

OLD AMERICAN LITERATURE

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1. Colonial Period (1607-1765)

The English settlers first settled down permanently in America (in early 17th century). First texts were merely writings (diaries, sermons, some poetry, description of the territory, geography, the way people lived) - non-literal stuff.

2. Revolutionary Period (1765-1810)

At that time, there was the Proclamation of Independence. Political independence was quick, while cultural took a long time. Men wrote to support a great political cause (Jefferson, Franklin, and Paine).

3. Romanticism (1810-1865)

For the first time America becomes culturally independent. Writers wrote about American topics, style. That was the birth of American literature (Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe).

4. The Gilded Age (1865-1890)

- local colour writing

It appeared after the Civil War. It was limited to particular location (local). It described the typical things that can be observed in that area, local peculiarities (colour) - very colourful.

- Realism (1870 →)

Henry James

5. Naturalism (1890-1930)

Stephen Crane

The Colonial Period

Ruland/Bradbury: From Puritanism to Post-Modernism

Cunliffe: The History of American Literature

After the settlers settled in America, America was no longer a virgin land (Indians - literature, tradition - it was left unobserved). Early American literature is not rooted in Indian literature but in whatever literature the settlers brought with them. The contacts with the old countries were cut off.

Those European traditions developed in America regardless of the development in Europe. Cultural independence was a long and painful process. There had been myths (America - a promised land). They had no idea what it might be like. The others envisioned it like perfect Hell. These myths were replaced by the picture of reality. The first English arrived in 1607 and founded Virginia. This settlement was small (a commercial settlement). These settlers wanted to find gold. Many people died because of the lack of food, fuel.

Later, the Dutch founded Jamestown in 1608, and the French founded Quebec in 1624

Captain John Smith wrote a letter to his company, explaining his policy, and this letter was published in London in 1608 (the first writing of America) - **A True Relation (...) of Virginia** (a rich potential of America, lack of food). About 100 people arrived, but they were not prepared for the harsh winter, so they starved or ate their own horses and many died. Soon, Smith found out that he could make profit of tobacco. He also mentions a woman Pocahontas, a daughter of an Indian chief. She helped Captain Smith and the other settlers. He also published a book titled **General History of Virginia (...)**. In it, he writes about Pocahontas and how she saved his life. Pocahontas went to London in 1616 and was celebrated there. Captain Smith named New England (East Coast), published **Description of New England** and drew its map. He also drew a map of Virginia.

There was not much interest in literature, since most of the colonialists were adventurers and hard-working people who sent their children to be educated in England.

Colonel William Byrd, a wealthy landowner, wrote journals and a diary of his experiences in America.

1620-1640 a large number of people migrated to New England. They were bound for Virginia but came to New England. Later on, new settlers came to New England. They considered themselves as the chosen people.

The first Puritan colonies:

- Plymouth Plantation
- Massachusetts
- Rhode Island
- Virginia (they read for leisure)

Puritans

They took literature seriously. They started writing and develop their own literary tradition. They chronicled everything they did. There are still some remains from Puritanism. They wrote for simple people, they wanted to be understood. They developed plain style. Writings were enriched with biblical analogies.

Literary activity of Puritans:

William Bradford: *History of Plymouth Plantation*

Puritan concept of history (everything that happens is due to God's providence)

John Winthorpe (he governed Massachusetts): *Journal*

The History of New England
(1826)

Simple candid narrative. He talks about education (Harvard), Indians.

The Puritans believed that religious vitality of the society depended on the individual. In order to make sure that they would not be led astray, they led journals and diaries (to keep an eye on their own behaviour). Through diaries, we get an insight of what the Puritan life looked like.

Samuel Sewall (1652-1730):

- *Diary* (1673-1729): career as a prominent citizen; devoted friend, son, father; stern Puritan; one of the seven judges who sentenced 19 people to death in Salem on the charge of witchcraft (1692); later on in life, he regretted his decision.

Sermons: to generate emotion and faith

Cotton and Mather - two families with many priests → Cotton Mather (a son of both families)

He wrote:

- *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or the Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702)

- *Wonders of the Invisible World* (witchcraft in Salem - he did not attend the executions of the people in Salem)

- *Essays to Do Good* (influenced Abe Lincoln, who personified the American dream.

Some people who disagreed with Puritan doctrine were called dissenters and were banished to Rhode Island

Puritan poetry:

They did not approve of singing in church.

- *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640) was the first book printed in America. English literature influenced the Puritan literature. It was a link between mundane/trivial reality and divine truth.

Transcendental meaning: Puritanism anticipated the typical American strain.

They required piety. The aim of poetry was not to induce leisure but to induce piety to make the reader think of spiritual life (metaphors and allegories were not welcome; a medium to express what the Puritans believed in - doctrine - it was acceptable).

The first Puritan poet:

Anne Dudley Bradstreet

She was from Massachusetts and had eight children. Her idols were the English metaphysical poets (Sydney, Spenser) → influence is visible.

In her poems, she talked about events from her daily life when she observed nature.

- Her first collection The four elements was published in London by her brothers in London and includes poems about after-life and how one should not question God's deeds. Their form: couplet.
- The second collection Several poems presents her best lyrical poems, which reveal her strict Puritan conscience:
 - *To My Dear and Loving Husband* (life after death, love lasts forever, even after death; overstatements)
 - *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650) - a poetic collection
 - *Contemplation* (beauty of nature; she concentrates on the sun as the generative force of nature; she recalls man's fall; She hopes that men will be redeemed; she returns to nature; world of men; the poem combines the views on nature and religious thoughts)
 - *As Weary Pilgrim* (religious poem about a Puritan who is waiting for death, a Puritan shouldn't be afraid of dying, since he will become one with God)
 - *In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet Who Deceased August, 1665* (religious poem; one should not question God's deeds)

Edward Taylor

He is the most important of the Puritan poets. He was unknown during his life. The content of his poems was religious. He used striking metaphors and conceits.

- *Upon a Spider Catching a Fly* (it is about a spider who acts differently when he catches a wasp and when he catches a fly. In the second part he transforms the image onto the human race -> the devil uses different strategies to lure his victims. In the final stanza he turns to God for help, to make the devil's doings ineffective, so that human kind and God will prevail)
- *Huswifery* (a religious poem; he addresses his Creator; the whole poem is a complex metaphor the cloth-making illustrates his relation to God)

Early American Fiction:

In the beginning, novels had didactic spirit and were sentimental.

Writing

There were many biographies and histories. The Puritan authors made their best in their scientific investigation.

Cotton Mather

The Christian Philosopher (to reconcile philosophy and religion; it is a sufficient proof that God exists)

Indian captivity narratives - stories written or told by white settlers who were taken as captives by Indians. They were treated badly (myth of the chosen people who escaped persecution and were redeemed by God's providence).

Mrs Mary Rowlandson

Narrative of Captivity and Redemption of Mrs Mary Rowlandson (published in 1682; allegory (a moral lesson) of victory of the religion; she saw a salvation as a sign of God; plain narrative style; she was concrete in her description (Indian cruelty in detail))

Roger Williams

He was the first American villain to see the Indians. He was a Puritan preacher. He was exiled on Rhode Island. He studied the languages of the Indian tribes and wrote a book *Key to the Languages of America*.

Educational literature:

The New England Primer – a textbook of puritan doctrines in verse form for children

In 1662, Michael Wigglesworth published a leaflet called The Day of Doom.

The Revolutionary Period

This was the political period, the age of awakening. Medieval doctrines are rejected. There is a return to classical literature (Latin, Greek). Everything should be pure, plain.

The common enemy were the Indians and England. The **French-Indian War** (1763) resulted basically in French loss of some Canadian territory. After this, the colonies were eager to get rid of the British/English rule. The colonies entered **revolutionary war**, which ended in 1774. Political writing dominates this period.

Thomas Paine

- *Common Sense*
- *Crisis* (pamphlets published during the revolutionary war).

Thomas Jefferson

- *Declaration of Independence* (July 4, 1774)

Benjamin Franklin he is also one of the people who made his "american dream" come true)

- *Poor Richard's Almanack* (1733-58)

His best known work is *Autobiography* (1818). It is important because it is not just his private story, but also a document on the period when he lived. He tells us about the most important events, a record of America's intellectual growth. It is also important because it has been used for many later written autobiographies.

Early American Poetry

In that time, America had no international copy law. Books were published without paying. America had not won literary independence. The problem was that British literature did not transplant well in America.

Jean de Crevecoeur

- *Letters from the American Farmer* (1782)

He describes American territory, and the way of life. The Letter nr. 4 is frequently quoted. He is the first one who observed that the Americans are becoming a single nation (The Melting Pot)

Philip Freneau

- *Poems* (1786)

He wrote short poems that were well received by the Americans. They are remarkable because of their praise of nature and simple language. It was British influence of lyric poems.

- *The British Prison Ship* (based on his own experience)

- *The Wild Honeysuckle* (the celebration of nature)

- *The Indian Burying Ground* (American hunter)

The noble savages were buried in the sitting position, along with their objects. The poem celebrates romantic primitivism.

William Cullen Bryant

- *Poems* (1821)

He was the first American romanticist. He was the most important poet of this period. He was a descendant of Puritans. Early in his writing of the poems, he looked to Robert Burns and William Wordsworth.

- *Thanatopsis* (blank-verse poem; meditation on death)

A man should live in a way that he would not be afraid of the moment of his death. Metaphors and similes are very original. He used sound effects (assonance, rhythm).

- *To a Waterfowl*

It is addressed to a bird. It was published in his collection of *Poems* (1821). The language is pretty archaic. He observes the bird passing between him and the setting sun. Wordsworth's ideal of the solid nature → parallels between the *Solitary Reaper*. There is a visual image here, but in Wordsworth's poem, there is a hearing image. There is also the idea of God's protecting everybody here. God is represented in natural disguise. He is present in the nature.

- *Forest Hymn*

Bryant was a cosmopolitan. He travelled a lot, but he never turned away from America. He was aware that it was not enough to take British model and transplant it into America. In the poem *The Prairies* he illustrates his idea. As a rule, he included in this poem natural imagery to illuminate the eternal

truths. He was the first American poet who achieved international fame. This is due to the American landscape, which is described in his poems.

The beginnings of American novel

The Americans were suspicious about the novel and didn't just transplant it from England. The first American novel was about seduction. America being the best territory for exploring, the novel begins to flourish when the Romanticism gives way to Neo-classicism. The origin of American novel lies in Romanticism.

tale - focuses on the action

short story - focuses on the characters

Charles Brockden Brown

He is considered the first professional American novelist. After the publication of *Alcuin: A Dialogue* (1798), he wrote such novels as *Edgar Huntly* (reverses the Pocahontas story, a white man rescues an Indian), *Arthur Mervyn* (2 vol., 1799-1800), and *Ormond* (1799), in which he presented arguments for social reform. *Wieland* (1799) was by far his most popular work and foreshadowed the psychological novel.

Washington Irving (1783-1859)

He is a writer of English-Scotch origin. He spent his youth in New York (landscape picturesque).

- *A History of New York (...)* by *Dietrich Knickerbocker* (1809)

He is a fictional narrator. He takes us back to Henry Hudson (a river is named after him - Hudson). He talks about New Amsterdam before it became known as New York. The book is not pure history, but it also contains satire, humor and fiction. When he was in London, he was often challenged by the British (Who reads American books?).

- *The Sketchbook of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1820)

It contains two of his best tales:

- *Rip van Winkle*: It is a tale about a man Rip. He is a funny person. He's a lazy individual who doesn't want to perform his everyday chores but rather goes to pubs (his wife says that). The wife is very bossy.

She likes to push Rip around. One day, he goes to sleep and dreams about little people. When he wakes up and finally gets back to his village, everyone is gone. He finds out that slept for 20 years.

Two interpretations of the work:

- a pastoral escapism (a narrative that portrays a character who doesn't fit into society)
- a political satire (The British repressing the Americans)
- *The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow*: There are German legends in it (he got acquainted with them when he met Walter Scott). There is an American setting (valuable). The characteristic of this work is to find value in the past. In the beginning, he describes the Sleepy Hollow region, people, customs and history. Irving provides an American history.

- *Tales of a Traveler*

The author of the Wild West:

James Fenimore Cooper

He made American novel independent.

He was born in a rich family. He inherited the fortune. He lost it pretty soon, so he had to do something for a living - write.

- *The Spy* (1821) - a revolutionary novel
- *Daniel Boone* is a woodsman who loves nature and is on good terms with the Indians.

5 novels - *Leatherstocking Tales* (tensions between Americans and Indians)

- *The Pioneers* (1823): He introduced the main protagonist, who appears in other novels under different names: Natty Bumppo (*The Pioneers*) → Deerslayer (*Leatherstocking Tales*) → *Pathfinder* → La Longue Carabin → Hawkeye. Natty Bumppo is an individualist, both a man of wilderness, as well as a man of civilization. He does not really belong to either of the words.

- *The Deerslayer* (1840s) youth
- *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) ↓
- *The Pathfinder* (1840s) ↓

- *The Pioneers* (1823)
 - *The Prairie* (1827)
- ↓
old age

He produced more than 30 romances.

Cooper had no personal experience and knowledge about the Indians. The critics discovered that Cooper's female characters are not very convincing.

Natty seems to belong nowhere (not to the world of Indians, not to the world of whites). He lives in a vacuum that does not exist. He is a predecessor of a western cowboy hero.

Cooper also wrote sea yarns - sea fiction:

- *The Pilot*
- *The Red Rover*

Cooper can capture the reader's interest and then hold it. His novels teach the young certain positive values: brave deeds, love, honor. He introduced in the American literature the genre of sea yarns. With the *Leatherstocking Tales*, he introduced fiction. With *The Spy*, he introduced the American history novel.

The Flowering of the New England

It took place in the 1840s. This is a typical American movement. **Transcendentalism** was very short in duration (1836-1861 - Civil War). Boston, Harvard and Concord were the main centers of this activity. Boston was the cultural center. Harvard College was at first only a religious college, but then it expanded. There were important literary magazines: *The North American Review* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. It was this area and atmosphere that saw the birth of transcendentalism. The idea was that there are truths that go beyond reality. There are truths that are known to human heart rather than to human mind. In order to commune with the divine power, one must transcend the experience of senses. Transcendentalists felt that most of what

we call values lies outside the limits of reason and belongs to the round of intuition, instinct. The ideas that transcendentalists formed were derivative.

Transcendentalists:

- Ralph Waldo Emerson
- Henry David Thoreau
- Margaret Fuller

These people met occasionally and informally to discuss philosophy, theology and literature. They never called themselves transcendentalists, but people called them that. They called themselves Symposium = The Hedge Club. They had their own magazine called *The Dial* (Margaret Fuller was the editor). They also had two experimental cooperative farms devoted to ideas of communal living. They had to share everything (profit, work, ideas). Brook Farm survived for a while, but ended in a failure.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

He was a preacher who decided to leave the ministry. After preaching his farewell sermon, he went to Europe, where he met Wordsworth and Coleridge → influenced. He bought a house in Concord where the others visited him. He became the chief spokesman of transcendentalism → Yankee Puritanism, European Romantics. He argued for intuition as a guide to universal truth. He believed that God is all-loving, all-probating, that His presence in men made them men-divine. In this way, God assured their salvation. His first book *Nature* appeared in 1836, after his return from Europe. He claimed that the material world is nothing but disguised God's presence. We must not see God through previous generations and their experiences. A year later, he spoke at Harvard → this address was called *The American Scholar* (1837) - an intellectual declaration of independence. He makes an appeal as a scholar to accept the leading role in American society. He must be self-reliant, he must trust himself and not submit to pragmatism. These ideas were further developed in *Self-reliance* (1841), in which he illustrates God's presence in nature. He explains his doctrine called

'trust thyself'. He says that a man should not postpone his life and should not rely on others but only on himself. Another speech in Harvard was claimed to be irrelevant and atheistic. They should not stick to the dogma, but rely on their intuition. Other essays were published in his collections:

- *Essays, First Series* (1841)
- *Essays, Second Series* (1844)

He talks about self-reliance, over-soul, history, friendship.

What is expected from the poet is written in his work *Poem*. He says that he must see beyond the surface and must see the actual meaning, the universe himself. According to him, every natural phenomenon pre-exists, which sail through the air and only a very good poet can see and tell about it to the others.

He was a poet, not really a great one.

The Poet → the death of a poet is very important to the communion

The Poet = God - increases the human joy; He is present everywhere (*The Problem*); He is present in the heart of a sculpture.

Emerson's acceptance of men and nature

In all of his works, he has been one of the most influenced authors so far.

Henry David Thoreau

He put Emerson's ideas into practice. He was pronounced individualist - he took Emerson's idea of self-reliance. Near Concord in Walden Pond, he built himself a cabin in a perfect isolation. He grew his own food etc. He spent there 2 years, observing the weather, birds, plants. He published only 2 works:

- *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1849)
- *Walden* (1845) – 17 chapters, records sounds, sites and events
 - He recorded his experience of the 2 years' isolation in the woods.
 - a series of 18 essays - how he made a living
 - his temporary decrease

- describes the sounds of the wind, certain fish in the pond

- He also wrote 18
- It developed a love for common place's natural objects.
- powerful descriptions
- His metaphors and images are original - close to nature.
- He speaks of himself as a poet, although he never wrote poems - as his approach to the language.

Emerson - the thinker

Thoreau - the experimentalist

Whitman: - *Leaves of Grass*

The New England Renaissance

The transcendentalism - 1st part

The Genteel tradition - 2nd part

- Henry W. Longfellow
- John G. Whittier
- James R. Lowell

Henry W. Longfellow

He was a professor at Harvard. He is no longer considered a great poet, although at that time, he was very important. His poems are said to be conventional, easy. The words don't say much more than what they really mean. He was an *ethnic* poet.

- *Voices of the Night* (1839) - his first volume of poems

He wrote for common people: *The Arsenal Springfield*. He compares the stored weapons with the instruments that would play an awful symphony. It's a peace poem (an appeal to people that they would never use weapons again).

- *The Jewish Cemetery at Newport* - it celebrates the death of the Jewish community in Newport. Dead matrons never rise again.

He also wrote ballads:

- *The Village Blacksmith*: It doesn't feature sad events. Children on their way from school stop by the smithy.

- *The Wreck of the Hesperus*: The very beginning of the ballad suggests that something terrible is going to happen. The ship is overcome by a storm. The skipper and his daughter die.

He was a narrative poet as well:

- *Evangeline*: It is based on a historic event. Evangeline and her lover are deported to Louisiana (during the French-American War). They are put on different ships. Evangeline spends the rest of her life searching for him. She finds him (they're both old). They are buried together.

- *The Song of Hiawatha* (1850s): Longfellow studied the Indian legends and history. Hiawatha is an Indian mythical figure.

- *The Courtship of Miles Standish*: It is based on a funny event - Miles falls in love with a woman. He is too chicken and asks his friend John to invite her, Priscilla, out. Eventually, John and Priscilla get married and Miles is left alone.

He also wrote sonnets. He translated the *Divine Comedy* by Dante. He wrote the introduction and the preface to all three translations. He was instrumental in bringing European culture into USA. He was important for the establishment of **national literature**. His poems are romantic in nature. His reputation suffered a great decline in the 20th century.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Brahmin - the elite, the upper class of New Englanders, a Harvard graduate, studied medicine in France

He was a poet.

- *Poems* (1836) - a collection of poems

- *Old Ironsides*: a successful plea to preserve the old battleship which was ordered destroyed. He thought it was a shame.
- *My Aunt*: It was written to commemorate an unmarried aunt. He felt sorry for her.

He was also a novelist (medical topics). He was the editor of a journal *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Poetry: about weddings, births, deaths

His style was conservative, almost neoplatistical.

- *The Chambered Nautilus*: A poem that was included in the collection of poems *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858). One should attempt, as mollusk, to build a border and more comprehensive life.
- *The Last Leaf*: The favorite poem of President Lincoln. It talks about the predecessor of Herman Melville.
- *The Wonderful One Hoss Shay = The Deacon's Masterpiece*: It is a humorous (the choice of language, monotonous line; the poem is a parable) poem written in couplets. The idea is to build a carriage that would last forever.

Prose works:

- *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*
- *The Professor at the Breakfast Table*

He wanted to entertain the readers.

James Russell Lowell

He was a successful journalist and a poet. He participated in the antislavery movement (*The National Antislavery Standard*). He edited their newspaper. As a poet, he was active in his youth.

- *A Year's Life* (1841): the first collection of poems
- *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (a long poem): It is based on the Holy Grail legend. Sir Launfal decides to search for the Holy Grail and he orders his

arms prepared to set out on his search. In his sleep, he dreams that he had already set out on his journey. He realizes that his search would be futile. He returns to his castle barehanded only to discover that a beggar's wooden cup, from which he had drunk, was actually the Holy Grail. In that moment, he wakes up and abandons his preparations. He becomes a philanthropist. He decides to perform some good deeds.

A series of papers (written in a Yankee dialect):

- Biglow Papers: There was a political reason behind both of the two series (Mexican War, support of the North during the Civil War, fought against child labour). The papers first saw the light of day in a newspaper (1st series - 1848; 2nd series - 1867). Hosea Biglow is the main protagonist. He doesn't have much education. He needs an editor to edit the papers for him.

The Courtin - a humorous paper

Hosea is a poet and he likes to make poetry ("pottery").

He wrote some short lyrics:

- *To the Dandelion* (1840s): an ode to nature, the poet addresses the plant as if it were a human.
- *The First Snowfall*: description of the winter; the poet wants to express his sorrow for his personal loss - the loss of a child

He was also a literary critic.

- *A Fable for Critics*: In this poem, he satirizes his contemporaries and also himself.

John Greenleaf Whittier

He was self-educated (through the Bible). He was an editor of several newspapers. He was an abolitionist and a great poet. His poems spoke about slavery and the rural life in New England.

There are two periods of his life:

- abolitionist period
- New England period

Poems:

- *Ichabod* (1850) = fallen from glory or glory is departed. It refers to a famous orator Daniel Webster (he attracted many spectators when he gave his speeches; he talked about the compromise of slavery. He wanted slavery to remain institutionalized).

- *Voices of Freedom*

- *Massachusetts to Virginia* (1843): It was read publicly. It appeared in his collection of poems *Voices of Freedom* (1846). The poet addresses Virginia from Massachusetts. The poet recalls the common struggle of both states during the Civil War and he calls attention to the inconsistency of the slaveholders' positions. He is very firm in his antislavery views.

The New England period:

- *Snowbound; A Winter Idyl* (1866): The snow comes and people cannot go outside, so they talk about their memories. Nature is well presented.

- *Telling the Bees* (1858): It was written as a ballad and included in a collection of ballads *Home Ballads* (1860).

- *Maud Muller* (1854): It was included in a collection of poems *The Panorama and Other Poems*. A wealthy judge meets a farm girl Maud. The judge in his later years remembers the incident.

During his life, he was respected as a poet. His work is provincial and also sentimental. His antislavery poems paved the way for the election of Abraham Lincoln and for the abolition of slavery.

Southern literature

Before the Civil War, the South was agricultural and employed slaves. Life was more open to changes. There was an issue of slavery - it was a matter of survival of economy for the Southerners.

Antebellum days were not very fortunate. American literature was considered as trashy and unimportant. They got all the literature they wanted from England. After the Civil War, the school system was established - the reading public began to appreciate literature and started reading it.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 - 1864)

He was Poe's contemporary. He joined the experiment in Brook Farm. He changed his name because of the stain in his family name. One of his predecessors was one of the seven judges in the trial of the witchcraft in Salem. He was born in Salem. His life was similar to Poe's. His father died when Nathaniel was very young and his mother isolated herself from other people. He was a solitary child and loved reading (his love for allegory). When he was 17, he entered the Bowdoin college. His first works were not successful.

The Twice-Told Tales (1836):

He took a job in a Boston custom house.

Mosses from an Old Manse (1846)

The Scarlet Letter (1850):

It was considered his major novel. The protagonist is a woman called Hester Prynne. The novel takes place in puritan Boston (middle of the 17th century). An elderly man Roger decides to leave for America. He sends his wife Hester first to find a place. He follows her after two years. Upon his arrival, he finds his wife standing in a pillory with an illegitimate child in her arms. The letter on her clothing is a sign of her sin. He assumes the name Roger Chillingworth. He wants to find out who the father of the baby is. Hester gradually develops into a person whom everybody likes. The letter A gradually changes from adultery to able and eventually angel. In the meantime, her husband has discovered that the father is a young priest Arthur Dimmesdale. He wants to take a revenge. Arthur is too chicken to

confess his sin openly. He begins to wear his hand over his heart (his guilty conscience). Roger moves in with Arthur as his personal doctor and tortures him. Hester asks her lover to flee with her but Arthur declines. Finally, he confesses his sin in the pillory. After revealing the secret, he dies in Hester's arms. Hester lives happily with her daughter in Europe.

The structure:

There are two parts and 24 chapters. 12 chapters divide the book and the narrative. There are also a prologue and an epilogue. There are three climaxes (in the pillory).

The two male protagonists are condemned, but Hester is not.

expiation of sin - how to get rid of the sin

Symbols:

Prison: puritan regime and law

Ann Hutchinson: a descendant who was banished to Rhode Island, because she wanted to change the regime. She was killed in an Indian massacre and became a martyr.

Baby Pearl: She is the living project of the scarlet letter.

The leech: Hester's husband

A rosebush: passion

Hester's cottage: a symbol of ostracism.

The preface of *The Scarlet Letter - Custom House* (how he discovered it)

The critics say that it isn't much of a woman-sinning but of a representative female - a changing woman.

Hawthorne embraces the issue of Puritanism and condemns it.

The House of the Seven Gables (1851):

It is a romance of heredity. It deals with the sin.

It is about a fulfillment of a curse upon the distant descendent of the person who did something wrong - he was Judge Pyncheon (he was a sinner and one of the judges who put to death a man Matthew Maule at Salem (he was supposedly a wizard).

At the moment of his execution, Matthew pronounced a curse. For several generations, the Pyncheon men die unnaturally.

At the beginning, we get to know Hepzibah and Clifford, the present sufferers. The curse loses its power when a male representative of the Maule family falls in love with a Pyncheon girl.

The point: The sins of fathers are passed to sons. The novel is tightly constructed. A whole novel is a systematic preparation of a climatic event.

The Marble Faun:

It is an allegorical romance. It takes place in Rome in the 19th century. It is another novel which shows Hawthorne's preoccupation with evil. This time, he concentrates on the working of the human conscience.

The Blithedale Romance:

It is Hawthorne's Brook farm experience.

To sum up:

- an intensely local writer
- Almost all novels take place in England.
- He was a man of thoughts rather than of action. The male characters are also like that (they are burdened with evil).

His tales:

- predecessors of short stories (the stress on the development of characters)
- have more action
- short in characterization

Twice-Told Tales:

The tales in many ways resembled his longer works, evil and various aspects of it.

The main body of his tales can be divided:

- historical tales
- allegories (represent a more complex system of ideas)
- parables (simple stories)

They all stand for something larger and represent ideas.

Young Goodman Brown:

It is an allegory based on a dream. It is a story of a goodman Brown who leaves his home and wife Faith at a dusk. He goes to the woods to a gathering - they want to meet the devil. There, he sees his wife on the point of being admitted - of becoming a witch. He shouts and the vision disappears. He becomes mentally disarranged. The theme is the presence of evil. Faith symbolizes religious faith and her un/faithfulness as a wife.

Symbols are present in order to dramatize the theme. The consequences of it are fatal for Brown. He loses faith in religion, in his wife and in human faith.

The Minister's Black Veil:

It is about a New England clergyman who once steps in front of his congregation with a black veil on his face. He even wears it in front of his wife. On his death bed, he says that he sees a black veil on every face. The veil symbolizes sin, he sees sin in every heart. It is a purely Puritan concept of a human being.

Later in his life, Hawthorne becomes occupied with scientists who put science above the human heart.

- his collection Mosses from an Old Manse (1846): Old Manse - the house where Hawthorne spent a good deal of his last days.

The Birthmark:

It is his best known tale. It is about scientists who use their intellect to the extent that they disregard all human norms. A chemist Aylmer is married to a beautiful woman Georgiana. She is perfect except that she has a birthmark

on her cheek. For Aylmer this is a sign of imperfection. He convinces his wife to remove it. He makes a point, she drinks it, the mark disappears, but she dies.

The point: Aylmer must fail because he wished the impossible. He has committed an unpardonable sin. Georgiana's beauty vs. her birthmark, the two sides of human personality. Only good is allowed to do away with the bad side. A human being should never do God's acts.

The Blithedale Romance (1851)

Hawthorne's tales:

- *Rapaccini's Daughter*: It is from the collection *Mosses from an Old Manse*. It deals with a mad scientist. It is about a professor who makes an experiment. He uses his daughter. He nourishes her with poison and so she becomes poisonous and can have no contacts with other human beings. She falls in love with an ordinary boy. She makes him poisonous. She drinks the poison (overdose), he tries to save her but she dies.

- *Ethan Brand*: It is about a lime burner. His ambition is very high. He wants to find an unpardonable sin in the hearts of other people. He commits suicide but his heart is made of stone and is not burnt when he dies.

Hawthorne was a Puritan and Romantic. His style is very rich. His novels and tales deal with a conflict between intellect and materialism and moral issue (good and evil). His favorable topic was the human soul in relation to evil. As a Puritan, he could only think of sin as related to punishment. The degree of punishment can vary. As a Romantic, his tales are interlaced with supernatural, the mysterious, improbable themes. His tales and novels are frequently symbolic. He very carefully selects the characters and chooses the setting and the plot. He was not touched by the philosophy of transcendentalism. His belief in individuality is a transcendental doctrine, value. He believed that an individual is his own jailer as well as his liberator.

Edgar Allan Poe

His life was sad. He was born in Boston. He remained an orphan (his father deserted the family and his mother died). He was taken in by the Allans and led the life of a rich man. He drank and gambled and that ruined him. He was never officially adopted. Poe began to write early. He was a short story writer, a poet and a literary critic. He married very young, but his wife died and he was devastated (drinking, gambling).

Critical and theoretical works:

He exposed the aesthetic values in literature. Beauty is the most important and is generally referred to as a pleasant aspect of human existence. He found beauty in tragic spheres of human existence.

- *The Raven*: This is his best known poem. He gave an account of how he composed this poem.

In his famous essay *The Philosophy of Composition* (published in a magazine), he underlines the statement that his poetic tone is always the creation of beauty. A literary work should be short so as to be read in one sitting.

He introduced versification, the use of the refrain, diction, imagery, the importance of climax. Every poet should be elaborated to his denouement. He should know the difference between the cause and effect.

- *The Poetic Principle*: This is a critical work. It was published in a magazine. He stresses the importance of the unity of effect. He speaks against didacticism, claiming that the poems should not teach.

- *A Review of Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales* (1842): It was published in Graham's Magazine. In the introduction, Poe formulated the short story as a literary genre. He classified the literary genres according to their artistic value. A writer should have a free established design. The aim of the tale is the creation of truth - ratiocination. In the tale, there must be terror, horror, fear and passion.

The poetry:

- *The Raven*: There are 18 6-lined stanzas. The subject is the death of a beautiful woman. It's about a student who is studying but is interrupted by a raven, who doesn't want to leave. He only says "Nevermore". He uses alliteration, assonance, internal rhyme, repetition. This poem puts all Poe's theories into practice (how poetry should be written).

- *To Helen* (1831): it commemorates Poe's devotion to an older woman. It speaks about a beautiful woman who died.

In 1847, Poe's wife died → he wrote two poems:

- *Ulalume*: a ballad; a very special expression of the author's grief.

- *Annabel Lee* (1849): It is dedicated to his dead wife. A very rhythmic poem (the use of repetition). It is a very melancholic and sad poem. It talks about a beautiful Annabel Lee.

- *Israfel* (1830s): The name of the angel that appears in the English translation of Koran.

- *Bells*: 4 uses of bells: sleigh bells, wedding bells, funeral bells, alarm bells

The tales:

- tales of mystery and horror: *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Ligeia*, *The Cask of Amontillado*, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, *The Masque of Red Death*

- analytical tales or the tales of ratiocination: *Murders on the Rue Morgue*, *The Gold Bug*, *The Purloined Letter*

- pseudo-scientific tales (tales of horror): *A Descend into the Maelstrom*

- humorous tales: *The Devil in the Belfry*

Poe is considered a father of an American short story. Intuition, induction and deduction were legitimate path to knowledge. He expelled humorous and meditative elements.

1839: a collection of tales: *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*

He wrote and published 17 tales.

Ligeia:

It is about a woman who transcends the physical death. The narrator's wife dies. He remarries, but the 2nd wife also dies - not a usual death. She keeps coming back.

The Fall of the House of Usher:

It is a gothic tale. The narrator has a split personality.

A Descent into the Maelstrom:

It's an account of a sailor who survives a shipwreck. He tides himself to a cask.

The Pit and the Pendulum:

The narrator escapes a terrible faith.

The Masque of Red Death:

It is a parable of the Memento mori theme. It is about a Prince Prospero who organizes a masque ball in order to save himself and others from the plague. At midnight, the masque of red death (= plague) appears. It looks like a plague - stricken corps. The masque strikes the Prince dead. The guests uncover the masque. There is nothing.

The Cask of Amontillado:

There is a theme of revenge. There are two characters. One has been assaulted by another. A man who wants a revenge takes another man to some catacombs in order to show him the cask of amontillado which he made up. In the end of the hall, he walls him up.

In his detective stories, he introduces Auguste Dupin. He is a lonely, intelligent man, capable of solving the most difficult problems (a matter of amusement for him). He works alone (without the police).

puzzle-solving - putting pieces together

Murders on the Rue Morgue (early 1840s):

It introduces Auguste Dupin. Poe discusses the differences between analytical capacities and mere ingenuity. He has extraordinary abilities. Two women are found dead in their apartment (mother and daughter). The police have no clues whatsoever. Dupin enters the scene. He analyses the case and makes a hypothesis which has to be proved. The murderer must have been an orangutan. It is found and caged from its owner.

The Purloined Letter (early 1840s):

The police asks Dupin for help. An important letter has been stolen from a female member of the royal family. The police thinks it was a certain minister D. With this letter, he could blackmail certain members of the family. The letter has not been found. Dupin should solve the riddle. He comes to the apartment and finds the letter. It was not hidden. It was easily accessible and visible. The letter is placed on the letter-bank. The outside of the letter looks different.

Herman Melville (1819 - 1891)

He was a representative of Romanticism in America. He was the most pessimistic of the three (Poe, Hawthorne). He was born in NYC. He was a descendant of English and Dutch parents. His father died when Herman was young. Herman had to quit school and go to work (a clerk). He helped his brother in fur and cap store. At the age of 19, he boarded a ship. He returned ashore and became a teacher and started to write. In 1841, he set out for the second time - on a whaler (Pacific). He was soon disillusioned. He and another man escaped from the ship. They wandered around the Pacific islands. He was held by a tribe Taipé. He escaped and wind out in Hawaii. There, he enlisted in the army and returned to Boston.

The whaling expedition provided him with the experience that he was able to rely upon through his life. At first, he was successful. In 1846, he published a

novel *Typee* (about the life among the cannibals, he was able to perceive their negative and positive sides). He indicated how the arrival of the white men (Protestant missionaries) corrupted these primitives. This novel was a good sea-yarn. It was an adventure that was new.

When *Typee* was followed by *Omoo* (1847), the readers were not very interested in it. It was considered an inferior novel. It is a vivid narration after his escape from Taipei.

When *Mardi* appeared (1849), very few people read it and it was a financial disaster.

In 1851, Melville published *Moby Dick*. He spent years writing it (forgetting even his meals). The novel was not a success when it came out. It is a good sea novel of adventure. It is not a cheerful novel and ends tragically. Only one person survives - the narrator of the story.

It is a first person narrative. The narrator is Ishmael.

Industry of whaling. It is a great philosophical drama, concerned with fighting against evil. Captain Ahab has lost a leg in an encounter with the white whale Moby Dick. He is all set upon revenge. He wants to locate him and kill him. He collects a crew (various nationalities) and makes them all swear they'll do their very best to kill the whale. The crew represents humanity and human race. The white whale symbolizes malice. Ahab is so set upon revenge that he knows no limits. There is no reason for him. After a three-day chase, the whale appears, sinks the vessel and kills everyone except Ishmael. There are two non-human antagonists: the white whale and the sea (the setting and the background, ferocious, violent, cruel, just like Ahab and Moby Dick).

It is an allegory: the hunting down the moral evil in the world. This is the way *Moby Dick* is interpreted.

The novel is interspersed with the essays of human courage, fate. There is a sense of mystery. It is a myth that Melville created all by himself. There are symbols of good (destroyed by evil) and evil.

- *Pierre*: a demanding book to read (incest)

Melville also wrote some poetry and a couple of long short stories. Some were published in magazines (so that he would get money). They were collected and published as *The Piazza Tales*:

- *Bartleby the Scrivener*

A story about a man called Bartleby who all of a sudden doesn't want work anymore. He just sits at his desk and his boss can't fire him. The owner of the company is forced to move and Bartleby is thrown in jail where he dies soon.

- *Billy Budd, Sailor*

A story about a sailor who is loved by everyone but a man called Claggart. He accidentally kills him in a dispute and is hanged. Billy Budd personifies innocence.

- *Benito Cereno*: It is based on a story previously written by Delano (it is also a name of a character). In 1799, Captain Delano drops anchor near an uninhabited island near South America. There, he encounters a Spanish ship in a very poor condition. Cereno is its captain. Cereno is very ill. His black servant Babo helps him perform his duties. Cereno tells Delano that he has sailed from the British Isles, carrying a cargo of 300 black slaves. The ship was overcome by a storm and most of his slaves were lost and died (also his crew). Captain Delano feels sorry and offers to help. He feels uneasy when the remaining slaves are not disciplined and because Cereno does not express the gratitude. When Delano is about to leave, Cereno jumps in his ship, the Negroes on his ship start a revolt. The leader of the revolt was a black servant. Delano manages to overcome the slaves. Both ships are saved. They come to Lima and Babo is executed. Cereno cannot handle it anymore, enters a monastery and dies three months later.

Civil War

This was a war between North and South for the abolition of slavery. Abraham Lincoln started the war and won.

The end of the Civil War brought some changes.

South:- Slaves no longer worked on plantations for free.

- The system of economy fell apart.
- The south became more urbanized (the cities developed rapidly, schools were established).

These changes are also reflected in literature.

The period was turbulent: time of immigrations, economical achievements, polarization (very poor people vs. very rich people), Henry Ford began mass production of cars.

There was a new approach to literature: Realism began to find its way in literature. William Dean Howells is responsible for the introduction of Realism in American literature.

Romance was not quite dead yet. Realistic description was mixed with Romantic features (in a small territory - local color literature). Local color is mainly found in short stories. People were eager to know about other parts of the country.

Local color literature:

1. **Bret Harte** (Wild West)

His fiction lies between Realism and Romanticism (picturesque landscape). He describes provincial customs, accents, local legends, superstition. Regional peculiarities: the need to consolidate South and North.

His stories appealed to the readers, especially to those who lived in the ugly parts of the states. Some stories were popular, but then he began to

repeat himself ("the same formula") and the readers got bored. He depicted the local manners.

- *The Luck of Roaring Camp*:

His successful career began when this book appeared in the magazine and the story established Harte as a father of this fashion. A mixture of sentimentality and realism was a successful formula.

The story is about an illegitimate child who is born to a prostitute in a California gold-mining camp. The child's mother dies immediately after the birth. The child Luck is 'adopted' by the miners (they are rude, cruel, curse a lot). They soften - pastoral happiness. The end is tragic - a flood destroys this camp and the child dies.

Harte wanted to say that there is always a soft surface under a rough skin. The child redeems the miners of their sins.

Harte uses two languages: literary English (descriptions) vs. local dialect (dialogs).

- *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*:

He uses two languages and humor. The gambler is presented as calm and as a person who does not drink. Simple people have hearts of gold.

Harte's humorous effects are achieved in different ways:

- to use sophisticated expressions when they are out of context (improperly used)
- gambler's jargon - archaic words

His stories were repetitive. They have brief openings. He places his stories in Californian mine camps (1850). These camps represent a microcosm and protagonist's humanity in general. In his short stories, evil characters change to saints.

2. **Harriet Beecher Stowe** (New England)

- *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life among the Lowly* (1852):

On one hand, it was accepted with enthusiasm, but on the other hand, with criticism (too sentimental, overreacting).

- *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853):

She quoted some private letters and news articles to explain the facts.

- *Dred, A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856)

Harriet had some personal experience with the slavery. She met some runaway slaves. She also visited a plantation to see how it was to live and work there.

3. **O. Henry** (New York)

4. **Joel Chandler Harris** (Georgia):

In his youth, he worked on a plantation in Georgia. He is known for his *Br'er Rabbit* and *Br'er Fox*. These are the stories which he heard in his youth from Negroes. Uncle Remus is the narrator of these stories. The framework is quite simple. The Negro tells stories to a young boy. Br'er Rabbit always outsmarts stronger animals. These animals have a strong human appeal. There are various Uncle Remus collections that were published in 1880s.

5. **George Washington Cable** (Louisiana)

6. **Sarah Orne Jewett** (New England/Maine):

She wrote short stories, portraying women.

7. **Mary E. Wilkins Freeman** (New England/Massachusetts, Vermont)

She wrote short stories, portraying women. She wrote one story that is frequently anthologized: *The Revolt of Mother*. It is about a promised wife who has waited in vain for 40 years for a new house. In the end her husband builds a barn although he does not need another one. She has enough of that, so when he leaves to buy a horse, she moves into the new barn.

The characters are presented realistically, they speak in a dialect and use archaic words, however, they use sophisticated words to mark trivial events.

8. **Kate Chopin** (Louisiana, New Orleans)

Louisiana was the territory of Creoles and Cajuns (a native of Louisiana). She published two collections of short stories.

- *Desirée's Baby* (from a collection *A Night in Acadie*): It is about racial matters. A young woman Desirée is of uncertain parentage. She is taken to a house of a prosperous family. She falls in love with a young man - he is a slave-holder. They marry and have a baby. The baby is not 100 % white and he blames it on his wife's predecessors. She takes the baby and disappears in the wood. Her husband becomes very cruel and decides to burn all the belongings of his wife and the baby. He discovers a letter from his mother informing him that he is not 100 % white.

There is a lot of nostalgia from the antebellum days. She speaks about the blacks. This topic is used as a colorful addition.

9. **Thomas Nelson Page** (Virginia)

His stories interspersed with Negro dialects. He presents the coexistence of Negroes and the whites.

10. **Mark Twain** (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) (Missouri, the Mississippi)

He spent his youth in Hannibal. He became an under-pilot ('cub') on the Mississippi. He served in Confederate forces as a volunteer. He hoped to become rich, so he went to Nevada (silver mine). He joined the newspaper crew and changed his name to Mark Twain.

He published his articles from Europe as *Innocents Abroad*. From 1870s to 1890s, he traveled around the States. He wrote autobiographical works.

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

It is about a young prankster who lives with his aunt. The protagonist is a combination of at least three boys Twain used to know in his youth and Mark Twain himself. The book is a record of the boy's recollection. Everything is described with vividness. He wanted to express his views on his fellow Americans and on the whole human race. A good portion of the

book may be read as his observations about society. The book is very funny. This humor is leveled not so much at the young protagonist but rather points to the adults. Men and women can be very inconsistent, they do not always behave the way they should. This book was also meant for adult readers and is usually quoted as a book for children.

He can be considered as the predecessor of Henry James. In America, realism first began to appear as a way of thinking of American life. Later, it came to literature.

- *Roughing it* (1872)

- *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and Other Sketches* (1867):

It was published in a magazine. The protagonist of the story is a frog Dan'l Webster. His owner and he take part in many competitions (jumping). Once, the frog is distressed by a stranger who fills him with quail shot and he cannot jump anymore.

- *The Gilded Age* (1873):

The term gilded refers to the post-Civil War in America.

- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885):

It is considered a more serious work of art. It is a story about a life on Mississippi. The protagonist is Huckleberry Finn, a son of a drunkard. The main issues are his wants to break free, to escape the system that wants to civilize and educate him. He rejects it. The language is not literary English but a dialect. Also, humor and irony are used. In 1950s, the word Nigger bothered the critics and they accused Twain of racism. Huck finds Jim - the slave and doesn't know whether to tell the owner (it was the law to report about the found property) or to let the slave run away. Huck decides to remain human even though he has to break the law.

Twain wrote some books related to the *Innocents Abroad*:

- *A Tramp Abroad* (1880)

- *Following the Equator* (1897):

This last book differs a lot from his earlier ones. It is less humorous and is more like a satire.

- *Life on the Mississippi* (1883):

It is partly historical and autobiographic. He describes the traffic, nature and history, the importance of this river for the area and also his experience as a cub pilot.

- *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882):

It is based on a misplaced identity. British prince Edward discovers a pauper boy who looks like his twin brother. They exchange places and try to improve something on both places. The prince sees the poverty and the tyranny of the authority. They both contribute to a better life of both, paupers and authority.

- *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*

A Yankee from the 19th century travels back in time and his ideas are very modern and too obscure so he is put back to the 19th century.

- *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894):

It talks about two children who are born on the same day. One is born to a white woman and the other to a mulatto. Here, Twain makes a very negative connotation to the Negroes, because a Negro misplaces both (exchanges them). Twain's pessimism and bitterness are reflected in his story.

- *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* (1900):

It is about a town Hadleyburg which seems to be the most honest and righteous town in USA. One man comes to Hadleyburg to prove the statement wrong and succeeds. It turns out that Hadleyburg is as corrupted as any other town in USA.

Twain's unique language, his ability to mix serious matters with humorous ones makes him one of the beginners of American literature. In Twain's work, many critics found the sense of alienation.

Emily Dickinson

(1830 - 1886)

She was a contemporary of genteel tradition. In her life-time, she was pretty unknown. Only 7 of her poems were anonymously published during her life. She was born in Amherst. Her father was very dominating, patronizing. She studied in female institutions and never married. She was in love with a man who died of tuberculosis. The other man was a priest who was married and had a family. He moved away because of his sense of duty for his family. During her last years, she became mentally ill. As a person she was shy, odd and very sensitive. Obviously, she expressed her inner thoughts through her poems. When she died, she left a booklet of poems. Contemporary editions are entitled by the first line, not by numbers.

She was spiritual, expressed transcendental views of life, on love and many other topics. If Whitman was a poet of a body, she was a poet of the soul. The death of her first lover and parting with her second lover and many other tragedies are reasons for talking about death.

On the surface, the poems seem very simple, but that is not true. She loved nature and believed in the presence of God (Emerson). She was also influenced by British metaphysical poets. She was religious in her own private way (God, faith), she keeps searching but never finds a solution to her agonizing experience. Her verses look simple but the interpretation is difficult. The verses are brief, she makes omissions, so that the reader often looks for missing connections. Her images are fresh, original and there is no traditional rhyme. There is lots of space to be filled in - it results in ambiguity, different interpretations.

The main themes are courage, devotion and deepest emotions. She wrote very little about the world that surrounded her. Typical are poems that talk about death.

- *I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died:*

Some critics were very annoyed because of her grammar, omissions...(early editions).

She wrote poems with the following themes:

- love, defeat, loss
- solitude, death
- madness, suffering
- entrapment, craft, nature
- birds, bees, church imagery

Some critics say that there are several Emily Dickinson.

She was a transcendental poet and a poet of mysticism.

- *Success*
- *The Frost.*

It is a grotesque poem. It is about a universe that doesn't hear.

- *I Never Saw a Moor*

Although she wrote in the 19th century, the poems relate to romanticism and already to modernism, that is why it is so difficult to 'put' her into any group of poets.

Walt Whitman

(1819 -)

In Brooklyn, he became a painter, but changed jobs very frequently. His personal experience of mixing with different kinds of people is very important for his writing.

- *Leaves of Grass* (1855):

This is a collection of poems. The first edition contained only 12 poems. When it came out, it was not accepted with enthusiasm. Later on, he published new editions, so that every new edition was enlarged. This was not the only collection.

During the Civil War, he was a manly-nurse, so that after the war he published poems about the Civil war, called *Drum Taps* and *Democratic Vistas*.

In the *Leaves of Grass*, he identifies himself with any individual. *Song of Myself* is the opening poem. The poet sees himself as a representative human being, as a representative American. In his poem, he tries to include everybody, every possible race, immigrants, children, the old, drug-addicts, animals - pluralism. There is a mixture of Puritanism and transcendentalism. He knows no taboo themes. He proclaims himself as a poet of the body. But he is at the same time the poet of the soul, too. He sent his first collection to Emerson, because he liked him. He also believed that God is present in every person. There is the love for his fellow Americans whom he loves and respects. This poem was written in a free verse. Each line represents a separate thought. Everybody is perfectly equal.

There are poems that belong to the *Leaves of Grass* but are not from the first edition: *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*:

It is about a boy who steals out in order to listen to a pair of mocking birds, calling out to each other. One night, the female is gone and the male is crying in his nest, knowing that she is dead. There is a relationship between the physical and the spiritual. The boy learns that in time, physical love transcends to the level of spiritual love.

Whitman wrote a couple of poems about the Civil War:

- *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*:

It was written as an elegy when president A. Lincoln died. He tells how he would put some lilacs on the coffin in order to say goodbye. It is a very sad poem, very personal (grief over a dead president).

- *Passage to India*:

The central idea is unifying the world. First, he celebrates the modern devices which bring the continents closer together. But in order to really bring the continents together, spiritual values have to be taken into an account - not only technical.

- *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*:

It is based on Whitman's childhood in Brooklyn. He remembers the crowds of people, the panorama of the city from the ferry. Again, there is this idea of unity as the poet identifies with everything, everybody, all the people crossing the river.

There is an elegy to the dead president Lincoln:

- *Captain, My Captain*:

The poet sees himself as a representative of America, he celebrates the pluralism of America, transcendentalism... and ends with thoughts about death.

Whitman had to fight for recognition. The problem was that he was so radically new and different. He introduced new topics. He discarded rhyme almost entirely. He did employ the rhythm, which is determined by the idea of a poem (what he is saying, singing about).

The Age of Realism

By the end of the Civil War (1861-1865), many things have happened. The south began to change rapidly from agricultural to urban. The Federal Government abolished slavery. Sharp contrast began to appear between the few rich individuals, there were new technological innovations, postal service became a reality, the transcontinental railroad connected the east and the west, the cars contributed to mobility of Americans, there was the immigration from the European countries.

After the Civil War, America's cultural dependence of Europe was over.

In literature, Realism began to replace Romanticism.

Henry James

He was the leader of modern realism. He mostly depicted Europe and its people. He admired European achievements in arts, but was skeptical of

their moral values. He often compares Americans (more naïve, innocent, more sincere, inexperienced) and Europeans (experienced, wise, sincere). He wrote 'long' short stories.

The main themes in his works are: inexperience, naivete, history, contrasting reality and everyday art, young person undergoing the process of self-discovery.

He also uses a Conradian narrator - he observes things critically but is otherwise untrustworthy. He likes to make a psychological portrait (his brother was a psychologist).

All his works were first serialized in magazines, then revised and finally published.

- *Daisy Miller*: a study (1878):

It is a study of an Italian experience of an American young lady, who is very clever, independent, self-confident and headstrong. There is very little plot in it.

- *The Portrait of a Lady*:

The characters are: Isabel Archer, Lydia Touchet, Ralph Touchet, Lord Warburton, Caspar Goodwood, Serena Merle (Madame Merle), Gilbert Osmond (daughter Pansy).

After her father's death, Isabel is taken by her aunt from her family home in America to England, where the Touchets have a country house. Isabel is a pretty young lady. She has a number of suitors, but rejects them all. Ralph Touchet is her secret admirer. He knows he can never approach her. He makes her dying father leave a sum of money for Isabel.

Isabel meets a friend of Lydia Touchet - Serena. Afterwards, they all go to Italy where Madame Merle introduces another American - an art collector Gilbert to Isabel. Gilbert has a 15-year-old daughter. Gilbert and Isabel fall in love, despite other people warning her. She soon realizes he doesn't love her. Later she learns that Madame Merle is his former mistress and Pansy

their illegitimate child. She goes to England, because Ralph Touchet is dying. Caspar proposes again, but she rejects him. She returns to Pansy and Gilbert.

This is a very psychological novel. It concentrates on her inner life, consciousness. She is a very self-reliant character.

There are the influences of Emerson and Hawthorne (the idea of unpardonable; Gilbert has cut himself off humanity, collects objects, doesn't feel anything, his wife is also an object to him).

This is a study of the protagonist's development. It is a record of changes that she undergoes. There is an open ending that offers many interpretations: has she committed her spiritual suicide or has she opened herself and offered contemplation.

The language is very complex. There are long uninterrupted sentences.

- *Washington Square*

It is a psychological novel. There is an omniscient narrator. There are three characters: Dr. Austin Sloper, his daughter Catherine and Morris.

Dr. Austin lives in Washington Square with his only daughter, who is plain and unattractive, but she is quite rich. She attracts fortune hunters and falls in love with Morris. Her father objects and wants her daughter to forget Morris. He takes her to England. Eventually, he gives up. Years later, Dr. dies and she inherits the money. Morris returns bald, fat and unattractive. He wants to reconcile with her but she turns him down. She is presented as a double victim: of her father, who treated her as an object, and of her lover who loved only her money. She never recovers. She feels she has missed love experience twice (father, lover). When she sends Morris away, she doesn't do it out of pride, but she realizes that she was involved with a myth, something that never existed.

James' greatest achievement: a female protagonist who matured morally. She was allowed the freedom of choice.

- *The Ambassadors*:

It is the last of his novels to be serialized. It relates to Lewis Lambert Strether, the editor of a review publication in Massachusetts. It is subsidized by Mrs. Newsome, a rich widow who wants to spend her money on good deeds. Strether is also a widower. He is sent to Europe on a mission to bring back her son who should have returned to America before. He is the heir of the family business. If Strether completes his mission, they will get married. Strether finds out that the son has become involved with a woman, an aristocrat, who is some 10 years older and married. They are very fond of each other. Strether returns to the states empty handed. This means that Mrs. Newsome lost her son and that they will not marry.

Strether is a central character. The narrator is limited omniscient. Only Strether tells the story, but sometimes, there is also a fully omniscient narrator. When Strether returns from Europe, even without the son, he had an interesting experience, he has changed, his understanding has deepened and he is a spiritually different man.

- *The Gold Bowl*:

The protagonist is Maggie Verver, a daughter of a super rich American industrialist who's already retired. We meet her in London where she's getting married to an Italian Prince Amerigo. Charlotte, her close friend, comes from America and Prince and she go shopping for a wedding present for Maggie. They found a gold bowl, crystal but gilded. They detect a crack in it and don't buy it. Maggie is very much attached to her father Adam and is concerned because she thinks he is lonely. Both, Maggie and her father, think that Charlotte and the Prince were lovers. The Prince and Maggie marry and have a son. She gets the idea that her father and Charlotte should get married. One day, Maggie goes searching for a wedding present for her father and finds a gold bowl and buys it. However, the store owner knowing

about the crack feels guilty and goes to her apartment to return the money. There, he sees pictures of the Prince and Charlotte. Maggie realizes they were lovers. A friend of Charlotte and Maggie, Fanny, comes in. When Maggie tells her about the affair, Fanny smashes the bowl. Then, Amerigo walks in and sees the situation. Maggie remains silent. She doesn't say anything, but one day, Charlotte confronts Maggie. Adam and Charlotte return to the States.

In the preface, the author discusses the point of view. 1st part is Amerigo's point of view, and in 2nd part, he's absent and there is Maggie's point of view.

James loves to explore his characters' minds. There is a rich imagery (gold, water, games, animals) and many symbols (gold - something perfect, expensive; as Maggie and Prince's lives - with a crack).

Maggie is represented as an innocent, naïve American girl, sheltered by her rich father. She had no experience with evil. Later on, when she confronts evil, she doesn't run away but conquers it by herself.

James also wrote short stories. They were very long.

Short stories:

- *Daisy Miller*:

An American who lives in Europe meets Daisy Miller. She is a very natural girl, non-conformist. She doesn't observe the strict rules of American society. The American admires her, but one day, he finds her with the Italians in the coliseum, late at night. He's disappointed and she dies a few days later.

This short story received many critics. It was as a slender to other American girls.

- *The Real Thing*:

It deals with artists and art. It is written in a form of a parable. The purpose is to evoke aesthetic and moral. There is a narrator who works as an illustrator.

He works with models. They are asked to present a certain situation. One day, an impoverished couple the Monarchs show up. They want to be models because they need money. He doesn't like the idea. They try but they are very bad. Still, they keep coming. One day, two servants, an Italian and a cockney girl, exchange roles with the Monarchs. The Monarchs do the housework and admit they're not good models.

- *The Turn of the Screw*:

It is about two young children who are entrusted to their grandfather. The servants are evil characters and manage to corrupt the children.

- *Aspern Paper*:

It is about an American who is an admirer of a long-dead poet.

- *The Beast in the Jungle*:

It is about a man who is obsessed with an idea that life has something special in store for him. He calls this unexpected event beast in the jungle. He concentrates on this beast. All his life is wait. He doesn't fall in love because he has no time. At the end, he realizes that life indeed had something special in store for him - waiting. He lost everything, also a love of a woman who died.

- *A Passionate Pilgrim*

- *The Madonna of the Future*

- *The Bostonians*

- *What Maisie Knew*

- *The Wings of the Dove*

His style is unique. He is not an easy author to read. He wrote novels and short stories on the presumption that readers are well educated to understand them. He was a pioneer of psychological realism. It was not appreciated. In 1930s and 1940s, his influence on modern authors began to grow and he became appreciated.

He can be pretty abstract at times. He uses a limited point-of-view (one character narrates what he sees).

Naturalism (1890 - 1930)

There were attempts of formulating new form of naturalism. Hamlin Garland published *Crumbling Idols* (1894). He explained that naturalism was an extreme form of realism. He pointed out that it is not easy to distinguish between naturalism and realism. There have to be other criteria in trying to distinguish naturalism and realism.

Naturalism is scientific - it analyzes and describes in great detail the misery of contemporary America. It was shaped by the Civil war (immigration). A man's life as perceived by naturalists is determined by forces he has no control over. He is the victim of biological forces, heredity, instincts, which some naturalists saw as animal-like. The social and economic environment make it impossible for a man to direct his own life. If a man has no free will, then his actions cannot be judged in moral terms.

There appeared massive changes in USA:

- rapid industrialization
- the development of transportation
- aggressive capitalistic exploitation (resources, workers)
- rapid urbanization
- the growth of slums

American naturalism seems to have grown more due to the above mentioned facts than to the European influences. American naturalism differs from European naturalism. It is not so bloody.

Stephen Crane

- *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*:

It is about a prostitute.

- *The red Badge of Courage*:

It is a war novel.

Crane also wrote a number of short stories:

- *The Blue Hotel*

- *The Open Boat*

Crane was a war reporter and later became a freelance writer. He wrote about slum life he knew from the first hand.

Frank Norris

Jack London

Theodore Dreiser

He comes from Indiana. There were 13 children in his family. His parents were of German origin. They moved around a lot and then settled in Chicago. He got to know misery, poverty. In his young years, he developed a life-long antagonism to organized religion. He read a lot (Spencer). He learned quite a lot about the doctrines of materialism and determinism. He accepted the view that a man is an animal who only wants to satisfy his basic needs (power, food, sex). His religion is futile.

In his works, he is able to express profound sympathy for his characters. He introduced a city into the American literature. He was equipped with his own observations about life in slums.

In 1900, he produced his first manuscript:

- *Sister Carrie*:

In that time, the book didn't get published. The protagonist was a woman who wasn't punished for her sins. Puritanism was still burning strong in America.

It is about a working girl Carrie whose family is very poor. She goes to Chicago to live with her sister and her family. She is disappointed because she can only get a job in a factory (she is exploited). She becomes a mistress

of a man Drove. They first met on a train when she came to Chicago and later on again after Carrie's disappointment with her work. She had another affair with a saloon manager Hurstwood. He is married but they fall in love and he would do everything for her. He steals money and they run away to Canada and then to New York. His evil deed catches up with him and he has to pay for what he did. He deteriorates financially and spiritually. Carrie gets a job and their paths divide. She leaves Hurstwood. She may have everything in financial sense but she is not happy. Hurstwood becomes a beggar and commits suicide.

The story tackles the urban scenes and backgrounds.