cast of often unsavory characters: *O Albany! Improbable City of Political Wizards, Fearless Ethnics, Spectacular Aristocrats, Splendid Nobodies, and Underrated Scoundrels* (1983). Kennedy has been hailed as an elder statesman of a small Irish-American literary movement that includes the late Mary McCarthy, Mary Gordon, Alice McDermott, and Frank McCourt.

Three writers who studied at Brown University in Rhode Island around the same time and took classes with British writer Angela Carter are often mentioned as the nucleus of a "next generation." Donald Antrim (1959-) satirizes academic life in *The Hundred Brothers* (1997), set in an enormous library from which one can see homeless people. Rick Moody (1961-) is best known for his novel *The Ice Storm* (1994). The novels of Jeffrey Eugenides (1960-) include *Middlesex* (2002), which narrates the experience of a hermaphrodite. Impressive stylists with off-center visions bordering on the absurd, Antrim, Moody, and Eugenides carry further the opposite traditions of John Updike and Thomas Pynchon. Often linked with these three younger novelists is the exuberant postmodernist David Foster Wallace (1962-). Wallace, who was born in Ithaca, New York, gained acclaim for his complex serio-comic novel *The Broom of the System* (1987) and the pop culture-saturated stories in *Girl with Curious Hair* (1989).

The Mid-Atlantic. The fertile Mid-Atlantic states, dominated by New York City with its great harbor, remain a gateway for waves of immigrants. Today the region's varied economy encompasses finance, commerce, and shipping, as well as advertising and fashion. New York City is the home of the publishing industry, as well as prestigious art galleries and museums.

Don DeLillo (1936-), from New York City, began as an advertising writer, and his novels explore consumerism among their many themes. *Americana* (1971) concludes: "To consume in America is not to buy, it is to dream." DeLillo's protagonists seek identities based on images. *White Noise* (1985) concerns Jack Gladney and his family, whose experience is mediated by various texts, especially advertisements. One passage suggests DeLillo's style: "...the emptiness, the sense of cosmic darkness. Mastercard, Visa, American Express." Fragments of advertisements that drift unattached through the book emerge from Gladney's media-parroting subconscious, generating the subliminal white noise of the title. DeLillo's later novels include politics and historical figures: *Libra* (1988) envisions the assassination of President John F. Kennedy as an explosion of frustrated consumerism; *Underworld* (1997) spins a web of interconnections between a baseball game and a nuclear bomb in Kazakhstan.

In multidimensional, polyglot New York, fictions featuring a shadowy postmodern city abound. An example is the labyrinthine New York trilogy *City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986), and *The Locked Room* (1986) by Paul Auster (1947-). In this work, inspired by Samuel Beckett and the detective novel, an isolated writer at work on a detective story addresses Paul Auster, who is writing about Cervantes. The trilogy suggests that "reality" is but a text constructed via fiction, thus erasing the traditional border between reality and illusion. Auster's trilogy, in effect, self-deconstructs. Similarly, Kathy Acker (1948-1997) juxtaposed passages from works by Cervantes and Charles Dickens with science fiction in postmodern pastiches such as *Empire of the Senseless* (1988), a quest through time and space for an individual voice.

New York City hosts many groups of writers with shared interests. Jewish women include noted essayist Cynthia Ozick (1928-), who hails from the Bronx, the setting of her novel *The*

Puttermessa Papers (1997). Her haunting novel *The Shawl* (1989) gives a young mother's viewpoint on the Holocaust. The droll, conversational *Collected Stories* (1994) of Grace Paley (1922-) capture the syncopated rhythms of the city.

Younger writers associated with life in the fast lane are Jay McInerney (1955-), whose *Story of My Life* (1988) is set in the drug-driven youth culture of the boom-time 1980s, and satirist Tama Janowitz (1957-). Their portraits of loneliness and addiction in the anonymous hard-driving city recall the works of John Cheever.

Nearby suburbs claim the imaginations of still other writers. Mary Gordon (1949-) sets many of her female-centered works in her birthplace, Long Island, as does Alice McDermott (1953-), whose novel *Charming Billy* (1998) dissects the failed promise of an alcoholic.

Mid-Atlantic domestic realists include Richard Bausch (1945-), from Baltimore, author of *In the Night Season* (1998) and the stories in *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1999). Bausch writes of fragmented families, as does Anne Tyler (1941-), also from Baltimore, whose eccentric characters negotiate disorganized, isolated lives. A master of detail and understated wit, Tyler writes in spare, quiet language. Her best-known novels include *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant* (1982) and *The Accidental Tourist* (1985), which was made into a film in 1988. *The Amateur Marriage* (2004) sets a divorce against a panorama of American life over 60 years.

African Americans have made distinctive contributions. Feminist essayist and poet Audre Lorde's autobiographical *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982) is an earthy account of a black woman's experience in the United States. Bebe Moore Campbell (1950-), from Philadelphia, writes feisty domestic novels including *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine* (1992). Gloria Naylor (1950-), from New York City, explores different women's lives in *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), the novel that made her name.

Critically acclaimed John Edgar Wideman (1941-) grew up in Homewood, a black section of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His Faulknerian *Homewood Trilogy* - *Hiding Place* (1981), *Damballah* (1981), and *Sent for You Yesterday* (1983) - uses shifting viewpoints and linguistic play to render black experience. His best-known short piece, "Brothers and Keepers" (1984), concerns his relationship with his imprisoned brother. In *The Cattle Killing* (1996), Wideman returns to the subject of his famous early story "Fever" (1989). His novel *Two Cities* (1998) takes place in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

David Bradley (1950-), also from Pennsylvania, set his historical novel *The Chaneysville Incident* (1981) on the "underground railroad," a network of citizens who provided opportunity and assistance for southern black slaves to find freedom in the North at the time of the U.S. Civil War.

Trey Ellis (1962-) has written the novels *Platitudes* (1988), *Home Repairs* (1993), and *Right Here, Right Now* (1999), screenplays including "The Tuskegee Airmen" (1995), and a 1989 essay "The New Black Aesthetic" discerning a new multiethnic sensibility among the younger generation.

Writers from Washington, D.C., four hours' drive south from New York City, include Ann Beattie (1947-), whose short stories were mentioned earlier. Her slice-of-life novels include *Picturing Will* (1989), *Another You* (1995), and *My Life, Starring Dara Falcon* (1997).

America's capital city is home to many political novelists. Ward Just (1935-) sets his novels in Washington's swirling military, political, and intellectual circles. Christopher Buckley (1952-) spikes his humorous political satire with local details; his *Little Green Men* (1999) is a spoof about official responses to aliens from outer space. Michael Chabon (1963-), who grew up in the Washington suburbs but later moved to California, depicts youths on the dazzling brink of adulthood in *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* (1988); his novel inspired by a comic book, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000), mixes glamour and craft in the manner of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The South. The South comprises disparate regions in the southeastern United States, from the cool Appalachian Mountain chain and the broad Mississippi River valley to the steamy

cypress bayous of the Gulf Coast. Cotton and the plantation culture of slavery made the South the richest section in the country before the U.S. Civil War (1860-1865). But after the war, the region sank into poverty and isolation that lasted a century. Today, the South is part of what is called the Sun Belt, the fastest growing part of the United States.

The most traditional of the regions, the South is proud of its distinctive heritage. Enduring themes include family, land, history, religion, and race. Much southern writing has a depth and humanity arising from the devastating losses of the Civil War and soul searching over the region's legacy of slavery.

The South, with its rich oral tradition, has nourished many women storytellers. In the upper South, Bobbie Ann Mason (1940-) from Kentucky, writes of the changes wrought by mass culture. In her most famous story, "Shiloh" (1982), a couple must change their relationship or separate as housing subdivisions spread "across western Kentucky like an oil slick." Mason's acclaimed short novel in Country (1985) depicts the effects of the Vietnam War by focusing on an innocent young girl whose father died in the conflict.

Lee Smith (1944-) brings the people of the Appalachian Mountains into poignant focus, drawing on the well of American folk music in her novel *The Devil's Dream* (1992). Jayne Anne Phillips (1952-) writes stories of misfits - *Black Tickets* (1979) - and a novel, *Machine Dreams* (1984), set in the hardscrabble mountains of West Virginia.

The novels of Jill McCorkle (1958-) capture her North Carolina background. Her mystery-enshrouded love story *Carolina Moon* (1996) explores a years-old suicide in a coastal village where relentless waves erode the foundations from derelict beach houses. The lush native South Carolina of Dorothy Allison (1949-) features in her tough autobiographical novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992), seen through the eyes of a dirt-poor, illegitimate 12-year-old tomboy nicknamed Bone. Mississippian Ellen Gilchrist (1935-) sets most of her colloquial *Collected Stories* (2000) in small hamlets along the Mississippi River and in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Southern novelists mining male experience include the acclaimed Cormac McCarthy (1933-), whose early novels such as *Suttree* (1979) are archotypically southern tales of dark emotional depths, ignorance, and poverty, set against the green hills and valleys of eastern Tennessee. In 1974, McCarthy moved to El Paso, Texas, and began to plumb western landscapes and traditions. *Blood Meridian: Or the Evening of Redness in the West* (1985) is an unsparing vision of *The Kid*, a 14-year-old from Tennessee who becomes a cold-hearted killer in Mexico in the 1840s. McCarthy's best-selling epic *Border Trilogy* -- *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), and *Cities of the Plain* (1998) -- invests the desert between Texas and Mexico with mythic grandeur.

Other noted authors are North Carolinian Charles Frazier (1950-), author of the Civil War novel *Cold Mountain* (1997); Georgia-born Pat Conroy (1945-), author of *The Great Santini* (1976) and *Beach Music* (1995); and Mississippi novelist Barry Hannah (1942-), known for his violent plots and risk-taking style.

A very different Mississippi-born writer is Richard Ford (1944-), who began writing in a Faulknerian vein but is best known for his subtle novel set in New Jersey, *The Sportswriter* (1986), and its sequel, *Independence Day* (1995). The latter is about Frank Bascombe, a dreamy, evasive drifter who loses all the things that give his life meaning -- a son, his dream of writing fiction, his marriage, lovers and friends, and his job. Bascombe is sensitive and intelligent -- his choices, he says, are made "to deflect the pain of terrible regret" -- and his emptiness, along with the anonymous malls and bald new housing developments that he endlessly cruises through, mutely testify to Ford's vision of a national malaise.

Many African-American writers hail from the South, including Ernest Gaines from Louisiana, Alice Walker from Georgia, and Florida-born Zora Neale Hurston, whose 1937 novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is considered to be the first feminist novel by an African American. Hurston, who died in the 1960s, underwent a critical revival in the 1990s. Ishmael Reed,

born in Tennessee, set *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972) in New Orleans. Margaret Walker (1915-1998), from Alabama, authored the novel *Jubilee* (1966) and essays *On Being Female, Black, and Free* (1997).

Story writer James Alan McPherson (1943-), from Georgia, depicts working-class people in *Elbow Room* (1977); *A Region Not Home: Reflections from Exile* (2000), whose title reflects his move to Iowa, is a memoir. Chicago-born ZZ Packer (1973-), McPherson's student at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, was raised in the South, studied in the mid-Atlantic, and now lives in California. Her first work, a volume of stories titled *Drinking Coffee Elsewhere* (2003), has made her a rising star. Prolific feminist writer bell hooks (born Gloria Watkins in Kentucky in 1952) gained fame for cultural critiques including *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (1992) and autobiographies beginning with *Bone Black: Memories of a Girlhood* (1996).

Experimental poet and scholar of slave narratives (*Freeing the Soul*, 1999), Harryette Mullen (1953-) writes multivocal poetry collections such as *Muse & Drudge* (1995). Novelist and story writer Percival Everett (1956-), who was originally from Georgia, writes subtle, open-ended fiction; recent volumes are *Frenzy* (1997) and *Glyph* (1999).

Many African-American writers whose families followed patterns of internal migration were born outside the South but return to it for inspiration. Famed science-fiction novelist Octavia Butler (1947-), from California, draws on the theme of bondage and the slave narrative tradition in *Wild Seed* (1980); her *Parable of the Sower* (1993) treats addiction. Sherley Anne Williams (1944-), also from California, writes of interracial friendship between southern women in slave times in her fact-based historical novel *Dessa Rose* (1986). New York-born Randall Kenan (1963-) was raised in North Carolina, the setting of his novel *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989) and his stories *Let the Dead Bury Their Dead* (1992). His *Walking on Water: Black American Lives at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (1999) is nonfiction.

The Midwest. The vast plains of America's midsection -- much of it between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi River -- scorch in summer and freeze in scouring winter storms. The area was opened up with the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, attracting Northern European settlers eager for land. Early 20th-century writers with roots in the Midwest include Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, and Theodore Dreiser.

Midwestern fiction is grounded in realism. The domestic novel has flourished in recent years, portraying webs of relationships between kin, the local community, and the environment. Agribusiness and development threaten family farms in some parts of the region, and some novels sound the death knell of farming as a way of life.

Domestic novelists include Jane Smiley (1949-), whose *A Thousand Acres* (1991) is a contemporary, feminist version of the *King Lear* story. The lost kingdom is a large family farm held for four generations, and the forces that undermine it are a concatenation of the personal and the political. Kent Haruf (1943-) creates stronger characters in his sweeping novel of the prairie, *Plainsong* (1999).

Michael Cunningham (1952-), from Ohio, began as a domestic novelist in *A Home at the End of the World* (1990). *The Hours* (1998), made into a movie, brilliantly interweaves Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* with two women's lives in different eras. Stuart Dybek (1942-) has written sparkling story collections including *I Sailed with Magellan* (2003), about his childhood on the South Side of Chicago.

The Midwest has produced a wide variety of writing, much of it informed by international influences. Richard Powers (1957-), from Illinois, has lived in Thailand and the Netherlands. His challenging postmodern novels interweave personal lives with technology. *Galatea 2.2* (1995) updates the mad scientist theme; the scientists in this case are computer programmers.

African-American novelist Charles Johnson (1948-), an ex-cartoonist who was born in Illinois and moved to Seattle, Washington, draws on disparate traditions such as Zen and the slave narrative in novels such as *Oxherding Tale* (1982). Johnson's accomplished, picaresque novel

Middle Passage (1990) blends the international history of slavery with a sea tale echoing Moby-Dick. Dreamer (1998) re-imagines the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Robert Olen Butler (1945-), born in Illinois and a veteran of the Vietnam War, writes about Vietnamese refugees in Louisiana in their own voices in *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain* (1992). His stories in *Tabloid Dreams* (1996) – inspired by zany news headlines – were enlarged into the humorous novel *Mr. Spaceman* (2000), in which a space alien learns English from watching television and abducts a bus full of tourists in order to interview them on his spaceship.

Native-American authors from the region include part-Chippewa Louise Erdrich, who has set a series of novels in her native North Dakota. Gerald Vizenor (1935-) gives a comic, postmodern portrait of contemporary Native-American life in *Darkness at Saint Louis Bearheart* (1978) and *Griever: An American Monkey King in China* (1987). Vizenor's *Chancers* (2000) deals with skeletons buried outside of their homelands.

Popular Syrian-American novelist Mona Simpson (1957-), who was born in Wisconsin, is the author of *Anywhere but Here* (1986), a look at mother-daughter relationships.

The Mountain West. The western interior of the United States is a largely wild area that stretches along the majestic Rocky Mountains running slantwise from Montana at the Canadian border to the hills of Texas on the U.S. border with Mexico. Ranching and mining have long provided the region's economic backbone, and the Anglo tradition in the region emphasizes an independent frontier spirit.

Western literature often incorporates conflict. Traditional enemies in the 19th-century West are the cowboy versus the Indian, the farmer/settler versus the outlaw, the rancher versus the cattle rustler. Recent antagonists include the oilman versus the ecologist, the developer versus the archaeologist, and the citizen activist versus the representative of nuclear and military facilities, many of which are housed in the sparsely populated West.

Novelist Thomas McGuane (1939-) typically depicts one man going alone into a wild area, where he engages in an escalating conflict. His works include *The Sporting Club* (1968) and *The Bushwacked Piano* (1971), in which the hero travels from Michigan to Montana on a demented mission of courtship. McGuane's enthusiasm for hunting and fishing has led critics to compare him with Ernest Hemingway. Michigan-born Jim Harrison (1937-), like McGuane, spent many years living on a ranch. In his first novel, *Wolf: A False Memoir* (1971), a man seeks to view a wolf in the wild in hopes of changing his life. His later, more pessimistic fiction includes *Legends of the Fall* (1979) and *The Road Home* (1998).

In Richard Ford's Montana novel *Wildlife* (1990), the desolate landscape counterpoints a family's breakup. Story writer, eco-critic, and nature essayist Rick Bass (1958-), born in Texas and educated as a petroleum geologist, writes of elemental confrontations between outdoorsmen and nature in his story collection *In the Loyal Mountains* (1995) and the novel *Where the Sea Used To Be* (1998).

Texan Larry McMurtry (1936-) draws on his ranch childhood in *Horseman, Pass By* (1961), made into the movie *Hud* in 1963, an unsentimental portrait of the rancher's world. *Leaving Cheyenne* (1963) and its successor, *The Last Picture Show* (1966), which was also made into a film, evoke the fading of a way of life in Texas small towns. McMurtry's best-known work is *Lonesome Dove* (1985), an archetypal western epic novel about a cattle drive in the 1870s that became a successful television miniseries. His recent works include *Comanche Moon* (1997).

The West of multiethnic writers is less heroic and often more forward looking. One of the best-known Chicana writers is Sandra Cisneros (1954-). Born in Chicago, Cisneros has lived in Mexico and Texas; she focuses on the large cultural border between Mexico and the United States as a creative, contradictory zone in which Mexican-American women must reinvent themselves. Her best-selling *The House on Mango Street* (1984), a series of interlocking vignettes told from a young girl's viewpoint, blazed the trail for other Latina writers and introduced readers to the vital

Chicago barrio. Cisneros extended her vignettes of Chicana women's lives in *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991). Pat Mora (1942-) offers a Chicana view in *Nepantla: Essays from the Land in the Middle* (1993), which addresses issues of cultural conservation.

Native Americans from the region include the late James Welch, whose *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* (2000) imagines a young Sioux who survives the Battle of Little Bighorn and makes a life in France. Linda Hogan (1947-), from Colorado and of Chickasaw heritage, reflects on Native-American women and nature in novels including *Mean Spirit* (1990), about the oil rush on Indian lands in the 1920s, and *Power* (1998), in which an Indian woman discovers her own inner natural resources.

The Southwest. For centuries, the desert Southwest developed under Spanish rule, and much of the population continues to speak Spanish, while some Native-American tribes reside on ancestral lands. Rainfall is unreliable, and agriculture has always been precarious in the region. Today, massive irrigation projects have boosted agricultural production, and air conditioning attracts more and more people to sprawling cities like Salt Lake City in Utah and Phoenix in Arizona.

In a region where the desert ecology is so fragile, it is not surprising that there are many environmentally oriented writers. The activist Edward Abbey (1927-1989) celebrated the desert wilderness of Utah in *Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness* (1968).

Trained as a biologist, Barbara Kingsolver (1955-) offers a woman's viewpoint on the Southwest in her popular trilogy set in Arizona: *The Bean Trees* (1988), featuring Taylor Greer, a tomboyish young woman who takes in a Cherokee child; *Animal Dreams* (1990); and *Pigs in Heaven* (1993). *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998) concerns a missionary family in Africa. Kingsolver addresses political themes unapologetically, admitting, "I want to change the world."

The Southwest is home to the greatest number of Native-American writers, whose works reveal rich mythical storytelling, a spiritual treatment of nature, and deep respect for the spoken word. The most important fictional theme is healing, understood as restoration of harmony. Other topics include poverty, unemployment, alcoholism, and white crimes against Indians.

Native-American writing is more philosophical than angry, however, and it projects a strong ecological vision. Major authors include the distinguished N. Scott Momaday, who inaugurated the contemporary Native-American novel with *House Made of Dawn*; his recent works include *The Man Made of Words* (1997). Part-Laguna novelist Leslie Marmon Silko, the author of *Ceremony*, has also published *Gardens in the Dunes* (1999), evoking Indigo, an orphan cared for by a white woman at the turn of the 20th century.

Numerous Mexican-American writers reside in the Southwest, as they have for centuries. Distinctive concerns include the Spanish language, the Catholic tradition, folkloric forms, and, in recent years, race and gender inequality, generational conflict, and political activism. The culture is strongly patriarchal, but new female Chicana voices have arisen.

The poetic nonfiction book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), by Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-), passionately imagines a hybrid feminine consciousness of the borderlands made up of strands from Mexican, Native-American, and Anglo cultures. Also noteworthy is New Mexican writer Denise Chavez (1948-), author of the story collection *The Last of the Menu Girls* (1986). Her *Face of an Angel* (1994), about a waitress who has been working on a manual for waitresses for 30 years, has been called an authentically Latino novel in English.

California Literature. California could be a country all its own with its enormous multiethnic population and huge economy. The state is known for spawning social experiments, youth movements (the Beats, hippies, techies), and new technologies (the "dot-coms" of Silicon Valley) that can have unexpected consequences.

Northern California, centered on San Francisco, enjoys a liberal, even utopian literary tradition seen in Jack London and John Steinbeck. It is home to hundreds of writers, including Native American Gerald Vizenor, Chicana Lorna Dee Cervantes, African Americans Alice Walker

and Ishmael Reed, and internationally minded writers like Norman Rush (1933-), whose novel *Mating* (1991) draws on his years in Africa.

Northern California houses a rich tradition of Asian-American writing, whose characteristic themes include family and gender roles, the conflict between generations, and the search for identity. Maxine Hong Kingston helped kindle the renaissance of Asian-American writing, at the same time popularizing the fictionalized memoir genre.

Another Asian-American writer from California is novelist Amy Tan, whose best-selling *The Joy Luck Club* became a hit film in 1993. Its interlinked story-like chapters delineate the different fates of four mother-and-daughter pairs. Tan's novels spanning historical China and today's United States include *The Hundred Secret Senses* (1995), about half-sisters, and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2001), about a daughter's care for her mother. The refreshing, witty Gish Jen (1955-), whose parents emigrated from Shanghai, authored the lively novels *Typical American* (1991) and *Mona in the Promised Land* (1996).

Japanese-American writers include Karen Tei Yamashita (1951-), born and raised in California, whose nine-year stay in Brazil inspired *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (1990) and *Brazil-Marú* (1992). Her *Tropic of Orange* (1997) evokes polyglot Los Angeles. Japanese-American fiction writers build on the early work of Toshio Mori, Hisaye Yamamoto, and Janice Mirikitani.

Southern California literature has a very different tradition associated with the newer city of Los Angeles, built by boosters and land developers despite the obvious problem of lack of water resources. Los Angeles was from the start a commercial enterprise; it is not surprising that Hollywood and Disneyland are some of its best-known legacies to the world. As if to counterbalance its shiny facade, a dystopian strain of Southern California writing has flourished, inaugurated by Nathanael West's Hollywood novel, *The Day of the Locust* (1939).

Loneliness and alienation stalk the creations of Gina Berriault (1926-1999), whose characters eke out stunted lives lived in rented rooms in *Women in Their Beds* (1996). Joan Didion (1934-) evokes the free-floating anxiety of California in her brilliant essays *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* (1968). In 2003, Didion penned *Where I Was from*, a narrative account of how her family moved west with the frontier and settled in California. Another Angelino, Dennis Cooper (1953-), writes cool novels about an underworld of numb, alienated men.

Thomas Pynchon best captured the strange combination of ease and unease that is Los Angeles in his novel about a vast conspiracy of outcasts, *The Crying of Lot 49*. Pynchon inspired the prolific postmodernist William Vollmann (1959-), who has gained popularity with youthful, counterculture readers for his long, surrealistic meta-narratives such as the multivolume "*Seven Dreams: A Book of North American Landscapes*," inaugurated with *The Ice-Shirt* (1990), about Vikings, and fantasies like *You Bright and Risen Angels: A Cartoon* (1987), about a war between virtual humans and insects.

Another ambitious novelist living in Southern California is the flamboyant T. Coraghessan Boyle (1948-), known for his many exuberant novels including *World's End* (1987) and *The Road to Wellville* (1993), about John Harvey Kellogg, American inventor of breakfast cereal.

Mexican-American writers in Los Angeles sometimes focus on low-grade racial tension. Richard Rodriguez (1944-), author of *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez* (1982), argues against bilingual education and affirmative action in *Days of Obligation: An Argument With My Mexican Father* (1992). Luis Rodriguez's (1954-) memoir of macho Chicano gang life in Los Angeles, *Always Running* (1993), testifies to the city's dark underside.

The Latin-American diaspora has influenced Helena Maria Viramontes (1954-), born and raised in the barrio of East Los Angeles. Her works portray that city as a magnet for a vast and growing number of Spanish-speaking immigrants, particularly Mexicans and Central Americans fleeing poverty and warfare. In powerful stories such as "*The Cariboo Café*" (1984), she

interweaves Anglos, refugees from death squads, and illegal immigrants who come to the United States in search of work.

The Northwest. In recent decades, the mountainous, densely forested Northwest, centered around Seattle in the state of Washington, has emerged as a cultural center known for liberal views and a passionate appreciation of nature. Its most influential recent writer was Raymond Carver.

David Guterson (1956-), born in Seattle, gained a wide readership when his novel *Snow Falling on Cedars* (1994) was made into a movie. Set in Washington's remote, misty San Juan Islands after World War II, it concerns a Japanese American accused of a murder. In Guterson's moving novel *East of the Mountains* (1999), a heart surgeon dying of cancer goes back to the land of his youth to commit suicide, but discovers reasons to live. The penetrating novel *Housekeeping* (1980) by Marilynne Robinson (1944-) sees this wild, difficult territory through female eyes. In her luminous, long-awaited second novel, *Gilead* (2004), an upright elderly preacher facing death writes a family history for his young son that looks back as far as the Civil War.

Although she has lived in many regions, Annie Dillard (1945-) has made the Northwest her own in her crystalline works such as the brilliant poetic essay entitled "Holy the Firm" (1994), prompted by the burning of a neighbor child. Her description of the Pacific Northwest evokes both a real and spiritual landscape: "I came here to study hard things -- rock mountain and salt sea -- and to temper my spirit on their edges." Akin to Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Dillard seeks enlightenment in nature. Dillard's striking essay collection is *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1974). Her one novel, *The Living* (1992), celebrates early pioneer families beset by disease, drowning, poisonous fumes, gigantic falling trees, and burning wood houses as they imperceptibly assimilate with indigenous tribes, Chinese immigrants, and newcomers from the East.

Sherman Alexie (1966-), a Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, is the youngest Native-American novelist to achieve national fame. Alexie gives unsentimental and humorous accounts of Indian life with an eye for incongruous mixtures of tradition and pop culture. His story cycles include *Reservation Blues* (1995) and *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), which inspired the effective film of reservation life *Smoke Signals* (1998), for which Alexie wrote the screenplay. *Smoke Signals* is one of the very few movies made by Native Americans rather than about them. Alexie's recent story collection is *The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000), while his harrowing novel *Indian Killer* (1996) recalls Richard Wright's *Native Son*.

Study Questions:

1. Name the most prominent American authors of the 21st century.
2. What is the most popular literary genre among American readers?
3. What are the sharpest themes discussed in the books of the 21st century American writers?

Selected Sources 2013-Present:

1. <https://qwiklit.com/2013/10/31/25-contemporary-american-novels-you-should-read-right-now/>

Lecture 15. Nobel Prize Winners

Plan:

1. Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951). "Main Street: The Story of Carol Kennicott" and "Babbitt".
2. Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953). "Long Day's Journey into Night".
3. Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973). "The Good Earth".
4. William Faulkner (1897-1962). The Snopes Novels. "The Sound and The Fury". "A Rose for Emily".
5. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). His of Writing. The Iceberg Theory. "A Farewell to Arms". "The Old Man and the Sea". "Fiesta", or "The Sun Also Rises".
6. John Steinbeck (1902-1968). "The Grapes of Wrath".
7. Saul Bellow (1915-2005). "Dangling Man". "Herzog".
8. Isaac Bashevis Singer.
9. Czesław Miłosz.
10. Joseph Brodsky.
11. Bob Dylan.
12. Toni Morrison (1931-) – New Generation Women Writer. "Beloved". "The Bluest Eye".
13. Louise Glück.

The Nobel Prize for Literature is awarded, according to the will of Swedish inventor and industrialist Alfred Bernhard Nobel, "to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind" in the field of literature. It is conferred by the Swedish Academy in Stockholm.

1. Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951). "Main Street: The Story of Carol Kennicott" and "Babbitt".

Primary Works: "Our Mr. Wrenn", the romantic adventures of a gentle man (1914), "The Trail of the Hawk" (1915), "The Job" (1917), "The Innocents" (1917), "Free Air" (1919), "Main Street" (1920), "Babbitt" (1922), "Arrowsmith" (1925), "Mantrap" (1926), "Elmer Gantry" (1927), "The Man Who Knew Coolidge" (1928), "Dodsworth", a novel (1929), "Ann Vickers" (1933), "Work of Art" (1934), "It Can't Happen Here", a novel (1935), "The Prodigal Parents", a novel (1938), "Bethel Merriday" (1940), "Gideon Planish" (1943), "Cass Timberlane", a novel of husbands and wives (1946), "Kingsblood Royal" (1947), "The God-seeker", a novel (1949), "World So Wide", a novel (1951).

A Brief Biography of Sinclair Lewis

Sinclair Lewis has the distinction of being the 1st American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (1930) "...for his vigorous and graphic art of description and his ability to create, with wit and humour, new types of characters..." One of the muckrakers, Lewis's "Main Street" is a devastating indictment of American provincialism; in other works, he satirizes businessmen ("Babbitt") and the medical profession ("Arrowsmith").

Harry Sinclair Lewis was born in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, and graduated from Yale University. He took time off from school to work at a socialist community, Helicon Home Colony, financed by muckraking novelist Upton Sinclair. Lewis's "Main Street" (1920) satirized monotonous, hypocritical small-town life in Gopher Prairie, Minnesota. His incisive presentation of American life and his criticism of American materialism, narrowness, and hypocrisy brought him national and international recognition. In 1926, he was offered and declined a Pulitzer Prize

for *“Arrowsmith”* (1925), a novel tracing a doctor's efforts to maintain his medical ethics amid greed and corruption. In 1930, he became the 1st American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Lewis's other major novels include *“Babbitt”* (1922). George Babbitt is an ordinary businessman living and working in Zenith, an ordinary American town. Babbitt is moral and enterprising, and a believer in business as the new scientific approach to modern life. Becoming restless, he seeks fulfillment but is disillusioned by an affair with a bohemian woman, returns to his wife, and accepts his lot. The novel added a new word to the American language - "babbitttry", meaning narrow-minded, complacent, bourgeois ways.

“Elmer Gantry” (1927) exposes revivalist religion in the U.S., while *“Cass Timberlane”* (1945) studies the stresses that develop within the marriage of an older judge and his young wife.

“Main Street: The Story of Carol Kennicott” (1920)

“Main Street” is a novel by Sinclair Lewis, published in 1920. The story of Main Street is seen through the eyes of Carol Kennicott, a young woman married to a Midwestern doctor who settles in the Minnesota town of Gopher Prairie (modeled on Lewis' hometown of Sauk Center). The power of the book derives from Lewis' careful rendering of local speech, customs, and social amenities. The satire is double-edged—directed against both the townspeople and the superficial intellectualism of those who despise them.

Sinclair Lewis frequently had difficulty in determining in his own mind whether his works were meant as bitterly comic satires of American life and values or whether they were planned as complex novels centering on the lives of the characters he made famous. One of the difficulties of reading Lewis is that these two conflicting sorts of writing are both present in many of his works, and frequently at odds with each other. This is demonstrably true of *“Main Street”*. For all his satire of small-town attitudes and values, Lewis is not unequivocal in his attack. He finds a great many things of value in the best *“Main Street”* has to offer, and he seems to see Carol Kennicott's reconciliation with the town at the end of the novel as a triumph rather than a failure on her part. Though *“Main Street”* is, as it has been frequently called, a revolt against the village, it is a revolt marked by the complexity of Lewis's attitude toward Gopher Prairie and toward its real-life counterpart, Sauk Center, Minnesota, where Lewis spent his early years.

“Babbitt” (1922)

In *“Babbitt”*, Lewis captures the political and personal unrest of the era, as well as the social rebellion at the heart of *the Roaring Twenties*.

Lewis's depiction of the labor strike, with all of its potential for mass violence, as well as the often-expressed view that immigrants and foreigners are basically sub-human, presents a harrowingly realistic portrait of post-war life in America. Critics have long considered this novel to be an exceptionally truthful work of realism, both in its creation of flesh-and-blood characters and in its accurate documentation of the 1920s.

In addition to being a seminal work of realism, *“Babbitt”* is also a highly effective work of satire. Lewis captures the hypocrisy of the period with a special focus on the distance between public utterance and actual behavior that characterized the decade. The booming alcoholic trade during Prohibition is one obvious example of this hypocrisy. Through tone and sentence structure, Lewis deftly reveals both the hypocrisy of the society and its effect on its members. George Babbitt is an embodiment of this divided mindset. Not only do his actions fail to reflect his beliefs, but even his very thoughts seem to contradict each other. He suffers great confusion between morality and the appearance of it, while America, on the whole, suffers confusion over what morality really means.

Lewis also travels into the underworld of Zenith, where the bohemians and the flappers dance and drink through the night. The novel's portrayal of Tanis Judique's group of friends (the Bunch) and, to a lesser extent, of the Dopplebraus, reveals a key social pattern of the period. In many ways, this was a time when the old restraints on personal freedom and morals were

dissolving. Lewis captures the appeal of a freer lifestyle and the loss of control that seems inevitably associated with it.

Lewis rounds out his portrait with several other themes of the time: the lure of nature, the influence of advertising and mass media in shaping public opinion, the growing reverence of science and technology, the stifling (yet comforting) social and commercial conformity, and the decline of religion through its commercialization and through ignorance among religious leaders and Fundamentalists. He captures the ambivalence of his characters who wish both to participate in and to withdraw from society. Thus it becomes obvious that Babbitt will never be able to resolve the conflict and confusion that make him unable to find meaningful fulfillment. Indeed, this conflict and this confusion define the era.

Study Questions:

1. Characterize style and thematic direction of books written by Sinclair Lewis.
2. For what exactly Sinclair Lewis won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930?

“Main Street”:

1. Do you think Carol should leave Gopher Prairie and make a new life for herself, or should she keep trying to change her perspective and learn to love her life in there? Why?
2. What is it about Will Kennicott that annoys Carol most? Is her criticism fair?
3. What does Carol say in the final pages of this book? What is Will's response and what does it mean for the story's overall message?
4. Who tries to help Carol adjust to Gopher Prairie? Are these efforts harmful or helpful?
5. How effective is Lewis as a satirist in this novel? Are any of the characters in this book similar to people you know in real life?
6. Who is the most difficult person to get along with in Gopher Prairie? Why?

“Babbitt”:

1. What does Lewis's description of Babbitt's home tell us?
2. Babbitt supports business ethics, but he is unclear what he means by ethics. What does his actual behavior tell us about business ethics in Zenith?
3. The Babbitts throw a dinner party to celebrate Babbitt's business success one spring. Why is it ironic that they should call their guests the "keenest intellects"?
4. How is Riesling different from the typical Zenith businessman?

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1. Lingeman, Richard. *Sinclair Lewis: Rebel from Main Street*. St. Paul: Borealis, 2015.

2. Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953). “Long Day's Journey into Night”.

Primary Works: (Year Written/Year Produced or Published): “*A Wife for a Life*” (1913/1958), “*The Web*” (1913/1914), “*Bound East for Cardiff*” (1914/1916), “*Fog*” (1914/1917), “*The Sniper*” (1915/1917), “*In the Zone*” (1916/1917), “*The Long Voyage Home*” (1916/1917), “*The Moon for the Caribbees*” (1916/1918), “*Beyond the Horizon*” (1918/1920), “*Anna Christie*” (1920/1921), “*The Hairy Ape*” (1921/1922), “*Desire Under the Elms*” (1923/1924), “*Lazarus Laughed*” (1926/1928), “*Strange Interlude*” (1927/1928), “*Dynamo*” (1928/1929), “*Ah! Wilderness*” (1932/1933), “*Days Without End*” (1933/1934), “*The Iceman Cometh*” (1939/1946), “*Long Day's Journey into Night*” (1941/1956),

A Brief Biography of Eugene O'Neill

"I was born in a hotel and, damn it, I'll die in a hotel."

- E. O'Neill

Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, (born Oct. 16, 1888, New York, N.Y., U.S.—died Nov. 27, 1953, Boston, Mass.), foremost American dramatist and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1936. His masterpiece, *"Long Day's Journey into Night"* (produced posthumously 1956), is at the apex of a long string of great plays, including *"Beyond the Horizon"* (1920), *"Anna Christie"* (1921), *"Strange Interlude"* (1928), *"Ah! Wilderness"* (1933), and *"The Iceman Cometh"* (1946).

Eugene O'Neill was the son of the Irish-American actor James O'Neill. As the son of a travelling actor, O'Neill never knew a stable "home". He accompanied his father on theatrical tours during his youth, and at the age of 7 was sent to school. He did not spend much time with his parents. He would be affected later in life by the loneliness he experienced while away from his family. He went to Princeton University in 1906, where he stayed only 1 year. He was suspended for 4 weeks for throwing a rock at a window while drunk, and never bothered to return to take his final exams.

Later O'Neill explored the cosmopolitan world of New York. Then he sailed to Honduras to escape of past troubles. This 3-year trip broadened his horizons. He arrived in New York and worked in the theater. He briefly served as assistant manager of a theatrical troupe organized by his father, but in 1910 he "ran away" again, this time to Buenos Aires. While in Buenos Aires, O'Neill worked a number of odd jobs, but most of his time was spent drinking with friends on the waterfront. He returned to New York in 1911.

After contracting a mild case of tuberculosis in 1912, O'Neill went to a sanitarium, where he wrote his 1st plays. It was here that O'Neill decided that he wanted to be a playwright. After leaving the sanitarium, O'Neill studied the techniques of playwriting at Harvard University from 1914 to 1915 under the famous theater scholar George Pierce Baker.

During most of the next 10 years O'Neill lived in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and in New York City, where he served as both a dramatist and a manager for the Provincetown Players. This experimental theatrical group staged a number of his 1-act plays, beginning with *"Bound East for Cardiff"* (1916), and several long plays, including *"The Hairy Ape"* (1922). *"Beyond the Horizon"* (1920), a domestic tragedy in 3 acts, was produced successfully on the Broadway stage, as was *"The Emperor Jones"* (1920), a study of the disintegration of the mind of a black dictator under the influence of fear. In the 9-act play *"Strange Interlude"* (1928), O'Neill sought to portray the way in which hidden psychological processes affect outward actions.

His most ambitious work, the trilogy *"Mourning Becomes Electra"* (1931), was an attempt to re-create the power and profundity of the ancient Greek tragedies by setting the themes and plot of the *"Oresteia"* by Aeschylus in 19th-century New England. *"Ah, Wilderness"* (1933), written in a relatively light vein, was another of his most successful plays.

O'Neill's other dramas include *"Moon of the Caribbees"* (1918), *"Anna Christie"* (1921), *"All God's Chillun Got Wings"* (1924), *"Desire Under the Elms"* (1924), *"The Great God Brown"* (1926), *"Lazarus Laughed"* (1928), *"Marco Millions"* (1928), *"Dynamo"* (1929), and *"Days Without End"* (1934).

From 1934 until his death, O'Neill suffered from a crippling nervous disorder similar to Parkinson's disease. During this entire period, he worked intermittently on a long cycle of plays concerning the history of an American family, but he completed only *"A Touch of the Poet"* in 1942 and *"More Stately Mansions"* in 1953. After 1939 he wrote 3 other plays unrelated to the cycle: *"The Iceman Cometh"* (1946), which portrays a group of social misfits unable to live without illusions, and 2 tragedies dealing with his family, *"Long Day's Journey into Night"* and *"A Moon for the Misbegotten"*. O'Neill was awarded the 1936 Nobel Prize for literature.

2 weeks after O'Neill's death, *New York Times* critic Brooks Atkinson mourned: "A giant writer has dropped off the earth; a great spirit and our greatest dramatists have left us, and our theatre world is now a smaller, more ordinary place".

"Long Day's Journey into Night" (1956)

“*Long Day's Journey into Night*” is a drama in 4 acts written by E. O'Neill in 1941–1942 but 1st published in 1956. The play is widely considered to be his masterwork and magnum opus. The play premiered in Sweden and then opened on Broadway, winning the Tony Award for Best Play.

O'Neill posthumously received the 1957 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for the work. “*Long Day's Journey into Night*” is often regarded to be 1 of the finest American plays of the 20th century. The play concerns the Tyrone family – including parents James and Mary and their sons Edmund and Jamie. Mary is addicted to drugs and Edmund is ill with tuberculosis. The play refers to the setting of the play, which takes place during 1 day. The action covers a single day from around 8:30 a.m. to midnight, in August 1912 at the seaside Connecticut home of the Tyrones: the semi-autobiographical representations of O'Neill himself, his older brother, and their parents at their home, Monte Cristo Cottage. 1 part of the play concerns addiction and the resulting dysfunction of the family. In the play the characters conceal, blame, resent, regret, accuse, and deny in an escalating cycle of conflict with occasional desperate and sincere attempts at affection, encouragement, and consolation.

Study Questions:

1. O'Neill explained “*The Hairy Ape*” by saying that “it was a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal and has not yet acquired in a spiritual way. Thus, not being able to find it on earth nor in heaven, he's in the middle, trying to make peace”. Comment.
2. “Tragedy, I think, has the meaning the Greeks gave it. To them it brought exaltation, an urge toward life and ever more life. It roused them to deeper spiritual understandings and released them from the petty greed of everyday existence. When they saw tragedy on the stage they felt their own hopeless hopes ennobled in art”. Comment these words of E. O'Neill. Can this claim be substantiated by O'Neill's work?

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2. King, William D. *Another Part of a Long Story: Literary Traces of Eugene O'Neill and Agnes Boulton.* Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2010.
3. Martin, Ronald E. *The Languages of Difference: American Writers and* Maufort, Marc. *Labyrinth of Hybridities: Avatars of O'Neillian Realism in Multi-Ethnic American Drama (1972-2003).* NY: Peter Lang, 2010.

3. Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892-1973). “The Good Earth”.

Primary Works: Novels: “*East Wind, West Wind*” (1930), “*The House of Earth*”, a trilogy (1935): “*The Good Earth*” (1931) - “*Sons*” (1932) - “*A House Divided*” (1935), “*Fighting Angel*” (1936), “*The Exile*” (1936), “*The Chinese Novel*” (1939), “*Dragon Seed*” (1942), “*Imperial Woman*” (1956), “*The Townsman*” (1945), “*The Eternal Wonder*” (2012). **Short stories:** “*The First Wife and Other Stories*” (1933), “*Far and Near*” (1947), “*The Good Deed*” (1969). **Nonfictional work:** “*The Child Who Never Grew*” (1950). **Autobiography:** “*My Several Worlds*” (1954).

A Brief Biography of Pearl Sydenstricker Buck

Pearl S. Buck, née Pearl Comfort Sydenstricker, pseudonym John Sedges, (born June 26, 1892, Hillsboro, West Virginia, U.S.—died March 6, 1973, Danby, Vermont), American author noted for her novels of life in China. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.

Pearl Sydenstricker was raised in Zhenjiang in eastern China by her missionary parents. Initially educated by her mother and a Chinese tutor, she was sent at 15 to a boarding school in Shanghai. 2 years later she entered Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia; she graduated in 1914 and remained for a semester as an instructor in psychology.

In May 1917 she married missionary John L. Buck; although later divorced and remarried, she retained the name Buck professionally. She returned to China and taught English literature in Chinese universities in 1925–30. During that time, she briefly resumed studying in the U.S. at Cornell University, where she took an M.A. in 1926. She began contributing articles on Chinese life to American magazines in 1922. Her 1st published novel, *“East Wind, West Wind”* (1930), was written aboard a ship headed for America.

“The Good Earth” (1931), a poignant tale of a Chinese peasant and his slave-wife and their struggle upward, was a best seller. The book, which won a Pulitzer Prize (1932), established Buck as an interpreter of the East to the West and was adapted for stage and screen. *“The Good Earth”*, widely translated, was followed by *“Sons”* (1932) and *“A House Divided”* (1935); the trilogy was published as *“The House of Earth”* (1935). Buck was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1938.

From 1935 Buck lived in the U.S. She and her 2nd husband, Richard Walsh, adopted 6 children through the years. Indeed, adoption became a personal crusade for Buck. In 1949, in a move to aid the mixed-race children fathered in Asia by U.S. servicemen, she and others established an adoption agency, Welcome House. She also founded another child-sponsorship agency, the Pearl S. Buck Foundation (1964; later renamed Opportunity House), to which in 1967 she turned over most of her earnings – more than \$7 million. Welcome House and Opportunity House merged in 1991 to form Pearl S. Buck International, headquartered on Buck's estate, Green Hills Farm in Pennsylvania, which is a national historic landmark.

After Buck's return to the U.S., she turned to biography, writing lives of her father, Absalom Sydenstricker (*“Fighting Angel”*, 1936), and her mother, Caroline (*“The Exile”*, 1936). Later novels include *“Dragon Seed”* (1942) and *“Imperial Woman”* (1956). She also published short stories, such as *“The First Wife and Other Stories”* (1933), *“Far and Near”* (1947), and *“The Good Deed”* (1969); a nonfictional work, *“The Child Who Never Grew”* (1950), about her mentally disabled daughter, Carol (1920–92); an autobiography, *“My Several Worlds”* (1954); and a number of children's books. Under the name John Sedges, she published 5 novels unlike her others, including a best seller, *“The Townsman”* (1945). In December 2012 an unpublished manuscript completed just prior to Buck's death was discovered in a storage locker in Texas, and it was published the next year. The novel, titled *“The Eternal Wonder”*, chronicles the peregrinations of a young genius.

“The Good Earth” (1931)

“The Good Earth” is a novel about peasant life in China in the 1920s, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1932.

Pearl S. Buck was truly a pioneer in appreciating the People's Republic of China and its emergence as a world power. Through her writings and humanitarian activities, she often made attempts to reduce the cultures of China and the United States to their lowest common denominator in order to bridge the two worlds in which she lived.

“The Good Earth” follows the life of Wang Lung from his beginnings as an impoverished peasant to his eventual position as a prosperous landowner. He is aided immeasurably by his equally humble wife, O-Lan, with whom he shares a devotion to the land, to duty, and to survival. Buck combines descriptions of marriage, parenthood, and complex human emotions with depictions of Chinese reverence for the land and for a specific way of life.

Study Questions:

1. Pearl Buck won the 1938 Nobel Prize for Literature for what the Nobel Prize Committee called "rich and genuine epic portrayals of Chinese peasant life, and for masterpieces of biography." How is her talent for writing biography reflected in her portrayal of Wang Lung and his family?
2. Discuss the roles of "chance" and "change" in the life of the Chinese peasant (especially note Chapters 18, 19, and 20), as opposed to a cause-and-effect relationship, illustrated in the belief by Wang Lung that hard work will have benefits.
3. Discuss the relationship between the House of Hwang and the family Wang, especially the rise of the Wangs while the House of Hwang is disintegrating. Consider, too, the similarity shown in the last half of the novel between the two houses.
4. A basic tenet of the novel seems to be that virtue and hard work are rewarded. Yet, the riches that are brought back from the South (truly a turning point of the novel) are acquired through "chance" and trickery. And, at the end of the novel, the roots established by Wang Lung will obviously be pulled up as the land is sold and divided by the sons. Is this consistent?
5. In "*The Chinese Novel*" (1939), Pearl Buck writes, "the novel in China was the peculiar product of the common people. And it was solely their property... dealing with all which interested the people, with legend and with myth, with lore and intrigue, with brigands and wars, with everything, indeed, which went to make up the life of the people, high and low." In what ways do the story and style of "*The Good Earth*", in their simplicity, offer something for all readers?
6. The success of "*The Good Earth*" prompted Pearl Buck to write 2 sequels, which were finally released with "*The Good Earth*" in a trilogy entitled "*House of Earth*". How does "*The Good Earth*" lend itself to sequels? In what way is the end of "*The Good Earth*" a beginning? In the end, how does the family Wang compare to the House of Hwang at the beginning of the novel?

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1. Gould Hunter Thomas. "*Nanking*". *An American in China, 1936-1939: A Memoir*. Greatrix Press, 2004.
2. Julie Bosman. *A Pearl Buck Novel, New After 4 Decades*. // New York Times, May 21, 2013.
3. Liao, Kang. *Pearl S. Buck: a cultural bridge across the Pacific*. Greenwood, 2007.
4. Melvin, Sheila. *The Resurrection of Pearl Buck*. // Wilson Quarterly Archives, #10, 2016.

4. William Faulkner (1897-1962). The Snopes Novels. "The Sound and The Fury". "A Rose for Emily".

Primary Works: "*The Marble Faun*" (1924), "*Soldier's Pay*" (1926), "*Mosquitoes*" (1927), "*Sartoris*" (1929), "*The Sound and the Fury*" (1929), "*As I Lay Dying*" (1930), "*Sanctuary*" (1931), "*These 13*" (1931), "*Light in August*" (1932), "*Doctor Martino and Other Stories*" (1934), "*Pylon*" (1935), "*Absalom, Absalom!*" (1936), "*The Unvanquished*" (1938), "*The Wild Palms*" (1939), *The Snopes Clan Novels*: "*The Hamlet*" (1940) - "*The Town*" (1957) - "*The Mansion*" (1959), "*Go Down, Moses*" (1942), "*Intruder in the Dust*" (1948), "*Knight's Gambit*" (1949), "*Collected Stories of William Faulkner*" (1950), "*Requiem for a Nun*" (1951), "*A Fable*" (1954), "*Big Woods*" (1955), "*The Reivers*" (1962).

A Brief Biography of William Faulkner

"I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past". W. Faulkner, in his 1950 Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

William Cuthbert Faulkner (September 25, 1897 – July 6, 1962) was an American writer and Nobel Prize laureate from Oxford, Mississippi. Faulkner wrote novels, short stories, a play, poetry, essays, and screenplays. He is primarily known for his novels and short stories set in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, based on Lafayette County, Mississippi, where he spent most of his life. Faulkner created an entire imaginative landscape, Yoknapatawpha County, mentioned in numerous novels, along with several families with interconnections extending back for generations. Yoknapatawpha County, with its capital, Jefferson, is closely modeled on Oxford, Mississippi, and its surroundings. Faulkner re-creates the history of the land and the various races - Indian, African-American, Euro-American, and various mixtures - who have lived on it. An innovative writer, Faulkner experimented brilliantly with narrative chronology, different points of view and voices (including those of outcasts, children, and illiterates), and a rich and demanding baroque style built of extremely long sentences full of complicated subordinate parts.

Faulkner is one of the most celebrated writers in American literature generally and Southern literature specifically. Though his work was published as early as 1919, and largely during the 1920s and 1930s, Faulkner was relatively unknown until receiving the 1949 Nobel Prize in Literature, for which he became the only Mississippi-born Nobel laureate. 2 of his works, "*A Fable*" (1954) and his last novel "*The Reivers*" (1962), won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked his novel "*The Sound and the Fury*" (1929) 6th on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century; also on the list were "*As I Lay Dying*" (1930) and "*Light in August*" (1932). "*Absalom, Absalom!*" (1936) is often included on similar lists. "*The Sound and the Fury*" and "*As I Lay Dying*" are two modernist works experimenting with viewpoint and voice to probe southern families under the stress of losing a family member; "*Light in August*" is about complex and violent relations between a white woman and a black man; and "*Absalom, Absalom!*" is about the rise of a self-made plantation owner and his tragic fall through racial prejudice and a failure to love.

Most of these novels use different characters to tell parts of the story and demonstrate how meaning resides in the manner of telling, as much as in the subject at hand. The use of various viewpoints makes Faulkner more self-referential, or "reflexive," than Hemingway or Fitzgerald; each novel reflects upon itself, while it simultaneously unfolds a story of universal interest. Faulkner's themes are southern tradition, family, community, the land, history and the past, race, and the passions of ambition and love. He also created three novels focusing on the rise of a degenerate family, the Snopes clan: "*The Hamlet*" (1940), "*The Town*" (1957), and "*The Mansion*" (1959).

Winner of the 1949 Nobel Prize for Literature, Faulkner's recognition as a writer came years after he had written his best work. Today he is regarded as an important interpreter of the universal theme of "the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself". Sometimes difficult to read, Faulkner experimented in the use of *stream-of-consciousness technique* and in the dislocation of narrative time. His fiction discusses issues of intimacy, class, race relations, and relations with nature.

The Snopes Clan Novels: "The Hamlet" (1940), "The Town" (1957), "The Mansion" (1959)

Faulkner tells the story of the rise of the Snopes family through 3 novels. It is a stunning cycle of stories depicting the decay of the south as it is overtaken by new social values at odds with the past. At times the story is told by an apparent omniscient narrator. At others it is solely told from the perspective of specific voices, especially the attorney Gavin Stevens, his nephew Chick Mallison, and V.K. Ratcliff, a travelling salesman, vending sewing machines on the installment plan.

The Snopes clan arrives in Yoknapatawpha County in force in the late 1890s, although Faulkner gives us glimpses of the family in "*The Unvanquished*" and "*Sanctuary*". However, Faulkner's ultimate symbol of the changing south appears in the form of Flem Snopes in "*The Hamlet*". Consider Flem Snopes synonymous with amoral greed, the darkest side of capitalism.

Flem will rise from sharecropper to banker over the span of 40 years. In an effort to portray himself as a respectable member of Jefferson society, he will rid the town of his own family members, using them for his own purposes until he discards them when they are no longer useful.

In addition to Flem, Faulkner creates more memorable Snopes: Mink, Wallstreet Panic, Montgomery Ward, and Clarence Eggleston Snopes. Then there is Eck Snopes, so innocent, so decent, that V.K. Ratcliff insists he could not have been a Snopes at all, surmising that Eck's mother had improved the family gene pool by trysting with someone outside the Snopes family.

On simple terms, the Snopes trilogy indicates that you can have love or money, but you can't have both. Flem's greatest opportunity comes from his marriage to Eula Varner after she becomes pregnant by a young man from one of the old aristocratic families. He will provide a name to a bastard child. However, he will never be Eula's lover. She will find that comfort from another source. Flem will accept playing the cuckold as long as it serves his purposes.

Gavin Stevens, his nephew Chick, and Ratliff will make it their mission to protect Jefferson from the Snopes clan. This trio represents the decency of democratic progress in the face of southern decay. These men are the moral foils to the amoral greed of Flem Snopes.

The Snopes novels have waxed and waned in their value in the Faulkner Canon through years of critical analysis. For this reader, these novels establish Faulkner's true place in postmodern literature. While maintaining the major aspects of southern literature in the use of legend, myth, time and place, Faulkner's County is a microcosm for a larger universe of human values.

“The Sound and the Fury” (1929)

“The Sound and the Fury” is a Southern Gothic modernist novel written by W. Faulkner. It employs a number of narrative styles, including the technique known as stream of consciousness, pioneered by 20th century European novelists such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Published in 1929, *“The Sound and the Fury”* was Faulkner's 4th novel, and was not immediately successful. In 1931, however, when Faulkner's 6th novel, *“Sanctuary”*, was published — a sensationalist story, which Faulkner later claimed was written only for money — *“The Sound and the Fury”* also became commercially successful, and Faulkner began to receive critical attention.

The novel is set in Jefferson, Mississippi. It centers on the Compson family, former Southern aristocrats who are struggling to deal with the dissolution of their family and its reputation. Over the course of the 30 years or so related in the novel, the family falls into financial ruin, loses its religious faith and the respect of the town of Jefferson, and many of them die tragically.

The novel is separated into 4 distinct sections. The 1st, April 7th, 1928, is written from the perspective of Benjamin “Benjy” Compson, a cognitively disabled 33-year-old man. The characteristics of his disease are not clear, but it is hinted that he suffers from a developmental disability. Benjy's section is characterized by a highly disjointed narrative style with frequent chronological leaps. The 2nd section, June 2nd, 1910, focuses on Quentin Compson, Benjy's older brother, and the events leading up to his suicide. In the 3rd section, April 6th, 1928, Faulkner writes from the point of view of Jason, Quentin's cynical younger brother. In the 4th and final section, April 8th, 1928, Faulkner introduces a 3rd person omniscient point of view. The last section primarily focuses on Dilsey, one of the Compsons' black servants. Jason is also a focus in the section, but Faulkner presents glimpses of the thoughts and deeds of everyone in the family.

In 1945, Faulkner wrote a *“Compson Appendix”* to be included with future printings of *“The Sound and the Fury”*. It contains a 30-page history of the Compson family from 1699 to 1945.

The 4 parts of the novel relate many of the same episodes, each from a different point of view and therefore with emphasis on different themes and events. This interweaving and nonlinear structure makes any true synopsis of the novel difficult, especially since the narrators are all unreliable in their own way, making their accounts not necessarily trustworthy at all times. Also in this novel, Faulkner uses italics to indicate points in each section where the narrative is moving into a significant moment in the past. The use of these italics can be confusing, however, as time

shifts are not always marked by the use of italics, and periods of different time in each section do not necessarily stay in italics for the duration of the flashback.

The title of the novel is taken from Macbeth's famous soliloquy of act 5, scene 5 of William Shakespeare's "*Macbeth*":

*Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

Immediately obvious is the notion of a "tale told by an idiot", in this case Benjy, whose view of the Compsons' story opens the novel. The idea can be extended also to Quentin and Jason, whose narratives display their own varieties of idiocy. More to the point, the novel recounts the decline and death of a traditional upper-class Southern family, "the way to dusty death". The last line is, perhaps, the most meaningful; Faulkner said in his speech upon being awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature that people must write about things that come from the heart, "universal truths". Otherwise they signify nothing.

The Sound and the Fury is a widely influential work of literature. Faulkner has been praised for his ability to recreate the thought process of the human mind. In addition, it is viewed as an essential development in the stream-of-consciousness literary technique. In 1998, the Modern Library ranked "*The Sound and the Fury*" 6th on its list of the 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century.

"A Rose for Emily" (1930)

Faulkner's most famous, most popular, and most anthologized short story, "*A Rose for Emily*" evokes the terms Southern gothic and grotesque, 2 types of literature in which the general tone is one of gloom, terror, and understated violence. The story is Faulkner's best example of these forms because it contains unimaginably dark images: a decaying mansion, a corpse, a murder, a mysterious servant who disappears.

Most discussions of the short story center on Miss Emily Grierson, an aristocratic woman deeply admired by a community that places her on a pedestal and sees her as "a tradition, a duty" — or, as the unnamed narrator describes her, "a fallen monument". In contrast to the community's view, we realize eventually that Miss Emily is a woman who not only poisons and kills her lover, Homer Barron, but she keeps his rotting corpse in her bedroom. The ending of the story emphasizes the length of time Miss Emily must have spent with her dead lover: long enough for the townspeople to find "a long strand of iron-gray hair" lying on the pillow next to "what was left of him, rotted beneath what was left of the nightshirt" and displaying a "profound and fleshless grin."

The contrast between the aristocratic woman and her unspeakable secrets forms the basis of the story. Because the Griersons "held themselves a little too high for what they really were," Miss Emily's father forbids her to date socially, or at least the community thinks so: "None of the young men were quite good enough for Miss Emily and such". She becomes so terribly desperate for human love that she murders Homer and keeps his dead body. Using her aristocratic position to cover up the murder, ironically she sentences herself to total isolation from the community, embracing the dead for solace.

Although our 1st reaction to the short story might be one of horror or disgust, Faulkner uses 2 literary techniques to create a seamless whole that makes the tale too intriguing to stop reading: the suspenseful, jumbled chronology of events, and the narrator's shifting point of view, which

emphasizes Miss Emily's strength of purpose, her aloofness, and her pride, and lessens the horror and the repulsion of her actions.

Study Questions:

1. Discuss the narrative structure of *"A Rose for Emily"*. Why does Faulkner present the story's events in non-chronological order? Would the story be successful if he had told it in a strictly linear fashion? Why or why not?
2. Compare how the townspeople treat Miss Emily in *"A Rose for Emily"* and Miss Minnie in *"Dry September"*.
3. In *"Dry September"*, many characters comment on the weather. How does Faulkner characterize the weather? Does it affect people's actions in the story? Has it ever affected yours?
4. How is *"Spotted Horses"* an example of American Old Southwest humor?
5. How does Faulkner use animal imagery in *"Spotted Horses"*? Is it effective? Is it linked especially with any group of people?
6. In his Nobel Prize for literature acceptance speech, Faulkner says that humanity will endure. Do his short stories suggest this optimism? Which of the stories' characters most successfully endure their hardships? Which the least?
7. How does the location in a hunting camp function as an appropriate setting for the themes manifest in the story *"Delta Autumn"*? In what ways is Roth Edmonds meant to function as a representative of contemporary man? How is Uncle Ike different from his kinsman?
8. How many novels and stories are connected to the Snopes family? Why did Faulkner appeal to this clan stories from time to time?
9. In the form of whom does Faulkner's ultimate symbol of the changing south appear in the trilogy about the Snopes? Prove your answer by examples from the novels.

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5. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). His of Writing. The Iceberg Theory. "A Farewell to Arms". "The Old Man and the Sea". "Fiesta", or "The Sun Also Rises".

Primary Works: *"The Sun Also Rises"* (1926), *"The Torrents of Spring"* (1926), *"Men Without Women"* (1927), *"The Killers"* (1933), *"The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber"* (1933), *"The Snows of Kilimanjaro"* (1933), *"A Farewell to Arms"* (1929), *"Death in the Afternoon"* (1932), *"The Green Hills of Africa"* (1935), *"To Have and Have Not"* (1937), *"For Whom the Bell Tolls"* (1940), *"Across the River and into the Trees"* (1950), *"The Old Man and the Sea"* (1952).

A Brief Biography of Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Hemingway, in full Ernest Miller Hemingway (born July 21, 1899, Oak Park, Illinois, U.S.—died July 2, 1961, Ketchum, Idaho), American novelist and short-story writer, awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954. He was noted both for the intense masculinity of his writing and for his adventurous and widely publicized life. His succinct and lucid prose style exerted a powerful influence on American and British fiction in the 20th century.

Ernest Hemingway was born in a suburb of Chicago, was educated in the public schools, began to write in high school, where he was active and outstanding. In 1917, he went to Kansas City, working as a reporter for the *Star*. He was repeatedly rejected for military service because of

a defective eye, but he managed to enter World War I as an ambulance driver for the American Red Cross. On July 8, 1918 he was injured on the Austro-Italian front. Decorated for heroism and hospitalized in Milan, he fell in love with a Red Cross nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky, who declined to marry him. These were experiences he was never to forget.

After recuperating at home, Hemingway his 1st important book, a collection of stories called "*In Our Time*" (1925) was published.

In 1926 he published "*The Sun Also Rises*", a novel with which he scored his 1st solid success. A pessimistic but sparkling book, it deals with a group of aimless expatriates in France and Spain — members of the postwar Lost Generation, a phrase that Hemingway scorned while making it famous. This work also introduced him to the limelight, which he both craved and resented for the rest of his life. Hemingway's "*The Torrents of Spring*", a parody of the American writer Sherwood Anderson's book "*Dark Laughter*", also appeared in 1926.

Hemingway's position as a master of short fiction had been advanced by "*Men Without Women*" in 1927 and thoroughly established with the stories in "*Winner Take Nothing*" in 1933. Among his finest stories are "*The Killers*", "*The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*" and "*The Snows of Kilimanjaro*".

However, the novel "*A Farewell to Arms*" (1929) overshadowed such works. Reaching back to his experience as a young soldier in Italy, Hemingway developed a grim but lyrical novel of great power, fusing love story with war story. While serving with the Italian ambulance service during World War I, the American lieutenant Frederic Henry falls in love with the English nurse Catherine Barkley, who tends him during his recuperation after being wounded. She becomes pregnant by him, but he must return to his post. Henry deserts during the Italians' disastrous retreat after the Battle of Caporetto, and the reunited couple flee Italy by crossing the border into Switzerland. There, however, Catherine and her baby die during childbirth, and Henry is left desolate at the loss of the great love of his life.

Hemingway's love of Spain and his passion for bullfighting resulted in "*Death in the Afternoon*" (1932), a learned study of a spectacle he saw more as tragic ceremony than as sport. Similarly, a safari he took in 1933–34 in the big-game region of Tanganyika resulted in "*The Green Hills of Africa*" (1935), an account of big-game hunting. A minor novel of 1937 called "*To Have and Have Not*" is about a Caribbean desperado and is set against a background of lower-class violence and upper-class decadence in Key West during the Great Depression.

By now Spain was in the midst of civil war. Still deeply attached to that country, Hemingway made 4 trips there as a correspondent. The harvest of Hemingway's considerable experience of Spain in war and peace was the novel "*For Whom the Bell Tolls*" (1940), a substantial and impressive work that some critics consider his finest novel, in preference to "*A Farewell to Arms*". Set during the Spanish Civil War, it tells of Robert Jordan, an American volunteer who is sent to join a guerrilla band behind the Nationalist lines in the Guadarrama Mountains. Most of the novel concerns Jordan's relations with the varied personalities of the band, including the girl Maria, with whom he falls in love. Through dialogue, flashbacks, and stories, Hemingway offers telling and vivid profiles of the Spanish character and unsparingly depicts the cruelty and inhumanity stirred up by the civil war. Jordan's mission is to blow up a strategic bridge near Segovia in order to aid a coming Republican attack, which he realizes is doomed to fail. In an atmosphere of impending disaster, he blows up the bridge but is wounded and makes his retreating comrades leave him behind, where he prepares a last-minute resistance to his Nationalist pursuers.

All of his life Hemingway was fascinated by war — in "*A Farewell to Arms*" he focused on its pointlessness, in "*For Whom the Bell Tolls*" on the comradeship it creates — and, as World War II progressed, he made his way to London as a journalist. Following the war in Europe, Hemingway returned to his home in Cuba and began to work seriously again. He also traveled widely, and, on a trip to Africa, he was injured in a plane crash.

In 1953 he received the Pulitzer Prize in fiction for "*The Old Man and the Sea*" (1952), a short heroic novel about an old Cuban fisherman who, after an extended struggle, hooks and boats a giant marlin only to have it eaten by voracious sharks during the long voyage home. This book, which played a role in gaining for Hemingway the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954, was as enthusiastically praised as his previous novel, "*Across the River and into the Trees*" (1950), the story of a professional army officer who dies while on leave in Venice, had been damned.

By 1960 Hemingway had left Cuba and settled in Ketchum, Idaho. He tried to lead his life and do his work as before. For a while he succeeded, but, anxiety-ridden and depressed, he was twice hospitalized at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where he received electroshock treatments. Two days after his return to the house in Ketchum, he took his life with a shotgun.

Hemingway's Style of Writing. Iceberg Theory

Hemingway's characters plainly embody his own values and view of life. The main characters of "*The Sun Also Rises*", "*A Farewell to Arms*", and "*For Whom the Bell Tolls*" are young men whose strength and self-confidence nevertheless coexist with a sensitivity that leaves them deeply scarred by their wartime experiences. War was for Hemingway a potent symbol of the world, which he viewed as complex, filled with moral ambiguities, and offering almost unavoidable pain, hurt, and destruction. To survive in such a world, and perhaps emerge victorious, one must conduct oneself with honor, courage, endurance, and dignity, a set of principles known as "the Hemingway code". To behave well in the lonely, losing battle with life is to show "grace under pressure" and constitutes in itself a kind of victory, a theme clearly established in "*The Old Man and the Sea*".

Hemingway's prose style was probably the most widely imitated of any in the 20th century. He wished to strip his own use of language of inessentials, ridding it of all traces of verbosity, embellishment, and sentimentality. In striving to be as objective and honest as possible, Hemingway hit upon the device of describing a series of actions by using short, simple sentences from which all comment or emotional rhetoric has been eliminated. These sentences are composed largely of nouns and verbs, have few adjectives and adverbs, and rely on repetition and rhythm for much of their effect. The resulting terse, concentrated prose is concrete and unemotional yet is often resonant and capable of conveying great irony through understatement. Hemingway's use of dialogue was similarly fresh, simple, and natural-sounding. The influence of this style was felt worldwide wherever novels were written, particularly from the 1930s through the '50s.

A consummately contradictory man, Hemingway achieved a fame surpassed by few, if any, American authors of the 20th century. The virile nature of his writing, which attempted to re-create the exact physical sensations he experienced in wartime, big-game hunting, and bullfighting, in fact masked an aesthetic sensibility of great delicacy. He was a celebrity long before he reached middle age, but his popularity continues to be validated by serious critical opinion.

"**The Iceberg Theory**" is the writing style of Ernest Hemingway. Influenced by his journalistic career, Hemingway contended that by omitting superfluous and extraneous matter, writing becomes more interesting. When he became a writer of short stories, he retained this minimalistic style, focusing on surface elements without explicitly discussing the underlying themes. Hemingway believed the true meaning of a piece of writing should not be evident from the surface story, rather, the crux of the story lies below the surface and should be allowed to shine through. Critics such as Jackson Benson claim that his *iceberg theory*, also known as *the theory of omission*, in combination with his distinctive clarity of writing, functioned as a means to distance himself from the characters he created.

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

“A Farewell to Arms” (1929)

“*A Farewell to Arms*” is a novel set during the Italian campaign of World War I. The book, published in 1929, is a first-person account of American Frederic Henry, serving as a Lieutenant (“Tenente”) in the ambulance corps of the Italian Army. The title is taken from a poem by 16th-century English dramatist George Peele.

The novel is divided into five books. It is about a love affair between the expatriate American Henry and Catherine Barkley against the backdrop of the World War I, cynical soldiers, fighting and the displacement of populations. The publication of “*A Farewell to Arms*” cemented Hemingway's stature as a modern American writer, became his 1st best-seller, and is described by biographer Michael Reynolds as “the premier American war novel from that debacle World War I”.

“The Old Man and the Sea” (1952)

“*The Old Man and the Sea*” is a short novel written in 1951 in Bimini, Bahamas, and published in 1952. It was the last major work of fiction by Hemingway that was published during his lifetime. One of his most famous works, it tells the story of Santiago, an aging Cuban fisherman who struggles with a giant marlin far out in the Gulf Stream off the coast of Florida. In 1953, “*The Old Man and the Sea*” was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, and it was cited by the Nobel Committee as contributing to their awarding of the Nobel Prize in Literature to Hemingway in 1954.

“*The Old Man and the Sea*” served to reinvigorate Hemingway's literary reputation and prompted a reexamination of his entire body of work. The novel was initially received with much popularity; it restored many readers' confidence in Hemingway's capability as an author. Its publisher, Scribner's, on an early dust jacket, called the novel a “new classic,” and many critics favorably compared it with such works as William Faulkner's “*The Bear*” and Herman Melville's “*Moby-Dick*”.

“Fiesta” or “The Sun Also Rises” (1926)

The novel “*Fiesta*” (“*The Sun Also Rises*”) was written by Hemingway within a few months. This literary piece is based on real events from the author's life: his 3rd visit to Pamplona bullfight in 1925 with his friends and rivals seeking love of Lady Daff Twisden. The latter became the inspiration for Lady Brett Ashley, novel's main heroine.

Novel's artistic problems are defined by two epigraphs: on the lost generation and on the cycle nature of all things. The main characters of the novel are young people who survived World War I having been seriously injured and having lost their spiritual life values. As it is usual with Hemingway, a developed criticism of the problem is absent here. A life-wise reader is supposed to understand everything without explanation. Hemingway is famously laconic when speaking about important issues. He avoids detailed descriptions and tends rather to enumerate things and events than to introduce their multifaceted revelations. The characters' dialogues are very laconic and quite clear. For instance, Jake's and Brett's feelings for each other can be clearly seen from these 4 simple phrases:

“It's good to see each other.”

“No. I don't think it is.”

“Don't you want to?”

“I have to.”

Study Questions:

1. To what extent Hemingway's life influenced his novels and stories? Prove your answer with examples from his books.
2. Explain what Iceberg Theory means.

“A Farewell to Arms”:

1. What could Henry mean by thinking, "Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hallow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the number of regiments and the dates"? How does this statement relate to the ethics of the prose style of the story?

2. What is the effect of Henry's description of battle? What information do and don't we get? How does this statement compare with other descriptions of warfare you may be familiar with?

"The Old Man and the Sea":

1. Describe Hemingway's portrayal of Santiago's relationship with the sea.

2. Is Santiago a prideful man? Why or why not?

3. How does Santiago embody Hemingway's ideals for manhood?

4. In your opinion, is Santiago successful as a fisherman? Why or why not?

5. Discuss Santiago's obsession with being a worthy adversary for the marlin.

6. What is Santiago's view of his own sinfulness?

7. Discuss the importance of the sense of sight to the characters in the novella.

8. How is the figure of Joe DiMaggio used to emphasize Santiago's respect for nature?

"The Sun Also Rises":

1. In what ways are the male and female characters in the novel similar? How are they different? What might Hemingway be saying about love in the post-war world?

2. Compare and contrast Cohn, Mike, and Jake. Consider their wartime experiences, relationships with women, etc. How are they similar? Different?

3. Is Brett a sympathetic character?

4. Is it possible to generalize about whether the characters that served in WWI (Jake, Bill, Mike, the Count, Brett) are different from Cohn, who did not?

5. How would *The Sun Also Rises* be similar or different if narrated by a character other than Jake? How would Cohn tell the story? Brett? Mike?

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3. Hawkins, Ruth A. *Unbelievable Happiness and Final Sorrow: The Hemingway-Pfeiffer Marriage*. Fayetteville: U of Arkansas P, 2012.

6. John Steinbeck (1902-1968). "The Grapes of Wrath".

Primary Works: "Tortilla Flat" (1935), "Cup of Gold, a Life of Sir Henry Morgan, Buccaneer, with Occasional Reference to History" (1936), "Of Mice and Men" (1937), "In Dubious Battle" (1939), "The Grapes of Wrath" (1939), "Sea of Cortez" (1941), "Cannery Row" (1945), "The Red Pony" (1945), "The Pearl" (1945), "Sweet Thursday" (1954), "The Wayward Bus" (1947), "East of Eden" (1952), "The Pastures of Heaven" (1956), "The Long Valley" (1956), "The Winter of Our Discontent" (1961), "Travels with Charley; in Search of America" (1962).

A Brief Biography of John Steinbeck

"[The writer's 1st duty was to] set down his time as nearly as he can understand it [and serve as] the watch-dog of society... to satirize its silliness, to attack its injustices, to stigmatize its faults." "What we have always wanted is an unchangeable, and we have found that only a compass point, a thought, an individual ideal, does not change."

J. Steinbeck. From headnote to "Anthology of American

John Steinbeck, in full John Ernst Steinbeck (born Feb. 27, 1902, Salinas, Calif., U.S.—died Dec. 20, 1968, New York, N.Y.), American novelist, best known for “*The Grapes of Wrath*” (1939), which summed up the bitterness of the *Great Depression* decade and aroused widespread sympathy for the plight of migratory farmworkers. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature for 1962.

Steinbeck attended Stanford University, California, intermittently between 1920 and 1926 but did not take a degree. Before his books attained success, he spent considerable time supporting himself as a manual laborer while writing, and his experiences lent authenticity to his depictions of the lives of the workers in his stories. He spent much of his life in Monterey County, California, which later was the setting of some of his fiction.

Steinbeck’s 1st novel, “*Cup of Gold*” (1929), was followed by “*The Pastures of Heaven*” (1932) and “*To a God Unknown*” (1933), none of which were successful. He 1st achieved popularity with “*Tortilla Flat*” (1935), an affectionately told story of Mexican Americans. The mood of gentle humor turned to one of unrelenting grimness in his next novel, “*In Dubious Battle*” (1936), a classic account of a strike by agricultural laborers and labor organizers who engineer it. The novella “*Of Mice and Men*” (1937), which also appeared in play and film versions, is a tragic story about the strange, complex bond between 2 migrant laborers.

“*The Grapes of Wrath*” won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award and was made into a notable film in 1940. The novel is about the migration of a dispossessed family from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California and describes their subsequent exploitation by a ruthless system of agricultural economics.

After the best-selling success of “*The Grapes of Wrath*”, Steinbeck went to Mexico to collect marine life with the freelance biologist Edward F. Ricketts, and the 2 men collaborated in writing “*Sea of Cortez*” (1941), a study of the fauna of the Gulf of California. During World War II Steinbeck wrote some effective pieces of government propaganda, among them “*The Moon Is Down*” (1942), a novel of Norwegians under the Nazis, and he also served as a war correspondent. His immediate postwar work — “*Cannery Row*” (1945), “*The Pearl*” (1947), and “*The Wayward Bus*” (1947) — contained the familiar elements of his social criticism but were more relaxed in approach and sentimental in tone.

Steinbeck’s later writings, which include “*Travels with Charley: In Search of America*” (1962), about Steinbeck’s experiences as he drove across the U.S., were interspersed with 3 conscientious attempts to reassert his stature as a major novelist: “*Burning Bright*” (1950), “*East of Eden*” (1952), and “*The Winter of Our Discontent*” (1961). In critical opinion, none equaled his earlier achievement. “*East of Eden*”, an ambitious epic about the moral relations between a California farmer and his 2 sons, was made into a film in 1955. Steinbeck himself wrote the scripts for the film versions of his stories “*The Pearl*” (1948) and “*The Red Pony*” (1949). Outstanding among the scripts he wrote directly for motion pictures were “*Forgotten Village*” (1941) and “*Viva Zapata!*” (1952).

Steinbeck’s reputation rests mostly on the naturalistic novels with proletarian themes he wrote in the 1930s; it is in these works that his building of rich symbolic structures and his attempts at conveying mythopoeic and archetypal qualities in his characters are most effective.

“*The Grapes of Wrath*” (1939)

“*The Grapes of Wrath*” is an American realist novel by J. Steinbeck. The book won the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for fiction, and it was cited prominently when Steinbeck was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1962. Set during the *Great Depression*, the novel focuses on the Joads, a poor family of tenant farmers driven from their Oklahoma home by drought, economic hardship, agricultural industry changes and bank foreclosures forcing tenant farmers out of work. Due to their nearly hopeless situation, and in part because they are trapped in the Dust Bowl, the

Joads set out for California. Along with thousands of other "Okies", they seek jobs, land, dignity, and a future. "*The Grapes of Wrath*" is frequently read in American high school and college literature classes due to its historical context and enduring legacy.

When preparing to write the novel, Steinbeck wrote: "I want to put a tag of shame on the greedy bastards who are responsible for this [the *Great Depression* and its effects]". He famously said, "I've done my damndest to rip a reader's nerves to rags". This work won a large following among the working class due to Steinbeck's sympathy for the migrants and workers' movement, and his accessible prose style.

Study Questions:

1. Discuss the significance of nature in Steinbeck's stories. Do animals have a symbolic function, helping the reader to understand the human characters?
2. What is the nature of John Steinbeck's medieval interest, especially in "*Tortilla Flat*"?
3. What is the basis of the friendship of George and Lennie in "*Of Mice and Men*"?
4. What factors led critics to downgrade Steinbeck's fiction after "*The Grapes of Wrath*"?
5. What conclusions about the U.S. does Steinbeck reach as a result of the journey described in "*Travels with Charley: In Search of America*"?

"The Grapes of Wrath":

1. What is the purpose of the intercalary chapters?
2. How does the economic decline of the Joad family correspond to the disintegration of their family? Are the Joads typical migrant laborers?
3. Describe Tom's spiritual journey from inner, intuitive morality to an outward expression of morality that encompasses all of humanity.
4. Describe briefly the social and historical background in which "*The Grapes of Wrath*" was created. How did this affect the novel's public and critical reception? How has this reception changed as the historical events that shaped the novel have receded into the distant past?
5. Explain the symbolism of the turtle in Chapter 3 in "*The Grapes of Wrath*".

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4. Wartzman, Rick. *Obscene in the Extreme: The Burning and Banning of John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath*. NY: Public Affairs, 2013.

7. Saul Bellow (1915-2005). "Dangling Man". "Herzog".

Primary Works: Novels: "*Dangling Man*" (1944), "*The Victim*" (1947), "*The Adventures of Augie March*" (1953), "*Henderson the Rain King*" (1959), "*Seize the Day*" (1956), "*Mosby's Memoirs*" (1968), "*To Jerusalem and Back*" (1976), "*Herzog*" (1964), "*Mr. Sammler's Planet*" (1970), "*Humboldt's Gift*" (1975), "*The Dean's December*" (1982), "*More Die of Heartbreak*" (1987), "*A Theft*" (1989), "*The Bellarosa Connection*" (1989), "*The Actual*" (1997), "*Ravelstein*" (2000).

A Brief Biography of Saul Bellow

"People don't realize how much they are in the grip of ideas.
We live among ideas much more than we live in nature".

S. Bellow

Saul Bellow, (born June 10, 1915, Lachine, near Montreal, Quebec, Canada—died April 5, 2005, Brookline, Massachusetts, U.S.), American novelist whose characterizations of modern urban man, disaffected by society but not destroyed in spirit, earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976. Brought up in a Jewish household and fluent in Yiddish (which influenced his energetic English style) he was representative of the Jewish American writers whose works became central to American literature after World War II. Bellow's parents emigrated in 1913 from Russia to Montreal. When he was 9 they moved to Chicago. He attended the University of Chicago and Northwestern University (B.S., 1937) and afterward combined writing with a teaching career at various universities, including the University of Minnesota, Princeton University, New York University, Bard College, the University of Chicago, and Boston University.

Bellow won a reputation among a small group of readers with his 1st 2 novels, "*Dangling Man*" (1944), a story in diary form of a man waiting to be inducted into the army, and "*The Victim*" (1947), a subtle study of the relationship between a Jew and a Gentile, each of whom becomes the other's victim. "*The Adventures of Augie March*" (1953) brought wider acclaim and won a National Book Award (1954). It is a picaresque story of a poor Jewish youth from Chicago, his progress - sometimes highly comic - through the world of the 20th century, and his attempts to make sense of it. In this novel Bellow employed for the 1st time a loose, breezy style in conscious revolt against the preoccupation of writers of that time with perfection of form.

"*Henderson the Rain King*" (1959) continued the picaresque approach in its tale of an eccentric American millionaire on a quest in Africa. "*Seize the Day*" (1956), a novella, is a unique treatment of a failure in a society where the only success is success. He also wrote a volume of short stories, "*Mosby's Memoirs*" (1968), and "*To Jerusalem and Back*" (1976) about a trip to Israel.

In his later novels and novellas – "*Herzog*" (1964; National Book Award, 1965), "*Mr. Sammler's Planet*" (1970; National Book Award, 1971), "*Humboldt's Gift*" (1975; Pulitzer Prize, 1976), "*The Dean's December*" (1982), "*More Die of Heartbreak*" (1987), "*A Theft*" (1989), "*The Bellarosa Connection*" (1989), and "*The Actual*" (1997) – Bellow arrived at his most characteristic vein. The heroes of these works are often Jewish intellectuals whose interior monologues range from the sublime to the absurd. At the same time, their surrounding world, peopled by energetic and incorrigible realists, acts as a corrective to their intellectual speculations. It is this combination of cultural sophistication and the wisdom of the streets that constitutes Bellow's greatest originality. In "*Ravelstein*" (2000) he presented a fictional version of the life of teacher and philosopher Allan Bloom. 5 years after Bellow's death, more than 700 of his letters, edited by Benjamin Taylor, were published in "*Saul Bellow: Letters*" (2010).

"Dangling Man" (1944)

"*Dangling Man*" is a novel by S. Bellow. It is his 1st published work. Written in diary format, the story centers on the life of an unemployed young man named Joseph, his relationships with his wife and friends, and his frustrations with living in Chicago and waiting to be drafted. His diary serves as a philosophical confessional for his musings. It ends with his entrance into the army during World War II, and a hope that the regimentation of army life will relieve his suffering. Along with Bellow's 2nd novel "*The Victim*", it is considered his "apprentice" work.

The central character, Joseph, is a "dangling man" because he has given up his job and is awaiting induction into the military. Perhaps he is dangling in another way: he has become too intellectually removed to connect emotionally with his wife Iva or his friends. His intellectual distance is applied to himself as well, and, despite all else, he does possess a certain lucidity. While he has now "outgrown" an earlier self, amazing that a reader at least could not help but like that earlier self more than the lucid but lost "dangling" man he has become.

Some critics, including Edmund Wilson and Kenneth Fearing, deplored the novel's lack of a definite plot, but praised Bellow's depiction of what they saw as the characteristic features of the

generation of American intellectuals raised during the Great Depression. *"Dangling Man"* can be seen as a superfluous man narrative, raising interesting parallels with Turgenev's *"The Diary of a Superfluous Man"* and exploring the 19th-century Russian literary concept through a contemporary American experience.

The principal theme of *Dangling Man* involves the age-old search for values by which one can live in the world. For Joseph, this quest for ultimate meaning is necessarily preceded by self-knowledge: "But I must know what I myself am".

"Herzog" (1964)

"Herzog" is a novel by S. Bellow, composed in large part of letters from the protagonist Moses E. Herzog. It won the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction and The Prix International. *TIME* magazine named it one of the 100 best novels in the English language since "the beginning of *TIME*" (1923 to 2005).

"Herzog" is set in 1964 in the U.S., and is about the midlife crisis of a Jewish man named Moses E. Herzog. At the age of 47, he is just emerging from his 2nd divorce, this one particularly acrimonious. He has 2 children, one by each wife, who are growing up without him. His career as a writer and an academic has floundered. He is in a relationship with a vibrant woman, Ramona, but finds himself running away from commitment.

Herzog spends much of his time mentally writing letters he never sends. These letters are aimed at friends, family members, and famous figures. The recipients may be dead, and Herzog has often never met them. The one common thread is that Herzog is always expressing disappointment, either his own in the failings of others or their words, or apologizing for the way he has disappointed others. The character of Herzog in many ways echoes a fictionalized Saul Bellow. Both Herzog and Bellow grew up in Canada, the sons of bootleggers who had emigrated from Russia (St. Petersburg). Both are Jewish, lived in Chicago for significant periods of time, and were divorced twice (at the time of writing). Herzog is nearly the same age that Bellow was when he wrote the novel.

Moses Herzog, like many of Bellow's heroes, is a Jewish intellectual who confronts a world peopled by sanguine, incorrigible realists. Much of the action of the novel takes place within the hero's disturbed consciousness, including a series of flashbacks.

"Herzog" was praised for its combination of erudition and street smarts, for its lively Yiddish-influenced prose, and for its narrative drive.

Study Questions:

1. What is the main theme of Bellow's novels? Is it connected to his personal experience? If yes – find biographical prove.
2. What are the most successful novels of S. Bellow? In your opinion, why exactly these novels were awarded?

"Dangling Man":

1. Define the phrase "dangling man" by relating to specific qualities of Moses Herzog's character.
2. Explain the thematic significance of the water and the fish motifs.
3. Evaluate the traits and attitudes of Sandor Himmelstein and Simkin as stereotypes.
4. Explain the thematic significance of the motion imagery in the novel. How does it reflect Herzog's internal condition?
5. Briefly categorize and evaluate the various life views considered and rejected by the protagonist.

"Herzog":

1. If you were Herzog's therapist, what advice would you give him? Why?
2. Do you think Herzog flaunts his education too much? Why or why not?
3. Why does Herzog write a bunch of letters that he has no intention of ever sending? What do we make of the fact that he writes fewer letters as the book goes on?

4. Why did Herzog buy a crummy old house in the Berkshires? What does this house come to symbolize for Herzog over time?
5. When does Herzog hit "rock bottom" in this book, or what is his lowest point?

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8. Isaac Bashevis Singer

Isaac Bashevis Singer, Yiddish in full Yitskhok Bashevis Zinger, (born July 14?, 1904, Radzymin, Pol., Russian Empire—died July 24, 1991, Surfside, Fla., U.S.), Polish-born American writer of novels, short stories, and essays in Yiddish. He was the recipient in 1978 of the Nobel Prize for Literature. His fiction, depicting Jewish life in Poland and the United States, is remarkable for its rich blending of irony, wit, and wisdom, flavoured distinctively with the occult and the grotesque.

Singer's birth date is uncertain and has been variously reported as July 14, November 21, and October 26. He came from a family of Hasidic rabbis on his father's side and a long line of Mitnagdic rabbis on his mother's side. He received a traditional Jewish education at the Warsaw Rabbinical Seminary. His older brother was the novelist I.J. Singer and his sister the writer Esther Kreytman (Kreitman). Like his brother, Singer preferred being a writer to being a rabbi. In 1925 he made his debut with the story "Af der elter" ("In Old Age"), which he published in the Warsaw Literarische bleter under a pseudonym. His first novel, *Der Sotn in Goray* (Satan in Goray), was published in installments in Poland shortly before he immigrated to the United States in 1935.

Settling in New York City, as his brother had done a year earlier, Singer worked for the Yiddish newspaper *Forverts* (Jewish Daily Forward), and as a journalist he signed his articles with the pseudonym Varshavski or D. Segal. He also translated many books into Yiddish from Hebrew, Polish, and, particularly, German, among them works by Thomas Mann and Erich Maria Remarque. In 1943 he became a U.S. citizen.

Although Singer's works became most widely known in their English versions, he continued to write almost exclusively in Yiddish, personally supervising the translations. The relationship between his works in these two languages is complex: some of his novels and short stories were published in Yiddish in the *Forverts*, for which he wrote until his death, and then appeared in book form only in English translation. Several, however, later also appeared in book form in the original Yiddish after the success of the English translation. Among his most important novels are *The Family Moskat* (1950; *Di familye Mushkat*, 1950), *The Magician of Lublin* (1960; *Der kuntsnmakher fun Lublin*, 1971), and *The Slave* (1962; *Der knekht*, 1967). *The Manor* (1967) and *The Estate* (1969) are based on *Der hoyf*, serialized in the *Forverts* in 1953–55. *Enemies: A Love Story* (1972; film 1989) was translated from *Sonim: di geshikhte fun a libe*, serialized in the *Forverts* in 1966. *Shosha*, derived from autobiographical material Singer published in the *Forverts* in the mid-1970s, appeared in English in 1978. *Der bal-tshuve* (1974) was published first in book form in Yiddish; it was later translated into English as *The Penitent* (1983). *Shadows on the Hudson*, translated into English and published posthumously in 1998, is a novel on a grand scale about Jewish refugees in New York in the late 1940s. The book had been serialized in the *Forverts* in the 1950s.

Singer's popular collections of short stories in English translation include *Gimpel the Fool, and Other Stories* (1957; *Gimpl tam, un andere dertseylungen*, 1963), *The Spinoza of Market*

Street (1961), Short Friday (1964), The Seance (1968), A Crown of Feathers (1973; National Book Award), Old Love (1979), and The Image, and Other Stories (1985).

Singer evokes in his writings the vanished world of Polish Jewry as it existed before the Holocaust. His most ambitious novels—The Family Moskat and the continuous narrative spun out in The Manor and The Estate—have large casts of characters and extend over several generations. These books chronicle the changes in, and eventual breakup of, large Jewish families during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as their members are differently affected by the secularism and assimilationist opportunities of the modern era. Singer's shorter novels examine characters variously tempted by evil, such as the brilliant circus magician of The Magician of Lublin, the 17th-century Jewish villagers crazed by messianism in Satan in Goray, and the enslaved Jewish scholar in The Slave. His short stories are saturated with Jewish folklore, legends, and mysticism and display his incisive understanding of the weaknesses inherent in human nature.

Schlemiel Went to Warsaw, and Other Stories (1968) is one of his best-known books for children. In 1966 he published In My Father's Court, based on the Yiddish *Mayn tatns besdn shtub* (1956), an autobiographical account of his childhood in Warsaw. This work received special praise from the Swedish Academy when Singer was awarded the Nobel Prize. More Stories from My Father's Court, published posthumously in 2000, includes childhood stories Singer had first published in the *Forverts* in the 1950s. His memoir *Love and Exile* appeared in 1984.

Several films have been adapted from Singer's works, including *The Magician of Lublin* (1979), based on his novel of the same name, and *Yentl* (1983), based on his story "Yentl" in *Mayses fun hintern oyvn* (1971; "Stories from Behind the Stove").

9. Czesław Miłosz

Czesław Miłosz, (born June 30, 1911, Šeteniai, Lithuania, Russian Empire [now in Lithuania]—died August 14, 2004, Kraków, Poland), Polish American author, translator, critic, and diplomat who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1980.

The son of a civil engineer, Miłosz completed his university studies in Wilno (now Vilnius, Lithuania), which belonged to Poland between the two World Wars. His first book of verse, *Poemat o czasie zastygłym* (1933; "Poem of Frozen Time"), expressed catastrophic fears of an impending war and worldwide disaster. During the Nazi occupation he moved to Warsaw, where he was active in the resistance and edited *Pieśń niepodległa* (1942; "Independent Song: Polish Wartime Poetry"), a clandestine anthology of well-known contemporary poems.

Miłosz's collection *Ocalenie* (1945; "Rescue") contained his prewar poems and those written during the occupation. In the same year, he joined the Polish diplomatic service and was sent, after briefly working during 1946 in the Polish embassy in New York City, to Washington, D.C., as cultural attaché, and then to Paris, as first secretary for cultural affairs in Paris. There he asked for political asylum in 1951. Nine years later he immigrated to the United States, where he joined the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley and taught Slavic languages and literature until his retirement in 1980. Miłosz became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1970.

There are several volumes of English translations of Miłosz's poetry, including *The Collected Poems 1931–1987* (1988) and *Provinces* (1991). His prose works included his autobiography, *Rodzinna Europa* (1959; *Native Realm*), *Prywatne obowiązki* (1972; "Private Obligations"), the novel *Dolina Issy* (1955; *The Issa Valley*), and *The History of Polish Literature* (1969).

Though Miłosz was primarily a poet, his best-known work became his collection of essays *Zniewolony umysł* (1953; *The Captive Mind*), in which he condemned the accommodation of many Polish intellectuals to communism. This theme is also present in his novel *Zdobycie władzy* (1955; *The Seizure of Power*). His poetic works are noted for their classical style and their

preoccupation with philosophical and political issues. An important example is *Traktat poetycki* (1957; *Treatise on Poetry*), which combines a defense of poetry with a history of Poland from 1918 to the 1950s. The critic Helen Vendler wrote that this long poem seemed to her “the most comprehensive and moving poem” of the latter half of the 20th century.

10. Joseph Brodsky

Joseph Brodsky, original Russian name Iosip Aleksandrovich Brodsky, (born May 24, 1940, Leningrad, Russia, U.S.S.R. [now St. Petersburg, Russia]—died January 28, 1996, Brooklyn, New York, U.S.), Russian-born American poet who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987 for his important lyric and elegiac poems.

Brodsky left school at age 15 and thereafter began to write poetry while working at a wide variety of jobs. He began to earn a reputation in the Leningrad literary scene, but his independent spirit and his irregular work record led to his being charged with “social parasitism” by the Soviet authorities, who sentenced him in 1964 to five years of hard labour. The sentence was commuted in 1965 after prominent Soviet literary figures protested it. Exiled from the Soviet Union in 1972, Brodsky lived thereafter in the United States, becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1977. He was a poet-in-residence intermittently at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, from 1972 to 1980, was a professor of literature at Mount Holyoke College (South Hadley, Massachusetts) from 1981 to 1996, and was a visiting professor at other schools. He received a MacArthur Foundation fellowship grant in 1981 and served as poet laureate of the United States in 1991–92.

Brodsky’s poetry addresses personal themes and treats in a powerful, meditative fashion the universal concerns of life, death, and the meaning of existence. Despite what may be assumed from his exile, his writing was not overtly political but was instead unsettling to Soviet officials because of its overarching themes of antimaterialism and praise for individual freedom. His earlier works, written in Russian, include *Stikhotvoreniya i poemy* (1965; “Verses and Poems”) and *Ostanovka v pustyni* (1970; “A Halt in the Wasteland”); these and other works were translated by George L. Kline in *Selected Poems* (1973), which includes the notable “Elegy for John Donne.” His major works, in Russian and English, include the poetry collections *A Part of Speech* (1980), *History of the Twentieth Century* (1986), and *To Urania* (1988) and the essays in *Less Than One* (1986). His notable posthumous publications include the collections *So Forth* (1996) and *Nativity Poems* (2001) and the children’s poem *Discovery* (1999).

11. Bob Dylan

Bob Dylan, original name Robert Allen Zimmerman, (born May 24, 1941, Duluth, Minnesota, U.S.), American folksinger who moved from folk to rock music in the 1960s, infusing the lyrics of rock and roll, theretofore concerned mostly with boy-girl romantic innuendo, with the intellectualism of classic literature and poetry. Hailed as the Shakespeare of his generation, Dylan sold tens of millions of albums, wrote more than 500 songs recorded by more than 2,000 artists, performed all over the world, and set the standard for lyric writing. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016.

Bob Dylan has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2016, for “having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition,” the Swedish Academy announced Thursday. The award is given for a lifetime of literary writing rather than a single body of work. The Academy described Dylan as “a great sampler... and for 54 years he has been at it, reinventing himself.”

12. Toni Morrison (1931-) – New Generation Women Writer. “Beloved”. “The Bluest Eye”.

Primary Works: *“The Bluest Eye”* (1970), *“Sula”* (1973), *“Song of Solomon”* (1977), *“Tar Baby”* (1981), *“Beloved”* (1987), *“Jazz”* (1992), *“Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination”* (1992), *“Paradise”* (1998), *“Love”* (2003), *“A Mercy”* (2008), *“Home”* (2012), *“God Help the Child”* (2015).

A Brief Biography of Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison, original name Chloe Anthony Wofford, (born February 18, 1931, Lorain, Ohio, U.S.), American writer noted for her examination of black experience (particularly black female experience) within the black community. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993.

Morrison grew up in the American Midwest in a family that possessed an intense love of and appreciation for black culture. Storytelling, songs, and folktales were a deeply formative part of her childhood. She attended Howard University (B.A., 1953) and Cornell University (M.A., 1955). After teaching at Texas Southern University for 2 years, she taught at Howard from 1957 to 1964. In 1965 she became a fiction editor. From 1984 she taught writing at the State University of New York at Albany, leaving in 1989 to join the faculty of Princeton University.

Morrison’s 1st book, *“The Bluest Eye”* (1970), is a novel of initiation concerning a victimized adolescent black girl who is obsessed by white standards of beauty and longs to have blue eyes.

In 1973 a 2nd novel, *“Sula”*, was published; it examines (among other issues) the dynamics of friendship and the expectations for conformity within the community. The novel explores good and evil through the friendship of two women who grew up together. The work was nominated for the American Book Award.

“Song of Solomon” (1977) is told by a male narrator in search of his identity; its publication brought Morrison to national attention.

“Tar Baby” (1981), set on a Caribbean island, explores conflicts of race, class, and gender.

The critically acclaimed *“Beloved”* (1987), which won a Pulitzer Prize for fiction, is based on the true story of a runaway slave who, at the point of recapture, kills her infant daughter in order to spare her a life of slavery.

“Jazz” (1992) is a story of violence and passion set in New York City’s Harlem during the 1920s. Subsequent novels are *“Paradise”* (1998), a richly detailed portrait of a black utopian community in Oklahoma, and *“Love”* (2003), an intricate family story that reveals the myriad facets of love and its ostensible opposite. *“Love”* divides its narrative between the past and present. Bill Cooney, a wealthy entrepreneur and owner of the Cooney Hotel and Resort, is the center figure in the work. The flashbacks explore his life, while his death casts a long shadow on the present part of the story. A critic for *Publisher’s Weekly* praised the work, stating that “Morrison has crafted a gorgeous, stately novel whose mysteries are gradually unearthed”.

“A Mercy” (2008) deals with slavery in 17th-century America.

In the redemptive *“Home”* (2012), a traumatized Korean War veteran encounters racism after returning home and later overcomes apathy to rescue his sister. Morrison once again explores a period of American history — this time the post-Korean War era. In choosing this setting, “I was trying to take the scab off the ‘50s, the general idea of it as very comfortable, happy, nostalgic. *Mad Men*. Oh, please. There was a horrible war you didn’t call a war, where 58,000 people died. Novel’s main character, Frank, is a veteran who suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. While writing the novel, Morrison experienced a great personal loss. Her son Slade, an artist, died in December 2010. The pair had collaborated together on a number of children’s books, including *“Big Box”* (1999) and *“Little Cloud and Lady Wind”* (2010).

“God Help the Child” (2015) chronicles the ramifications of child abuse and neglect through the tale of Bride, a black girl with dark skin who is born to light-skinned parents.

Her novels are known for their epic themes, vivid dialogue and richly detailed black characters. The central theme of Morrison's novels is the black American experience; in an unjust society her characters struggle to find themselves and their cultural identity. Her use of fantasy, her sinuous poetic style, and her rich interweaving of the mythic gave her stories great strength and texture. In 2010 Morrison was made an officer of the *French Legion of Honor*. 2 years later she was awarded the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"Beloved" (1987)

"Beloved", novel by T. Morrison, winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, examines the destructive legacy of slavery as it chronicles the life of a black woman named Sethe, following her from her pre-Civil War life as a slave in Kentucky to her life in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. Although she lives there as a free woman, she is held prisoner by memories of the trauma of her life as a slave.

Major themes of the novel: mother-daughter relationships and psychological impact of slavery.

The novel is based on the true story of a black slave woman, Margaret Garner, who in 1856 escaped from a Kentucky plantation with her husband Robert and sought refuge in Ohio. Slave catchers soon caught up with the family, and before their recapture Margaret killed her young daughter to prevent her return to slavery. In the novel, Sethe is also a passionately devoted mother, and in an act of supreme love and sacrifice she too tries to kill her children to keep them from slavery. She succeeds only in killing her two-year-old daughter, and since she has not the energy to "pay" for 2 words on her child's tombstone (each word costs her ten minutes of intimate moments with the engraver) not *"Dearly Beloved"* but only *"Beloved"* was ultimately carved on the stone. From their bodies to their labour, all aspects of slaves were considered merchandise.

Sethe now lives in Ohio with her teenage daughter Denver, where their house is haunted by the ghost of the child Sethe killed. The hauntings are only alleviated by the occasional appearance of Paul D, a man so ravaged by his slave past that he keeps his feelings in the "tin tobacco box" of his heart. One day a teenage girl turns up. Is she Beloved incarnate? She knows the song that only Sethe and Denver share. Sethe is obsessed with assuaging her guilt and the opportunity to love Beloved.

This intensely shocking and moving narrative is written in a variety of voices and lengthy, fragmentary monologues, which, like the character of Beloved herself, are sometimes ambiguous. Morrison's beautiful language and intense imagery, however, have been rightly celebrated in this classic work.

"The Bluest Eye" (1970)

"The Bluest Eye", 1st novel by Toni Morrison. This tragic study of a black adolescent girl's struggle to achieve white ideals of beauty and her consequent descent into madness was acclaimed as an eloquent indictment of some of the subtler forms of racism in American society. Pecola Breedlove longs to have "the bluest eye" and thus to be acceptable to her family, schoolmates, and neighbors, all of whom have convinced her that she is ugly.

The novel suggests that the categories of gender, race, and economics are enmeshed in determining the fate of the 11-year-old tragic heroine. Pecola's obsessive desire to have the bluest eyes is a symptom of the way that the black female body has become dominated by white masculine culture. Morrison offers a typically powerful critique of the way that black subjectivity continues to be repressed in a commodity culture. The complex temporal structure of the novel and the restless changes in point of view are in part an attempt to imagine a fluid model of subjectivity that can offer some kind of resistance to a dominant white culture. The adolescent black sisters who relate the narrative, Claudia and Freda MacTeer, offer a contrast to the oppressed Breedlove family in that here they exercise both agency and authority.

In this early novel, Morrison's writing not only captures the hidden cadences of speech; she writes with a keen sensitivity to the protean quality of words. She offers a poetry infused with the promise of alternative modes of being in the world.

Study Questions:

"Beloved":

1. Was Sethe justified in killing Beloved? Why or why not?
2. Is Beloved a ghost? Is she a dead person come back to life? Or is she a random girl who's been possessed by the spirit of Beloved?
3. Why is the book separated into 3 parts?
4. If you were to pick one narrative perspective for the book (instead of the several that make up the book), whose perspective would you pick? Why?
5. The end of the book makes it so that we're not entirely sure what happened to Beloved. Do you think Beloved is gone by the end of the book, or do you think she's still around?
6. How does this novel compare to other novels about slavery and its effects?

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13. Louise Glück

Louise Glück, in full Louise Elisabeth Glück, (born April 22, 1943, New York, New York, U.S.), American poet whose willingness to confront the horrible, the difficult, and the painful resulted in a body of work characterized by insight and a severe lyricism. In 2020 she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, cited "for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal."

After attending Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, New York, and Columbia University in New York City, Glück taught poetry at numerous colleges and universities, including Harvard and Yale. Her first collection of poetry, *Firstborn* (1968), used a variety of first-person personae, all disaffected or angry. The collection's tone disturbed many critics, but Glück's exquisitely controlled language and imaginative use of rhyme and metre delighted others. Although its outlook is equally grim, *The House on Marshland* (1975) shows a greater mastery of voice. There, as in her later volumes, Glück's personae included historic and mythic figures such as Gretel and Joan of Arc. Her adoption of different perspectives became increasingly imaginative; for example, in "The Sick Child," from the collection *Descending Figure* (1980), her voice is that of a mother in a museum painting looking out at the bright gallery. The poems in *The Triumph of Achilles* (1985), which won the National Book Critics Circle Award for poetry, address archetypal subjects of classic myth, fairy tales, and the Bible. These concerns are also evident in *Ararat* (1990), which has been acclaimed for searing honesty in its examination of the family and the self.

In 1993 Glück won a Pulitzer Prize for *The Wild Iris* (1992). Her later works included *Meadowlands* (1996), *The First Five Books of Poems* (1997), and *The Seven Ages* (2001). *Averno* (2006) was her well-received treatment of the Persephone myth. The poems collected in *A Village*

Life (2009)—about existence in a small Mediterranean town—were written in a lavishly descriptive style that significantly departed from the parsimony that characterizes her earlier verse. *Poems 1962–2012* (2012) compiled all her published volumes of poetry. *Faithful and Virtuous Night* (2014) deals with mortality and nocturnal silence, sometimes from a male perspective; it won the National Book Award.

Glück was editor of *The Best American Poetry 1993* (1993). Her essay collections on poetry included *Proofs and Theories* (1994) and *American Originality* (2017). In 2001 she was awarded the Bollingen Prize for Poetry. Glück served as poet laureate consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress (2003–04). Her later honours included the Wallace Stevens Award (2008) and a National Humanities Medal (2015).

Study Questions:

1. Who is the winner of Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980?
2. Who is the winner of Nobel Prize in Literature in 1978?
3. Who is the winner of Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993?
4. Match names and dates:
William Faulkner
Sinclair Lewis
Ernest Hemingway
1930
1949
1954

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