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Электронный учебно-методический комплекс (ЭУМК) по учебной дисциплине «Современная зарубежная литература» предназначен для студентов специальности 1-21 06 01-02 «Современные иностранные языки (перевод)».

В ЭУМК содержатся лекционные материалы к дисциплине «Современная зарубежная литература», перечень рекомендованных учебных пособий, примерные темы для подготовки рефератов, задания для работы на семинарских занятиях.

СОДЕРЖАНИЕ

ПОЯСНИТЕЛЬНАЯ ЗАПИСКА

Учебно-методический комплекс «Современная зарубежная литература» разработан для студентов, обучающихся на факультете социокультурных коммуникаций Белорусского государственного университета, по учебной дисциплине «Современная зарубежная литература» для специальности 1-21 06 01-02 «Современные иностранные языки (перевод)». Содержание учебно-методического комплекса согласуется с учебной программой дисциплины «Современная зарубежная литература».

«Современная зарубежная литература» – общий курс истории культуры и литературы Великобритании, США, Австралии и Канады, который преподается на факультете социокультурных коммуникаций БГУ на протяжении одного семестра.

Основные цели дисциплины «Современная зарубежная литература» – образовательные, воспитательные, развивающие, образующие общую цель – дать студентам базовые знания о мировом литературном процессе в 1940 – 2000 гг. и дать общее представление об основных тенденциях в развитии национальных литератур Европы, Америки и Австралии на примере наиболее значительных представителей основных литературных направлений в национальных литературах. Для комплексного понимания художественного текста требуются базовые знания принципов анализа литературного произведения разных жанров и форм. В совокупности это позволит научить студентов эффективной работе с художественным текстом в виде лучших образцов мировой поэзии, прозы и драматургии, увидеть связь между явлениями в национальных литературах народов мира и белорусской литературе и будет способствовать повышению качества филологической подготовки студентов. Данный учебно-методический комплекс позволит создать у студентов целостное представление о развитии литературы основных стран изучаемого языка как составной части менталитета английского и американского народов, их культуре и языковых картинах мира.

Задачи учебной дисциплины:

– дать общетеоретические представления о современном зарубежном литературном процессе;

– научить узнавать черты основных литературных направлений в художественных произведениях;

– ознакомить с творчеством крупнейших мастеров слова в ведущих национальных литературах;

– дать набор знаний, необходимый для понимания функционирования литературы как вида искусства;

– дать представление о принципах работы с произведениями разных жанров и форм и ознакомить с основными принципами анализа литературного произведения.

Учебная дисциплина тесно взаимосвязана с другими дисциплинами: «Основы американистики», «Страноведение (первый иностранный язык)», «Зарубежная литература (первый иностранный язык)», «Регионоведение (первый иностранный язык)».

После изучения учебной дисциплины студент должен знать:

– современное состояние литературного процесса;

– основные литературные направления на современном этапе и особенности поэтики каждого из них;

– принципы анализ художественного произведения;

– творчество крупнейших представителей современных национальных литератур в контексте развития мирового литературного процесса.

Студент должен уметь:

– понимать и интерпретировать выдающиеся произведения современной мировой литературы;

– определить социальную, эстетическую и идейную ценность произведения, определять место произведения в стадиальных процессах мировой литературы; извлекать из него историческую, гуманистическую, антропологическую, этическую, эстетическую, культурологическую, страноведческую и лингвистическую информацию;

– узнавать черты основных литературных направлений в конкретном произведении литературы;

– теоретически анализировать основные литературные направления;

– выделять общее и различное в развитии национальных литератур на современном этапе.

Одной из самых сложных проблем дисциплины является проблема сочетания глубины и конкретности изучаемого материала с его необозримой обширностью. Как нам представляется, наиболее оптимальным путем для разрешения этого противоречия может служить следующая система сочетания мирового и национального, общего и частного, эволюционного и константного, закономерного и конкретного, позволяющая осознать литературные процессы и явления и в то же время иметь возможность проникнуть в глубинные слои художественного произведения, в его структуру и поэтику. Эта система включает хронологический аспект (изучение литературного процесса в странах Европы, Америки и Австралии с момента окончания Второй мировой войны, внесшей значимые изменения в мировой литературный процесс, с учетом эволюции художественных форм и средств воспроизведения действительности до настоящего момента), системный аспект (изучение англоязычных литературных явлений в контексте стадиальных процессов мировой литературы) и анализ наиболее выдающихся художественных произведений.

1. ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКИЙ РАЗДЕЛ

1.1. World War II and foreign literature

The 1930s saw a surge of literature that anticipated the horrors of World War II. These works portrayed Europe as a breeding ground for fascism, with constantly changing borders and the stifling of dissent. Travel writing became a prominent genre, offering firsthand accounts from a continent teetering on the brink of war. The rise of fascist regimes and the appeasement policies of some Western nations, especially after events like the Spanish Civil War and the fall of Czechoslovakia, fueled anxieties about the future and inspired these stark portrayals.

Writers in the thirties were 'extraordinarily inclined towards personal confessions', Valentine Cunningham observes; 'This was the age of the insistent personal testimony'. For Michael North, this generation had a 'peculiar … autobiographical urge'. While not always associated with literary innovation, the 1930s witnessed a peculiar kind of life-writing: one engaged in temporal ricochet, where the recourse to the past is an implicit treatment of the present and future. As Stephen Spender claimed, in his diary on 15 September 1939: 'Politics alter from day to day and therefore lack continuity … for this reason private life and personal standards become important because they have a continuity which one mustn't allow to be interrupted by outside events'.

Major events can make the past seem clearer. The fear and uncertainty of this "timeless gap" led him to reflect on past trips to Germany.

This period has a unique style of autobiography. Scholar Jonathan Bolton calls it the "mid-term autobiography". Looking at works by writers like Spender, Bolton argues these wartime memoirs share themes: a lost childhood, upbringings tinged with fascism, and a youthful awareness of death. These autobiographies don't just tell the past; they use past experiences to understand and even challenge the present social and political turmoil. World War II writings paint a terrifying picture of fear under constant aerial bombardment. Unlike other anxieties with a foreseeable resolution, the fear of bombs became a never-ending state. These writings show how this "mid-air" dread, with no clear beginning or end, became a new kind of terrifying reality.

Travel writing around 1940 wasn't just about visiting places; it was a premonition of war. This writing explores the psychological impact of living near fascist borders. It goes beyond simply reporting on the enemy and delves into the psychological roots of fascism, blurring the lines between political analysis and psychoanalysis. A good example is Christopher Isherwood's "Goodbye to Berlin". This book looks back at the Weimar Republic in Germany, a time of relative freedom for many (women, gay people, working class, Jews) who would soon be crushed by fascism. The writing itself reflects this looming doom. The narrator is passive, like a camera simply recording events. The characters themselves downplay their own importance, and the wealthy Jewish Landauers seem oblivious to the danger**.** Instead of objective reporting, these travel accounts are filled with a sense of resigned dread**.** Memories replace facts, turning politics into a dark fairy tale. This is seen in Edwin Muir's "Journeys and Places", where a trip towards war becomes a confusing myth. The victims of fascism

are portrayed more like characters in a tragedy, dreaming of a lost kingdom. The writing itself reflects this confusion, mixing historical references with dreamlike imagery that suggests the mental captivity of those under fascist rule. The failure of traditional political reporting, especially during the Spanish Civil War, led to this shift in travel writing. It became more internal and subjective, reflecting the move towards myth and exploring the psychological impact of living near fascism. Crossing borders, a common theme in writing about the Spanish Civil War, used to symbolize taking action. Now, it represents giving up on political engagement and surrendering to a world of fear and fantasy.

The problem with this travel writing is that it doesn't truly confront the real threat. Instead, the enemy becomes a vague psychological monster, similar to the ones W. H. Auden already explored in his earlier works like “The Orators”.

Leaving when needed: This approach is further weakened by the fact that many of these writers, like Auden and Isherwood, left Germany when it needed them most. As gay intellectuals, they might have faced real dangers, but it wasn't a sacrifice many considered. Armchair analysis vs. reality: This lack of firsthand experience with war shows in their writing. Many poems about the enemy, like R. N. Currey's “Unseen Fire” and H. B. Mallalieu's “State of Readiness”, depict war as a ghostly, impersonal conflict fought by machines, not humans. The soldiers in these poems long for a more “real” battle experience, suggesting the writing itself lacks the authenticity of someone who has truly faced the enemy.

Science fiction and fantasy became ways to explore the threat of Nazism, but these genres also created some problems. Writers used these popular genres to deliver warnings about fascism, but the very nature of fantasy and science fiction made the messages unclear.

For example, Katherine Burdekin's “Swastika Night” uses science fiction to depict a future dominated by Nazis. While Burdekin likely aimed to show the link between Nazi ideology, technology, and gender roles, the futuristic setting makes it difficult to analyze these ideas from a feminist perspective. Nightmarish allegory: Similarly, Rex Warner's fantasy novel “The Wild Goose Chase” uses the story of three brothers to represent the dangers of totalitarianism. Warner may have wanted to make this message accessible through a popular genre, but the allegorical elements (like a rugby match) can be too simplistic and obscure the true danger of fascism. In both cases, the attempt to use familiar genres to deliver a political message resulted in a confusing mix. The fantastical elements make it difficult to understand the real-world.

The internal polarisation – between the soldier’s deathward spiritual journey and the post-1941 idea of the citizen–soldier – took its own toll. Soldiers faced a difficult mental struggle. On one hand, they were on a personal journey that could lead to death. On the other hand, after 1941, the idea of the “citizen-soldier” emerged, emphasizing the soldier's role in a larger global fight. This conflict is seen in the work of Alun Lewis, a war poet. Lewis's writing reflects the tension between personal experience and the bigger political picture. He argues for soldiers to be engaged citizens fighting for a cause, but his work also hints at a desire for a more personal escape, similar to the introspective poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke.

The writing about the war in North Africa offered a more nuanced view of the enemy. This was the first real chance for writers to compare their war to the one their fathers fought in World War I.

The desert war shared some similarities with trench warfare – trenches, tanks, artillery bombardments. Soldiers also experienced the strange mix of intense fighting zones and nearby "carefree" cities like Cairo and Alexandria. However, writers were also struck by the differences. This was a much faster-paced war with incredible new technology and tactics unlike anything seen before. The use of deception and camouflage was more sophisticated as well. Despite the dangers, there was a strong sense of camaraderie among soldiers, perhaps even stronger than in World War I.

This conflict is clear when looking at different groups of writers in wartime Cairo. One group, centered around the "Personal Landscape" journalled by Lawrence Durrell and others, chose a more introspective approach to war poetry. Some writers rejected overtly political themes and focused instead on the deeper, personal experiences of war.

As scholar Roger Bowen points out, their poems about Cairo and Alexandria often highlight the contrast between the pre-war freedom of travel and the forced confinement of wartime exile. The rapid movements of pre-war travel are seen as a dark reflection of the mechanized warfare of the Nazis ("Panzer Blitzkrieg") and the British ("Desert Rat") forces. The "Personal Landscape" group wasn't the only voice in Cairo. There were also many patriotic journals publishing poems by soldiers, like "Salamander" which put out the "Oasis" anthologies. These journals, led by Keith Bullen and John Cromer, had a more traditional style reminiscent of poets like Rupert Brooke and Rudyard Kipling. They aimed to celebrate the ordinary soldier as a poet and historian, recording their experiences. Scholar Roger Bowen suggests these writers were pushing back against what they saw as overly complex and obscure modern poetry.

The "Oasis" group prioritized themes of shared purpose and camaraderie among soldiers, creating a counterpoint to the more introspective approach of the "Personal Landscape" writers.

The strongest desert war poetry explores the complex inner struggles of soldiers in a new kind of war. It delves into the tension between a soldier's individual psychology and their role as part of a larger society (psyche vs. polis). It examines the hidden aspects of a soldier's personality, including both the capacity for love and violence (inner lover/killer). This poetry also challenges the traditional portrayal of soldiers in World War I. Desert war poetry reflects the unique experience of a war heavily influenced by technology. For many soldiers, technology became a filter through which they experienced the world, potentially even replacing their own internal thoughts and feelings. Alan Ross's poems about destroyer warfare explore the psychological toll of using deception tactics at sea. These tactics create a trance-like state in soldiers, splitting their minds between a detached, dreamlike state and a cold, mechanical killer instinct. The poem "Radar" focuses on the technology that allows soldiers to attack without directly seeing the enemy. The radar's remote control creates a sense of detachment, with its smooth operations almost lulling soldiers into forgetting

the human cost of war. The poem highlights the contrast between the “soothing” efficiency of the radar and the violence it enables. Soldiers become “reified dreamers”, lost in a technological haze, while also acting as “rootless, mechanical killers”.

The British government heavily relied on writers to create propaganda during World War II. The Ministry of Information (MoI) employed famous authors like George Orwell, Graham Greene, and Cecil Day-Lewis. The MoI directly produced propaganda, but it also influenced public opinion indirectly. They encouraged publishers to produce pro-war content by offering them extra paper, a scarce resource during wartime. The Ministry also worked with the press, film industry, and BBC to shape public opinion. Scholar Keith Williams argues that this was the largest propaganda effort ever undertaken by the British government. It involved a massive number of writers working across various media outlets.

The very propaganda efforts designed to create unity may have contributed to the feelings of paranoia and uncertainty in writings by soldiers. The constant barrage of information and manipulation might have fostered a sense of distrust in both the external world (what's truly happening?) and the internal world (can I trust my own perceptions?). George Orwell's own experience working in propaganda highlights the complex relationship between writers and wartime anxieties. In his 1940 essay “Inside the Whale”, Orwell foresaw the war leading to a decline of independent thought and a rise of totalitarian control.

Contradiction in his work: Ironically, Orwell himself ended up participating in some of the very things he criticized. He agreed to censorship by the Ministry of Information (MoI). He selected poems and fiction that fit the government's agenda for wartime talks and readings. His propaganda work, in a way, mirrored the very methods of control he despised.

The worst effect of the Ministry of Information's censorship may have been downplaying the horrors of the Holocaust. Arthur Koestler criticized readers of a magazine called “Horizon” in 1943 for not believing his work about the mobile gas chambers used to kill Jews in Chelmno. There was evidence of the Holocaust (also known as the “Final Solution”) as early as 1941. Despite this evidence, the British Ministry of Information downplayed the Holocaust in its propaganda. They feared being accused of spreading exaggerations and upsetting both anti-Semitic Britons and people in the Middle East.

It wasn't until after the Cold War that British writers could fully explore the complexities of World War II. During the Cold War, there was a pressure to portray the war in a certain light to counter Soviet propaganda. This made it difficult to honestly examine the war's darker aspects. Once the Cold War ended, British culture could finally begin to confront the war's true darkness. This involved a more open and honest look at the war's impact, as if traveling back in time to see the war through the eyes of those who lived in occupied countries.

1.2. Complexity of the British literary process in the post-war period

A significant shift in social values and fashion that occurred a decade after World War II. This shift created a clear distinction between the way people thought and

behaved in the post-war era compared to the 1930s. The rise of the nuclear threat played a major role in this change, with the formation of anti-nuclear movements like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and protests against nuclear weapons development.

Plays in the 1950s and 60s reflected a major change in society. New playwrights like Beckett and Pinter emerged, challenging the traditional themes of light comedy and romance. This theatrical “revolution” embraced several trends: plays moved beyond the picture-frame proscenium stage for a more dynamic experience. Censorship loosened, allowing for bolder content. Plays aimed to create a two-way connection between actors and viewers. Theatre tackled social issues and political causes more directly. Plays explored sexuality with less inhibition. The author cautions against overstating the impact. Theatre can be a breeding ground for intense expression, and these changes might not mirror broader societal shifts. They point out contrasting literary successes of the same era, highlighting that audiences can embrace both traditional and edgy content. However, the innovation in this “revolution” remains significant and continues to influence theatre today.

While the second wave of verse drama enjoyed a resurgence, Terence Rattigan's work stood apart. Rattigan wasn't drawn to grand, poetic themes. Instead, his plays focused on the intricacies of human experience. He crafted character-driven stories that resonated with audiences. Two of his most celebrated works exemplify this approach. The Winslow Boy (1946) doesn't rely on fictional narratives. Instead, it dramatizes a real-life legal battle from 1910. The story centers around a young naval cadet wrongly accused of a crime, and the fight to clear his name. The Browning Version (1948) offers a poignant look at a failing teacher in a British boarding school. It delves into themes of personal struggles and lost dreams, showcasing Rattigan's ability to craft intimate portraits.

N.C. Hunter's comedies, though popular with London audiences in the 1950s, were mild-mannered. Plays like “The Waters of the Moon” (1951) and “A Day by the Sea” (1953) lacked the depth of Chekhov's works they aspired to. Set in ordinary surroundings with everyday conversations, these comedies offered timid explorations of characters yearning for change but ultimately resigned to their lives.

Samuel Beckett is a central figure in the theatrical revolution of the 1950s and 60s. Unlike many playwrights who emerged during this time, Beckett wasn't a newcomer to the literary scene. Hailing from Dublin, Beckett studied languages at Trinity College and later found himself in France, becoming friends with the literary giant James Joyce. He even edited a collection of essays analyzing Joyce's groundbreaking work, “Finnegans Wake”.

Although primarily a novelist, Beckett eventually gravitated towards theatre in his middle years. It's interesting to note that he still considered himself a novelist first and foremost. Beckett's early novels like “Murphy” (1938) displayed a clear dissatisfaction with traditional storytelling conventions. Filled with irony and a playful protagonist, “Murphy” mocked the very idea of plot, presenting a hero who seeks peace through self-imposed limitations and even self-destruction. Written during World War II but not published until later, "Watt" grapples with the harsh realities of the time.

Beckett's own experiences with the French Resistance are likely woven into the narrative. Themes of personal frustration and internal battles come to the forefront here.

Samuel Beckett's introduced innovative approach to theatre, particularly with his play “Waiting for Godot” (1955). When Beckett shifted from novels to plays, he recognized the need to structure his work differently. He broke his material into clearer segments for better theatrical presentation. “Waiting for Godot” became a theatrical revolution because it defied traditional elements. It lacked a clear setting, social context, or timeline. Additionally, it introduced a completely new way of using language. Beckett's use of language in the play can be seen as a deliberate ransacking of established forms. He used irony to undermine these traditional ways of speaking, highlighting their limitations. Traditionally, language helps people navigate life's various roles. By dismantling these established “verbal currencies”, Beckett creates a sense of instability and undermines people's sense of certainty.

Beckett's use of irony can be funny, but it's a humor tinged with cynicism. He exposes the shallowness and pretentiousness inherent in many forms of communication.

John Whiting (1917-1963) dissented from the prevailing trend of kitchen-sink dramas that emerged in the 1950s. Influenced by the modernist works of T.S. Eliot, George Bernard Shaw, Christopher Fry, and Wyndham Lewis, Whiting crafted a substantial body of work. His collected plays, published in two volumes in 1969, garnered critical acclaim for their intellectual depth. However, Whiting's dramas, such as Marching Song (1954) and The Gates of Summer (1956), exploring the internal struggles of a disgraced general and a disillusioned philanderer respectively, may have been less commercially viable due to their introspective nature and lack of conventional dramatic structure. John Whiting and John Arden represent contrasting approaches to playwriting in the mid-20th century. Whiting's works, influenced by modernist writers, exhibited a focus on intellectual themes and introspection. He expressed concerns that the rise of collective-minded theatre might stifle the playwright's individual voice. In contrast, Arden's plays were explicitly crafted for the stage. He later challenged the limitations of traditional play scripts, envisioning a more dynamic theatrical experience that transcended the confines of a linear text. Arden's most acclaimed work, Sergeant Musgrave's Dance (1959), exemplifies his experimentation. Inspired by the epic style of Bertolt Brecht, the play tackles a complex social and political issue: the brutality of colonial warfare. Set in a late 19th-century mining town amidst a labor strike, the narrative follows four deserters who return with the body of a fallen comrade. Their aim is to confront the townspeople with the harsh realities of war and instigate a call for accountability.The play utilizes a large cast and incorporates songs to create a visually and aurally engaging experience. While lauded for its theatrical impact, critical reception regarding Sergeant Musgrave's Dance has been mixed. Some reviewers commend its bold experimentation, while others find the overall dramatic structure and moral message to be underdeveloped.

Playwrights N. F. Simpson and Joe Orton carved distinct comedic niches within the mid-20th century theatrical landscape. While both employed absurdity and social commentary, their works diverged from the existential themes and sense of alienation

that characterized Absurdist playwrights like Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco. Simpson actively resisted comparisons to the Absurdists. His one-act play "Resounding Tinkle" (1958), featuring the surreal delivery of an elephant to a suburban home, exemplifies this distinction. While Simpson embraced the unconventional, his humor often retained a connection to relatable human experiences. For instance, the full-length play "One Way Pendulum" (1959) explores the absurdity of parking meter regulations, a theme that resonates with the frustrations of modern life. Later works like "The Cresta Run" (1966) veered even further from Absurdism, leaning heavily towards slapstick farce reminiscent of the Marx Brothers. Similar to Simpson, Joe Orton prioritized farcical humor in works like "Loot" (1966). This play's dark humor revolves around a stolen coffin and a corpse, pushing boundaries but maintaining a tenuous connection to a universal human experience – death. While employing satire, plays like "The Good and Faithful Servant" (1968) aimed their comedic barbs at social institutions and do-gooders, steering clear of the deep philosophical questions explored by Absurdist dramatists. Playwrights of the 1950s, through various styles – from direct social commentary to wry humor and introspective explorations of human limitations – captured the social and existential anxieties of the time. This theatrical movement coincided with the emergence of a group of novelists who mirrored the image of a "literary movement" fueled by "angry young men", as portrayed by the media.

The protagonists or anti-heroes in these novels, who challenged societal norms, were not simply one-dimensional characters. Some authors understood that unfocused rebellion can devolve into mere discontent. Therefore, they employed irony to create a more nuanced critique.

William Cooper (pen name of Harry Summerfield Hoff) is credited with introducing an early example of the "angry young man" archetype in his 1950 novel "Scenes from Provincial Life".

John Braine's 1957 novel, Room at the Top, stands out within the movement of "Angry Young Men" literature for its greater social commentary and moral complexity. While works like Lucky Jim, Hurry on Down, and Look Back in Anger captured the frustrations of the era, Room at the Top delves deeper.

The protagonist, Joe Lampton, is a working-class war orphan from the West Riding. Fueled by social prejudice and the allure of wealth, he sets out to infiltrate the upper class. However, his ambition comes at a cost. As Joe ruthlessly navigates social hierarchies, his genuine human qualities begin to erode. Relationships become tools for social advancement rather than sources of genuine connection. The novel's strength lies in Joe's self-awareness. His honest reflections expose the psychological toll of his ambition and add moral weight to the narrative. The sequel, Life at the Top (1962), explores the consequences of Joe's choices, further highlighting the sacrifices he's made in his pursuit of success.

The "Angry Young Men" movement is often understood as an expression of dissatisfaction with the post-war social landscape. Specifically, it critiqued the perceived limitations imposed by the Welfare State and the continued barriers faced by those seeking social mobility. While this movement channeled discontent, it lacked a clear ideological vision for change. Furthermore, the anger it expressed was often

muted compared to earlier protest movements. This disparity can likely be attributed to the different targets. The "Angry Young Men" confronted a more established and bureaucratic system, lacking the stark economic hardship of the interwar period's "slump" that fueled earlier outrage.

Lawrence Durrell emerged as a master of intricate plotting within the 1950s literary landscape. While his earlier work, The Black Book (1938), expressed scathing social commentary through its exploration of sexuality, it was his Alexandria Quartet that cemented his reputation for innovative storytelling.

The Alexandria Quartet, a tetralogy published between 1957 and 1960, consists of Justine, Balthazar, Mountolive, and Clea. The narrative unfolds against the vibrant backdrop of Alexandria, a city pulsating with life and sensuality. This setting evokes comparisons to E.M. Forster's Where Angels Fear to Tread, which explores the contrasting realities of a repressed England and a more passionate Mediterranean culture. Durrell's accomplishment lies in his construction of a multifaceted narrative. The story centers on Darley, a schoolmaster who becomes entangled with Justine, the wife of a wealthy Egyptian man named Nessim. Other key characters include Balthazar, a doctor; Mountolive, the British Ambassador; and Clea, Darley's eventual lover. The narrative unfolds through the perspectives of these characters, revealing a complex web of relationships, political intrigue (including arms smuggling to Palestine), and personal secrets.

Durrell's technique hinges on the concept of each novel adding layers of understanding and revising previous interpretations. Each character offers their own perspective, challenging assumptions formed through earlier limited viewpoints. This cyclical process of reinterpretation, while sometimes resulting in overly elaborate prose, ultimately creates a captivating and thought-provoking work.

In the literary landscape of the 1960s, Anthony Burgess challenged conventional narratives with A Clockwork Orange (1962). This dystopian novel departs from the works of his contemporaries, such as Angus Wilson, whose characters grapple with more restrained forms of suffering. Burgess, with a background of several novels including a trilogy on post-war Malaya, presents a far bleaker vision.

A Clockwork Orange projects a nightmarish vision of a future England. The narrative centers on Alex, a teenager who leads a gang of delinquents who engage in violent acts of theft, rape, and murder. Alex is eventually apprehended and subjected to a controversial form of rehabilitation – the Ludovico Technique. This "Reclamation Treatment", designed to eliminate violent urges, transforms Alex into a being incapable of experiencing genuine emotions or pleasure. He becomes desensitized to art, music, and even sex, existing as a mere shell devoid of free will.

Burgess's narrative serves as a scathing critique of both extremes. He satirizes the brutality of Alex and his gang, while simultaneously questioning the ethics of a society that would impose such a dehumanizing form of "conditioning" in the name of rehabilitation. A Clockwork Orange stands as a powerful indictment of both unrestrained violence and the potential dangers of totalitarian control, forcing readers to contemplate the complexities of free will and societal intervention.

Nigel Dennis stands out for his linguistic virtuosity, particularly evident in his novel Cards of Identity (1955). The novel centers around the Identity Club, a peculiar organization that holds annual conferences at a country house. Their motto: “Identity is the answer to everything”. The club offers a unique service: assigning carefully crafted identities to individuals deemed to be lacking a true sense of self.

Cards of Identity utilizes a series of case studies to satirize various aspects of contemporary life – public discourse, politics, religion, and sexuality. The work is intended for a well-informed audience familiar with current cultural and social trends, and capable of appreciating literary parody and pastiche.

Dennis's A House in Order (1966) presents a stark contrast to the exuberant satire of Cards of Identity. This novel adopts a minimalist approach, focusing on a prisoner of war confined to a small greenhouse and yard. The protagonist's aspirations and frustrations, limited by his circumstances, take on symbolic meaning. Despite its narrow scope, A House in Order emerges as a powerful and thought-provoking fable.

The critical perspectives of Dennis, Burgess, and Wilson point towards a shared skepticism of liberal humanism within their novels. This aligns with the Christian-oriented critiques found in the works of Golding and Spark, who also reject the tenets of liberal humanism. This convergence suggests a broader cultural reevaluation of the previously dominant Forsterian ideals.

A refreshing counterpoint to this prevailing sentiment is found in the work of Brigid Brophy. Brophy's novels, Hackenfeller's Ape (1953) and The Finishing Touch (1963), demonstrate a renewed faith in the power of the human spirit (echoing Shaw's “Life Force”) and the value of instinct. Brophy's playful and witty narrative style, reminiscent of Ronald Firbank, adds another dimension to the literary landscape. Both novels convey a palpable sense of the author's enjoyment in her craft.

R. S. Thomas (1913-) is a priest in the Church of Wales and a distinguished poet. His work is deeply rooted in his experiences serving rural parishes in Wales. To further connect with his parishioners, Thomas even undertook the task of learning the Welsh language.

Thomas's poetry is characterized by a disciplined and sincere dedication to his faith and his community. This commitment is evident throughout his collections, including Song at the Year's Turning (1955), Poetry for Supper (1958), The Bread of Truth (1963), Selected Poems 1946-1968 (1973), and Frequencies (1978).

As Glyn Jones aptly noted, citing Alun Lewis, R. S. Thomas's poems capture the essence of rural Wales, particularly the lives of those who work the small farms. Despite the limitations and remoteness of this setting, Thomas's passionate concern imbues his characters and themes with a universal significance.

R. S. Thomas's work stands out for its clarity and economy of language, a quality often contrasted with the more obscure and metaphor-laden poems of Dylan Thomas. In his introduction to Song at the Year's Turning, John Betjemen observes that W. B. Yeats appears to be the primary modern influence on Thomas's style. Betjemen further notes that Thomas believes poetry is best experienced through silent contemplation rather than public recitation.

English poet Norman Nicholson exemplifies a deep connection to place in his work. Born and raised in Millom, Cumbria, Nicholson has spent most of his life there, drawing inspiration for his creative output from his surroundings.

Nicholson's work encompasses various genres. He has authored topographical books that explore the landscapes of West Cumbria and the Lake District, alongside poetry collections such as Five Rivers (1944), Rock Face (1948), The Pot Geranium (1954), and A Local Habitation (1972).

In his autobiography, Wednesday Early Closing (1975), Nicholson delves into his upbringing. He describes his childhood living near a draper's shop in a community heavily impacted by the Depression.

Norman Nicholson played a significant role in the resurgence of verse drama. His contribution centered on reimagining biblical narratives within a Cumbrian setting. The Old Man of the Mountains (1946) breathes new life into the story of Elijah, while A Match for the Devil (1953) presents a fresh exploration of the Old Testament prophet Hosea. Nicholson continued this thematic exploration with Birth by Drowning (1960), a modern interpretation of the story of Elisha.

The emergence of Philip Larkin (1922-1985) in the 1950s marked a significant shift in British poetry. Larkin's work challenged the prevailing tendency towards nostalgia and sentimentality, particularly regarding childhood experiences and one's hometown.

Larkin's poem “I Remember, I Remember”, echoing the title of Thomas Hood's sentimental poem, offers a satirical critique of autobiographical writing. The poem dismantles the idealized fictions often associated with childhood memories. The narrative unfolds as the speaker, on a train journey, unexpectedly finds himself in his birthplace, Coventry. However, his observations undermine any sentimental attachment to the place.

The publication of Philip Larkin's third poetry collection, The Less Deceived (1955), marked a turning point, garnering immediate critical acclaim. Subsequent volumes, The Whitsun Weddings (1964) and High Windows (1974), solidified his reputation as a poet of unwavering integrity. While his thematic scope may be considered limited, it resonates with the restrictions and anxieties prevalent in contemporary thought and feeling.

Larkin's signature dry wit and understated observations on life struck a chord with a generation of disillusioned young intellectuals. They found solace in his gentle cynicism, a form of critical commentary that avoided self-righteous anger or excessive self-absorption. Larkin's approach to poetry, which he once described as “verbal pickling” – preserving an experience through precise language – appealed to readers for its lack of pretension and its focus on capturing the essence of an experience.

William Empson (1906) played a significant role in the renewed interest in intricate verse forms and the return of metaphysical wit within British poetry. His Collected Poems (1955) served as a testament to his own work in this vein. Furthermore, his critical study, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930), explored the potential of linguistic ambiguity in poetic expression. Empson's contributions were twofold: he was a highly influential mentor through his critical work, and a lauded poet

himself. However, his own verse proved to be less widely read due to its excessive complexity. His poems became overburdened with obscure allusions, creating a barrier between the poet and the reader. While deciphering these complexities could be rewarding for some readers, the overall effect often resulted in a loss of clarity and emotional connection.

Despite the significant influence of Empson's ideas, the poets associated with the "Movement" did not fully embrace his style. Critics often mistakenly linked the "Movement" to Empsonianism due to their shared emphasis on clear expression. However, the "New Lines" poets specifically rejected obscurity in their writings, making the connection between the two groups ultimately tenuous.

Elizabeth Jennings (1926-) is a distinguished poet who has distanced herself from her early association with the "Movement" group. Her poems, collected in volumes such as Poems (1953), Collected Poems (1967), Lucidities (1970), Selected Poems (1979), and Celebrations and Elegies (1982), demonstrate a thoughtful and introspective lyric voice.

Jennings' poetry is characterized by a quiet contemplation that stems from a genuine inner exploration rather than a reliance on external dramatic devices. She has tackled challenging subjects with courage and honesty, particularly in poems exploring the complexities of mental illness. Her work also displays a poignant depth of emotion in poems that grapple with loss, as exemplified in "For a child born dead".

1.3. Development of American literature in the postwar years

American literature following World War II (WWII) compared to World War I (WWI). Factors such as a possible societal desensitization to large-scale warfare or a perceived moral justification for the cause of WWII might have contributed to this difference.

However, the impact of WWII on American literature extends beyond the level of disillusionment. A dominant theme emerged in post-WWII fiction, reflecting a profound sense of human vulnerability. This vulnerability stemmed from the immense destructive power unleashed by advancements in military technology, culminating in the horrifying specter of the atomic bomb. This theme transcended the specific experiences of veterans and resonated with a broader societal anxiety about the potential for technology to overwhelm human control.

Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead (1948) exemplifies the enduring impact of World War II on American literature. Unlike some war novels that offer a broader perspective, Mailer zooms in on the brutal experiences of a small infantry unit in the Pacific. The soldiers' physical and psychological scars paint a harrowing picture of war's dehumanizing effects.

Mailer's work reflects a bleak worldview, akin to 19th-century naturalism, where human dignity seems perpetually under threat. Despite the grimness, Mailer offers a glimmer of hope. He suggests that even in this harsh reality, individuals can find some semblance of meaning and self-worth, albeit diminished and perhaps out of step with the American ideal.

James Jones' From Here to Eternity (1951) takes a more straightforward approach compared to Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead. Both novels are influenced by naturalism, a literary style that focuses on the harsh realities of life. Jones' story unfolds in Hawaii on the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack, following the lives of soldiers stationed there.

The protagonist Private Prewitt faces an inescapable destiny. Despite portraying the looming destruction of war, similar to Mailer, Jones doesn't paint a completely bleak picture. He suggests, like Mailer, that even under such circumstances, the possibility of maintaining human dignity remains.

Joseph Heller's Catch-22 (1961) stands out as a major work of World War II literature, with a unique perspective. Published during the Vietnam War escalation, Heller's darkly humorous novel uses satire to expose the absurdity of war. The story follows bombardier Yossarian, who desperately seeks a way out of combat. The central irony, the "Catch-22", is that claiming insanity to avoid flying missions requires sanity to make the claim, trapping Yossarian in a no-win situation.

Heller's masterpiece critiques the oppressive nature of military bureaucracy, highlighting the powerlessness of individuals within a system that treats them like replaceable parts. The novel's enduring relevance lies in its portrayal of war's inherent absurdity, applicable not just to World War II but to later conflicts as well. Some argue its influence extends to Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse-Five" and the dark humor of the Korean War film and TV series "M*A*S*H".

Tim O'Brien's novel The Things They Carried (1990) follows in the footsteps of Catch-22 by highlighting the absurdity of the Vietnam War. It goes beyond portraying the war's nonsensical aspects and reflects a postmodern approach by blending fact and fiction, making it unclear what's real and what's imagined. The narrator, who shares the author's name, is both a real person and a character in the story. The book combines memoir and short stories, jumping between realistic events and fantastical elements.

Similar to Catch-22, the novel hinges on a major paradox, a truth that seems illogical. Facing the draft, the narrator contemplates fleeing to Canada but ultimately feels too afraid to follow his conscience. He admits his "conscience told me to run" but a powerful, illogical force compelled him towards war. Shame, he explains foolishly, was the deciding factor. Unable to tolerate potential disappointment from his loved ones, he chooses to fight. Interestingly, the real Tim O'Brien, a war critic, portrays himself as a coward for not following his conscience and escaping to Canada. American society in the 1950s seemed obsessed with uniformity. Identical houses sprouted up in new suburbs, creating a monotonous landscape. Companies dictated how employees should dress and behave, promoting conformity in the workplace as well. Television and movies, forms of mass media, were seen by many as tools to create a shallow, homogenous culture that stifled creativity and individuality.

But beneath the surface, America remained a nation of rebels and diverse viewpoints. It wasn't long before those who didn't fit the mold started to push back. One of the first was Holden Caulfield, the main character in J.D. Salinger's 1951 novel Catcher in the Rye. Holden finds the wealthy lifestyle of post-war America meaningless and "phony", as he puts it. Holden became a template for a generation of

disillusioned outsiders who criticized American popular culture in their own unique ways and voices. These characters, including Holden himself, can be seen as following in the footsteps of Huckleberry Finn, who ultimately rejects societal norms and chooses freedom, whether literally or figuratively.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a group of young writers emerged, known as the Beats. These writers, including poets like Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and novelists like Jack Kerouac and Ken Kesey, aimed to revolutionize both American society and literature. Their approach involved experimentation with both the content and form of their work. Beat poetry tackled deeply personal and often painful themes. It rejected the rigid structures of traditional poetry, favoring rawness and emotional intensity. A prime example is Allen Ginsberg's poem “Howl” (1956), which throws out rhyme, rhythm, and formal language in favor of raw, unfiltered emotion. This focus on personal experience in Beat poetry influenced, and was influenced by, the confessional poetry movement exemplified by Robert Lowell's “Life Studies” (1959) and later works by Sylvia Plath. Similarly, Jack Kerouac's novel “On the Road” (1957) defied traditional plot structure. Instead, it unfolds as a free-flowing journey, blurring the lines between fiction and autobiography.

A new wave of regional literature emerged in the 1950s and early 1960s, perhaps as a counterpoint to the homogenized image of America presented in mainstream media. Southern writers, in particular, were determined to portray the South's unique character and its significant differences from the rest of the nation.

Authors like Eudora Welty, Flannery O'Connor, and Carson McCullers crafted stories featuring unconventional, even bizarre characters who either actively resisted or were ostracized by mainstream society. Flannery O'Connor's work, for example, often carries an underlying theme of rejecting the values of the middle class, including its watered-down version of Christianity, which she saw as lacking true spiritual depth.

Following World War II, a new generation of Western writers emerged. Larry McMurtry challenged the romanticized image of the West and the heroic cowboy archetype. His teacher, Wallace Stegner, focused on the unique character-building potential of the Western wilderness.

Following the war, Jewish literature flourished. Writers like Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Philip Roth explored the experiences of Jews living in urban North America. Their work delved into two central themes:

The challenges and complexities of Jewish culture blending with the broader American melting pot, often leading to a loss of distinct cultural identity. The feeling of being different and ostracized from mainstream society due to one's Jewish heritage. Philip Roth's controversial novel Portnoy's Complaint (1969) exemplifies these themes. This darkly comedic exploration of repressed sexuality drew criticism for its portrayal of the protagonist's mother, seen by some as a stereotypical overbearing Jewish figure. However, the novel's brilliance lies in its frank examination of these sensitive issues.

World War II significantly shaped the way African Americans viewed their place in America. Many Black soldiers faced discrimination within the military, despite fighting for a supposedly democratic nation. Some, however, experienced a stark

contrast in France, where they were treated with equality and even exoticism. This wartime freedom made returning to segregated America even more jarring.

The anger and disillusionment sparked by these experiences fueled a surge of powerful African American literature in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the most notable works is Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man (1952), a harrowing depiction of a Black man's disillusionment as he confronts the harsh realities of American racism.

The blossoming Civil Rights Movement further ignited a literary explosion. A diverse range of African American writers emerged, including Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Malcolm X, Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou, and Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones). Through autobiographies and fiction, these authors explored the contradictions and complexities of the African American experience, highlighting the injustices and tragedies they faced.

1.4. American post-war theater

While European theaters were grappling with rebuilding after the devastation of World War II, American theater experienced a remarkable flourishing. Unlike Europe, Broadway, the heart of American theater, remained largely unscathed by the war. However, despite this advantage, American plays hadn't produced anything truly significant since the mid-1930s, with a few exceptions like Thornton Wilder's works.

The post-war revitalization of American theater stemmed from a powerful collaboration. Visionary directors and theater professionals joined forces with two rising playwrights: Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) and Arthur Miller (1915-2005). These playwrights brought innovative styles (dramaturgy) to their work, capturing the hopes and anxieties of a nation emerging from a global conflict.

Theatrical innovation extended beyond playwriting in the post-war period. Stage designer Jo Mielziner (1901-1976) pioneered a new approach called “expressive” or “subjective” stage realism. This style blurred the lines between past and present, internal and external spaces, creating a more poetic and fluid experience for the audience.

Mielziner's designs, combined with the directing of Elia Kazan (1909-2003), brought plays like Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) and Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman (1949) to life. These productions used the stage to explore the shifting landscapes of memory and desire. The external world, while materially real, also felt dreamlike and fleeting.

These plays demanded a new level of complexity from actors. Continuing the legacy of Konstantin Stanislavsky's psychological approach, the Actors Studio (founded in 1947) championed “method acting”. This technique emphasized deep character development, focusing on the actors' understanding of their characters' motivations, intentions, and unspoken thoughts. This allowed them to deliver performances rich with psychological depth.

The new emphasis on psychological realism in acting, championed by the Actors Studio and embodied by Marlon Brando's performances, became the dominant style in American acting throughout the 1950s.

While Broadway remained a central stage for this revitalized American theater, its previously unchallenged position faced competition in the post-war years. To broaden theatrical experiences beyond New York City, several regional theaters emerged. These theaters had resident acting companies and presented full seasons of plays. Notable examples include the Alley Theatre in Houston (founded 1947), Arena Stage in Washington D.C. (1950), and the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis (1963).

Within New York itself, rising production costs on Broadway led to a shift towards a more conservative selection of plays. This, in turn, spurred the rise of off-Broadway theaters, offering a platform for more experimental and diverse productions.

Similar to the Little Theater Movement of the early 20th century, off-Broadway theater emerged as an alternative scene. These theaters were located outside the main commercial theater district in smaller venues, typically seating between 100 and 499 people. This allowed them to stage plays deemed too risky or unconventional for larger Broadway houses.

Off-Broadway theater became a vital platform for European playwrights like Samuel Beckett and Eugène Ionesco, whose works received their first New York productions in these spaces. The scene also nurtured new American playwrights like Edward Albee.

Furthermore, off-Broadway played a crucial role in reviving interest in established American playwrights. The 1956 production of Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh by Circle in the Square, a prominent off-Broadway theater, sparked renewed interest in O'Neill's work. This success paved the way for the Broadway debut of his acclaimed play Long Day's Journey into Night later that same year.

By the late 1950s, even off-Broadway theaters faced rising production costs, making them less willing to take risks on experimental plays or unestablished writers. They increasingly focused on productions with a guaranteed commercial appeal.

In response to this shift, a new wave of theaters emerged: off-off-Broadway. These shoestring operations were housed in unconventional spaces like coffeehouses, churches, and basements. Despite their modest means, they provided a crucial platform for a new generation of playwrights with a strong anti-establishment spirit and a passion for experimentation.

Throughout the 1960s, off-off-Broadway venues like Caffe Cino (1958), La MaMa ETC (1961), and Judson Poets' Theater (1961) launched the careers of influential contemporary playwrights like Maria Irene Fornes and Sam Shepard. The plays produced in these spaces were often quite radical, reflecting the broader spirit of experimentation in 1960s American theater.

For example, under Joseph Chaikin's leadership, the Open Theater rejected the psychological realism of method acting in favor of a more improvisational, transformative approach. Similarly, communal theater groups like the Living Theater (originally founded off-Broadway in 1947) explored a highly participatory style, blurring the lines between performers and audience.

The off-off-Broadway scene wasn't just about artistic innovation. Many theater groups actively addressed social issues through their work. Groups like the Free

Southern Theater, the Bread and Puppet Theater, and El Teatro Campesino employed a variety of techniques to deliver their messages. These techniques included:

Agitprop: A form of theater with a strong political or social message, often presented in a confrontational way.

Puppetry: Using puppets as characters allowed for a more accessible and sometimes allegorical way to explore social issues.

Populist theater traditions: Drawing on popular performance styles to connect with a wider audience and raise awareness about social problems. These theater groups tackled critical issues of the time, including the Civil Rights Movement, the plight of migrant farmworkers, and the Vietnam War.

The period between 1945 and 1970 witnessed a significant rise in contemporary African American drama. While theater played a central role in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s, with figures like Langston Hughes, and the Federal Theatre Project provided opportunities for Black theater professionals, it wasn't until Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun (1959) that African American drama truly captured mainstream attention.

This powerful play, a product of the Civil Rights Movement, also foreshadowed the more radical movements of the 1960s. African American theater of that decade reflected a growing sense of militancy. Playwrights like Amiri Baraka explored themes of separatism and revolution in their works. Baraka was also instrumental in establishing the Black Arts Repertory Theatre in Harlem, a key player in the Black Arts Movement.

These playwrights, along with others from the 1950s and 60s, paved the way for future generations of acclaimed African American dramatists such as Ntozake Shange, August Wilson, and Suzan-Lori Parks.

1.5. American anti-war novel

Founded by the Communist Party (CPUSA) in 1933: The ALF aimed to fight fascism abroad and movements within the US that resembled fascism. Despite its communist roots, the ALF attracted a wide range of people concerned about fascism, including non-radicals and liberals. By the late 1930s, the ALF coordinated anti-fascist activities for over 1,000 organizations representing millions. This magazine covered international events like the rise of fascism in Europe and Japanese aggression in Asia. Fight also addressed domestic issues championed by the left, such as worker rights, social welfare programs, racial equality, and anti-militarism. Langston Hughes' story “Conversation” doesn't explicitly mention fascism but criticizes racism within the US, highlighting the broader fight against oppression.

While America's entry into World War II undoubtedly solidified its opposition to fascism, the credit shouldn't solely go to military action. Antifascist groups and writers played a crucial, and often overlooked, role in shaping public opinion throughout the 1930s and 40s.

These antifascist forces understood that demonizing fascism required a dedicated effort. As a 1936 publication by the American League against War and Fascism put it,

victory against fascism hinged on which side mobilized public opinion more effectively.

The fight against fascism wasn't just about military might; it was a battle for hearts and minds. Culture, art, and literature all played a significant role in shaping people's values. Both before and after the attack on Pearl Harbor, artists, writers, and critics actively worked to cultivate an anti-fascist public consciousness.

Samuel Sillen, a prominent literary critic for the communist magazine “New Masses”, emphasized the importance of art and literature during wartime. He argued that the war wasn't just about military power, but also about fundamental values. Writers, according to Sillen, had a crucial role to play in defining those values.

Throughout the war and beyond, antifascist writers strategically positioned themselves within government agencies, cultural industries, unions, and political campaigns. Their tireless efforts to influence “basic values” had a significant impact on how Americans understood and responded to fascism.

Norman Corwin's “On a Note of Triumph” wasn't just a radio program; it was a multimedia event celebrating the Allied victory in Europe and the defeat of Nazi Germany. Aired in 1945 to coincide with the German surrender, the program embodied the spirit of antifascist internationalism that had united nations against fascism.

The elaborate production reflected the significance of the occasion. Anticipating the victory, CBS commissioned Corwin to write the poem months in advance. The final one-hour program featured a captivating soundscape. Martin Gable served as the main narrator, his voice woven into a rich tapestry of music by Bernard Herrmann (later known for his scores in Alfred Hitchcock films). Live sound effects added realism, while interludes featuring folk music by Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger further emphasized the collective human experience of the war. Actors also brought to life the voices of ordinary people, their everyday speech grounding the program in the human cost of the struggle against fascism.

The program's wide reach and format are particularly interesting. Airing on prime-time national radio, “On a Note of Triumph” showcased the power of poetry as a medium for conveying a powerful message. This choice speaks volumes about the cultural landscape of the 1940s, when radio held a central place in American life and artistic expression thrived within the broadcast format.

In conclusion, “On a Note of Triumph” was more than just a celebratory broadcast. It was a meticulously crafted artistic achievement that combined various elements – poetry, music, sound effects, and diverse voices – to commemorate a historic victory and celebrate the global fight against fascism.

American anti-fascist writers during World War II differed from their European and Asian counterparts in their preference for non-fiction. While fiction exploring the war existed, it wasn't nearly as popular as real-life accounts.

There were a few reasons for this. Firstly, as a reviewer in "The New Masses" noted in 1943, first-hand narratives from the war front were readily available and offered a level of authenticity that fiction couldn't compete with. During a fight for survival, readers craved the "photographic truth" more than fictionalized stories.

Secondly, the dominant trend among mid-century leftist writers was realism. This led to a preference for travelogues, reportage (firsthand reports on events), and other non-fiction forms that documented the “People's War” – a term emphasizing the collective struggle against fascism. These works, some adapted for radio broadcasts, included titles like William Shirer's “Berlin Diary” and John Roy Carlson's “Under Cover”.

It should be noted that fiction and poetry weren't entirely absent: Upton Sinclair's novel “Wide Is the Gate”, Norman Corwin's radio plays (discussed earlier), and Lillian Hellman's play “The Searching Wind”. There were also works by African American writers like the journal "Negro Story" and Chester Himes' novel “If He Hollers Let Him Go”, which offered a more critical perspective on the war experience.

Earlier works like Norman Corwin's radio program “On a Note of Triumph” presented a sanitized, unified vision of the war effort. Post-war novels addressed the experiences Corwin ignored. These stories focused on American GIs who weren't necessarily anti-fascist, harboring prejudices like racism and anti-Semitism. The focus shifted from external enemies (Germans and Japanese) to American military leadership. These officers were often depicted as embodying the very things the war was fought against – militarism, racism, classism, and anti-Semitism. Novels like Norman Mailer's “The Naked and the Dead” used allegory to explore this theme. The isolated platoon becomes a microcosm of a fascist state, with Hearn representing liberalism and Croft the brutal fascist. This shift in focus reflected a growing concern that America itself might adopt fascist tendencies after the war's victory.

Works by Richard Wright (“Native Son”), Nelson Algren (“Never Come Morning”), and others from the 1940s addressed the threat of fascism within the US, highlighting issues like racism and social injustice. Plays like “On Whitman Avenue” and “Deep Are the Roots” exposed the hypocrisy of fighting fascism abroad while African American veterans faced racism at home. Theodore Ward's “Our Lan” used the past (betrayal of African Americans after the Civil War) to shed light on contemporary struggles. Ann Petry's “The Street” and Chester Himes' “If He Hollers Let Him Go” added crucial black perspectives on the fight against oppression. Graphic novels like Miné Okubo's “Citizen 13660” and works by Toshio Mori explored the injustice faced by Japanese Americans during the war, challenging the idea of a “just” Allied cause.

1.6. English philosophical novel

While the prevailing theatrical and literary trends explored social and spiritual anxieties through various lenses – restlessness, wry humor, anger, and mockery – William Golding emerged as a distinct voice. His novels challenged the assumptions of modernity by examining human nature through the lens of original sin. Golding, a self-proclaimed moralist, firmly believed in the novel's capacity to confront readers with the realities of their own mortality and inherent flaws. His work explicitly addressed human sinfulness, arguing that “man is sick, not exceptional man, but average man”.

Golding's most renowned work, Lord of the Flies, stands in stark contrast to the conventional boys' adventure story. Here, the idyllic trope of shipwrecked youngsters triumphing through virtue is shattered. Golding deliberately subverts the model established by R. M. Ballantyne's Victorian tale, The Coral Island.

In Lord of the Flies, a group of schoolboys stranded on an island descend into savagery. Their initial attempts to maintain order and civilization crumble under the corrupting influence of a tyrannical leader. The narrative unfolds as the boys succumb to violence, hunting, and brutal rituals.

In his subsequent novel, The Inheritors (1955), Golding ventures further, exploring the dawn of humanity. The narrative delves into the time when Homo sapiens, our evolutionary ancestors, are replacing Neanderthals.

Golding portrays the Neanderthals, referred to simply as “the people”, as possessing a strong connection to their senses but lacking the capacity for complex thought or symbolic expression through art or rituals. They exhibit a basic respect for life, refraining from killing for sustenance, and live cooperatively.

The reader initially encounters a surprising reversal of expectations. The “new men”, initially presented as humanity's evolutionary advancement, are ultimately revealed as the ones who bring about the demise of the Neanderthals. This challenges the common assumption that our primitive predecessors were brutish and violent.

In contrast, the “new men” demonstrate the ability for abstract thought, self-awareness, and even self-deception. Their relationship with the Neanderthals mirrors the dichotomy between the “fallen” and the “innocent”. Golding himself considered The Inheritors to be his finest work. The novel's unique strength lies in its imaginative and linguistic exploration of Neanderthal consciousness.

William Golding's literary contributions extend beyond Lord of the Flies. He authored a play, The Brass Butterfly (1958), and a short story collection, The Scorpion God (1971). His later novels include The Pyramid (1967), Darkness Visible (1979), and Rites of Passage (1980). While his works may exhibit limitations in detailed character psychology and social realism, they are distinguished by a meticulous structural design and a powerful blend of poetic insight and moral clarity. Golding's thematic exploration often drew upon theological motifs.

In contrast, Muriel Spark, a convert to Catholicism, credited her faith with providing a framework for understanding life's complexities. She described Catholicism as offering "a norm from which one can depart" and a means to achieve artistic control over her material.

Both Golding and Spark engaged in a form of literary dialogue. Two of Golding's novels feature islands reminiscent of those found in works by Robert Louis Stevenson and Daniel Defoe. Similarly, Spark's Robinson (1958) clearly echoes Defoe's Robinson Crusoe. Spark's novel presents a complex protagonist in Robinson, a figure who blends elements of both Crusoe and Prospero from Shakespeare's The Tempest. He acts as a host, healer, and leader to three plane crash survivors stranded on his island. Both Robinson and the island itself take on mythic dimensions. The story is narrated by January Marlow, one of the survivors. Her narrative reveals how Robinson and the other characters, including an orphaned boy named Miguel, force her to

confront her own past experiences and re-evaluate them on a personal and psychological level.

Iris Murdoch is a distinguished philosopher whose novels explore themes of personal growth and self-discovery. Her protagonists often embark on journeys towards a state of liberation achieved through accepting life's inherent uncertainty and richness. However, her characters' experiences may lack the compelling intensity that propels a truly dramatic narrative. Under the Net (1954) features John Donoghue, a witty and resourceful Irishman, navigating a series of comical mishaps. While some readers might find the humor reminiscent of Doris Lessing's work (known for its seriousness) or even excessive in its detail compared to Lawrence Durrell's lush descriptions, Murdoch's comedic talents are undeniable. However, in The Bell (1958), Murdoch's attempt to sustain a full-length novel based on an elaborate practical joke results in a somewhat contrived plot. Despite her inventiveness and masterful descriptions of settings and actions, her meticulously crafted scenarios can feel overly complex and impede the narrative flow.

Iris Murdoch's early work was heavily influenced by French existentialism. This is evident in the central conflict of her writing: the struggle between the inherent chaos of existence and the individual's attempt to impose order on their inner world, thereby finding meaning and dignity in life.

In the 1960s, Murdoch's philosophical perspective shifted. She began to engage with Plato's ideas and Christian ethics. However, the core theme remained: the human challenge of confronting the absurdity of existence. Her preferred approach, though, evolved from the existentialist focus on individual creation of meaning to a more Stoic ideal – the courageous acceptance and navigation of life's inherent chaos.

French existentialism shaped her early work, focusing on the individual's struggle to find meaning in a chaotic world. Later, Plato and Christianity influenced her, but the core theme persisted. Murdoch ultimately favored a Stoic approach – bravely facing the chaos of existence rather than solely relying on individual meaning-making.

1.7. American women's novel

Betty Friedan's influential book, The Feminine Mystique (1963), is considered a landmark that ushered in the second wave of feminism.

The book opens by highlighting a deep, unspoken discontent brewing within American women during the mid-20th century. Friedan describes this as a yearning for something beyond the idealized image of femininity that confined women to domestic routines. She paints a picture of suburban housewives, amidst the seemingly mundane tasks of making beds and running errands, grappling with a silent question: "Is this all there is?"

Friedan argues that this dissatisfaction stemmed from societal pressure to conform to an unrealistic and ultimately unfulfilling definition of womanhood. She points to World War II as a catalyst. Many women who entered the workforce during the war experienced the liberation and fulfillment of jobs previously unavailable to them. However, the post-war period forced these women back into the restrictive mold of the 1950s housewife, leading to a profound sense of loss and a desire for more.

The impact of Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique wasn't limited to sparking a feminist movement. It also significantly influenced the literary world. Friedan's work paved the way for a surge in feminist writing, with authors like Erica Jong, Barbara Kingsolver, and Alice Walker exploring themes of female empowerment and social justice.

More importantly, Friedan's book challenged the established canon of American literature, a collection of works deemed most important by academics and critics. Previously, works by women were largely excluded from the canon, seen as inferior or outside the mainstream. However, as literary criticism evolved with a more feminist perspective, the canon began to be reassessed. This led to the inclusion of female writers like Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, and Zora Neale Hurston. Their works were incorporated into anthologies, studied in classrooms, and analyzed by scholars, finally receiving the recognition they deserved.

The inclusion of women writers in the American literary canon wasn't the only transformation. From the 1970s onwards, the canon began to embrace multicultural voices. Anthologies started featuring works like Native American myths and poetry, writings by early Spanish settlers, and stories of Chinese railroad workers.

This broadening of the canon led publishers to take a chance on Latino and Asian American authors. These writers offered fresh perspectives on the American dream, often shaped by their unique backgrounds. The story of Sandra Cisneros, author of The House on Mango Street (1984), exemplifies this shift. In a writing workshop, tasked with exploring the concept of “home”, Cisneros realized her experiences differed vastly from those of her classmates. For her, “home” was a collection of temporary apartments and finally, a modest house, the first her family owned. These experiences became the seed for her novel.

Other notable Latino/Latina writers like Julia Alvarez, Esmeralda Santiago, Luis Rodriguez, and Gary Soto enriched American literature not only with new themes but also with fresh linguistic styles. Similarly, Asian American and Indian American authors such as Amy Tan, Maxine Hong Kingston, Anita Desai, and Jhumpa Lahiri brought their unique perspectives to bear. Their stories often explored the clash between the often-rigid traditions of their families' cultures and the relative freedom of American society.

Toni Morrison emerges as a towering figure in African American literature during a period of exploration and rediscovery. While many Black writers grappled with expressing their experiences of contemporary racism, Morrison also delved deeply into their cultural roots. Her works transcend the boundaries of a single genre, becoming powerful explorations of identity, memory, and the enduring legacy of the past.

A core element of Morrison's literary genius lies in her mastery of language. In novels like “The Bluest Eye”, “Beloved”, and “Paradise”, language isn't merely a tool for communication; it becomes a foundation for identity and a bridge to ancestral memory. Morrison's concept of language encompasses everyday speech, but it also incorporates the rich tapestry of cultural symbols, forgotten names, spirituals sung by enslaved people, and even the captivating myths of Africa. These diverse elements weave together to form a unique linguistic landscape where characters embark on

journeys of self-discovery. The act of uncovering these hidden narratives is particularly significant in Morrison's work. As characters unearth the forgotten stories of their ancestors, they gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their place in the world. This process of rediscovery isn't just about knowledge; it empowers them and creates a sense of obligation to preserve their cultural heritage.

One of Morrison's most acclaimed works, “Song of Solomon”, exemplifies the complex relationship between the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts Movement. The protagonist, Milkman Dead, embarks on a quest to find gold, but this journey becomes intertwined with a yearning to reconnect with his lost African family history. Milkman's search for his roots leads him down a path of self-discovery, but it also creates a tragic rift with his friend Guitar. Guitar, fueled by rage and despair, embodies the ideology of the Black Arts Movement. He misinterprets Milkman's actions and joins a militant group, the Seven Days, who advocate for violent retribution against whites for the historical injustices suffered by African Americans. Guitar's path stands in stark contrast to the vision offered by Milkman's sister, Pilate. She establishes a matrilineal community – a haven for women who draw strength and support from their shared experiences. Pilate's peaceful alternative highlights the range of responses to racial tension within the Black community.

Through her masterful use of language, Toni Morrison carves out a space in American literature where African Americans reclaim their identities and confront the complexities of their history. She doesn't shy away from the harsh realities of racism, but she also celebrates the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring power of cultural memory.

1.8. Science and social fiction

Literary and cultural historians describe science fiction (SF) as the premiere narrative form of modernity because authors working in this genre extrapolate from Enlightenment ideals and industrial practices to imagine how educated people using machines and other technologies might radically change the material world. The SF enables authors to dramatize widespread cultural hopes and fears about new technoscientific formations as they emerge at specific historical moments.

The history of SF is very much bound up with the history of modern technoscientific development and the proliferation of writing that accompanied it. By means of the first scientific journals, scholars associated with the scientific academies of seventeenth-century France and Great Britain disseminated new ideas about the quantifiable nature of the material world and the importance of human agents within that world. By the eighteenth century such ideas had become central to the philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant and David Hume and the socio-political treatises of Adam Smith and Voltaire.

Mary Shelley drew upon her reading in pre-Darwinian evolutionary theory and her experience with public demonstrations of galvanism to create Frankenstein, which follows the tragic adventures of an isolated young scientist who uses electricity in a misguided attempt to create a new race of beings that will worship him. Despite their apparent differences, Voltaire and Shelley’s stories both insist that science can yield

great rewards as long as it is practiced according to the established methods of the scientific community. They also mark the emergence of SF's two oldest archetypes: the heroic scientistexplorer who shares knowledge with his intellectual brethren and the mad scientist who makes disastrous decisions that wreak havoc.

The next generation of speculative fiction writers turned their attention to what would become the central interest of SF: the creation of machines that could transform both the material and social worlds. This new interest emerged at the height of the Industrial Revolution, when steam-powered technologies enabled new modes of locomotion and new methods of production. These developments fostered the proliferation of new trade routes, factories, and urban spaces. They also fostered the rise of a new professional: the engineer.

New technologies and professions were central to the speculative stories that authors on both sides of the Atlantic published in the nineteenth century. These authors conveyed their ideas about the future of industrial society by updating older fantastic narrative traditions. The European leaders of this experiment were Jules Verne and H.G. Wells. Like Voltaire before him, Verne used the extraordinary voyage to spark a sense of wonder in readers regarding the marvels of the physical universe. However, he updated this story type in 1867's From the Earth to the Moon, 1871's A Journey to the Center of the Earth, and 1872's Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea by extrapolating from contemporary transportation technologies to show how humans (rather than aliens) might travel to exotic locales on the Earth and amongst the stars. In Great Britain, Wells used the future war story – a narrative form often employed by government officials to argue for increased spending on war technologies – to show how submarines, airplanes, and bombs might herald the end of war altogether. This is particularly evident in 1903's "The Last Ironclads," 1908's The War in the Air, and 1914's The World Set Free, where warring nation-states destroy themselves by underestimating new military technologies, thereby paving the way for the emergence of peaceful, scientifically managed global civilizations. In the stories of both Verne and Wells, the success of new technocultural endeavors depends on the action of a new technocultural hero: the creative engineer who works for the good of all people, rather than the benefit of any individual person, business, or nation.

The first four decades of the twentieth century marked the consolidation of engineering as the premiere profession of the modern era. They also marked the height of excitement about engineering in the public imagination, especially as it was expressed in the philosophy of technocracy, a pseudo-populist movement that emerged in reaction to the Great Depression and that, at its height, boasted over half a million followers. Led by engineer Howard Scott and the professors of Columbia University's Industrial Engineering department, technocrats advocated the creation of a scientifically educated and technically skilled populace whose best and brightest would naturally rise to the top.

Technocratic ideals also permeated pulp-era thought-variant stories, which were driven by speculative ideas rather than gadgets. This is particularly apparent in Stanley G. Weinbaum's The Adaptive Ultimate, which updated the Frankenstein narrative for the modern scientific era. Weinbaum's 1935 story follows the adventures of two

scientists who develop a serum based on insect hormones that enables wounded organisms to heal themselves. After serious ethical debate, the overly enthusiastic scientists decide to skip standard testing protocols and inject the serum into a dying young woman. When she turns into an amoral creature bent on conquering the world, Weinbaum's scientists recognize that they cannot simply, as Victor Frankenstein did, reject their creation. Instead, they take responsibility for their actions and contain the threat of the young woman, thereby transforming themselves from mad to heroic scientists. The principles of technocracy were also fundamental to John W. Campbell's 1939 Forgetfulness, which takes place on a far-future Earth where humans live in modest glass domes situated on the outskirts of ruined megacities. At the end of the story readers learn that these humans have not lost control of science and technology, but have actively chosen telepathic over technoscientific ways of being to avoid repeating their war-torn history. Thus Campbell's protagonists apply engineering techniques to the problem of human history and gain control over evolution itself.

The middle decades of the twentieth century seemed to epitomize the technocratic ideals of the pulp-era SF community. The new connections forged with industry and government during World War II led to a period of record growth for American science in the Cold War era. Much of this growth occurred in the two areas of research seen as key to national defense: atomic energy and space exploration. Much like science, SF experienced a Golden Age in the 1940s and 1950s. Prior to World War II, SF authors were often dismissed for writing about impossible sciences and technologies. Afterward, they were hailed as visionary prophets and invited to consult with entertainment, industry, and government leaders alike. This period also marked the appearance of the first SF anthologies, the beginning of the SF paperback novel trade, and the explosion of SF storytelling across radio, film, and television.

While Campbell's editorial vision dominated SF for years to come, two other editors made equally lasting contributions to the development of the genre: Anthony Boucher, who co-founded the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction in 1949, and H.L. Gold, who launched Galaxy Science Fiction in 1950.

The new story types that proliferated throughout this period underscore the literary and cultural maturity of Golden Age SF. This is particularly evident in the future histories of Robert Heinlein and Isaac Asimov. Heinlein's future history stories (originally published in Astounding between 1930 and 1960, then reprinted in The Past Through Tomorrow in 1967) tell the tale of a determined humanity that automates travel on Earth and then, over the course of the next three millennia, goes on to colonize the stars. Meanwhile, Asimov's future history sequence (including the stories collected in 1950's I, Robot, the Robot novels published between 1947 and 1958) predicts that humans' robotic creations will eventually become their caretakers, fostering the flame of civilization in even the darkest of times.

While Heinlein and Asimov used future histories to celebrate technocratic ideals, other Golden Age authors used other SF story forms to critically assess the relations of science, technology, and society. The most significant of these was the nuclear-war narrative. In Judith Merril's 1950 novel Shadow on the Hearth, Walter Miller's 1960 novel A Canticle for Leibowitz, and Nevil Shute's 1957 novel On the Beach, nuclear

war is not – as popular thinking then held – something that can be either limited or won. Instead, even the most minor atomic explosions reverberate through space and time, destroying families, plunging nations into savagery, and wiping out humanity altogether. And yet short stories such as Fritz Leiber's 1949 "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes" and Ann Warren Griffith's 1953 "Captive Audience," as well as Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth's 1953 novel The Space Merchants, turn out to be almost as frightening as their atomic-themed counterparts.

Both science and SF developed in new directions in the 1960s and 1970s. The initial challenge to speculative writing in this period came from a group of transatlantic authors and editors associated with what would eventually be called New Wave SF. The New Wave movement coalesced around Michael Moorcock's New Worlds magazine in Great Britain in the mid-1960s and debuted in the U.S. with the publication of Harlan Ellison's Dangerous Visions anthology in 1967 and Judith Merril's England Swings SF anthology in 1968. New Wave authors maintained that the characters, story types, and technocratic ideals of earlier SF were no longer adequate for dramatizing life in the modern world. As such, it was necessary to make SF new by turning from the hard to the soft sciences and exchanging stories about outer space for those focusing on the inner spaces of individuals and their societies. Other challenges came from the scores of new women writers who joined SF during this period. Feminist author-critics Joanna Russ, Pamela Sargent, and Samuel R. Delany all readily acknowledged that women had always written speculative fiction. But they also maintained that even the best SF remained trapped in "galactic suburbia": an imaginary space of dazzling technoscientific extrapolation where, oddly enough, social relations still looked like those of 1950s middle-class America. Accordingly, feminist writers called for their comrades to rethink their aesthetic practices and fulfill the Campbellian ideals of good SF by writing fiction that complicated mainstream notions about the future of scientific, social, and sexual relations.

Although they sometimes differed in their ideas about the relations of modern SF to its generic traditions, both New Wave and feminist SF authors used their chosen genre to explore how humans might grapple with alienation from themselves and their worlds. This is particularly apparent in the natural and urban disaster novels of British New Wave author J.G. Ballard. Ballard's 1962 novel The Drowned World imagines that humans might greet apocalypse (caused, in this case, by solar radiation that transforms Europe and North America into boiling lagoons) as an opportunity to give up technoscientific mastery and embrace devolution. Much like Ballard, American author Harlan Ellison used the setting of a radically transformed world to explore the inner space of individuals and their societies. This is particularly apparent in Ellison's infamous 1967 short story "A Boy and His Dog," which explores the impact of nuclear war on the nuclear family. In its broad outline, Ellison's story seems much like the conventional Golden Age nuclear-war narrative, but Ellison takes his critique in surprising new directions, insisting that the instigators of war are not impersonal bureaucrats, but hypocritical fathers whose adherence to Cold War sociopolitical ideals decimates the land and drives their children to rape, murder, and cannibalism.

Feminist SF authors of the 1960s and 1970s tended to be more optimistic about the future than their New Wave counterparts. This is apparent in Ursula K. Le Guin's 1969 novel The Left Hand of Darkness, which uses anthropology, sociology, and psychology to demonstrate how androgynous cultures might distribute childbearing responsibilities and thus power relations more equitably than cultures grounded in sexual division. It is even more evident in Marge Piercy's 1976 Woman on the Edge of Time and Joanna Russ's 1975 The Female Man, which illustrate how reproductive technosciences might reform social relations among men and women.

New Wave and feminist ideas are still central to SF, but in recent decades the genre has evolved in response to two new technocultural events: the massive expansion of information technologies and the emergence of a transnational economic system supported by these technologies. The premiere narrative form of the information age has no doubt been cyberpunk, the stylish mode of SF storytelling that merges strong interest in cybernetics and biotechnology with generally left-wing or libertarian politics and the do-it-yourself attitude of the early punk rock scene. The term "cyberpunk" was coined by SF author Bruce Bethke in his 1983 story of the same name, but was immediately taken up by editor Gardner Dozois to describe much of the fiction he was publishing in Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine at that time. Firstgeneration cyberpunk fiction, including William Gibson's celebrated 1984 novel Neuromancer and the short stories collected in Bruce Sterling's 1986 Mirrorshades anthology, drew energy from the technocultural events of its time, providing SF with new character types and settings. In cyberpunk, creative engineers and faithful robots give way to amoral but usually good-hearted hackers and willful but usually benign artificial intelligences, all of whom struggle to survive and even transcend the conditions of their existence as tools of a transnational economy. Much of this drama takes place in cyberspace, a sphere of artificial or virtual reality where human and machine intelligences can interact with one another and with the flows of information that comprise modern capitalist practice itself.

1.9. Postmodern tendencies in contemporary English literature

Unlike the US, where Postmodernism found enthusiastic proponents, Britain witnessed a more skeptical approach. This is evident in the titles mentioned, such as "The Illusions of Postmodernism" and "Against Postmodernism", which directly challenge the movement's core tenets. A key distinction is drawn between the development of Postmodernism in the US and its arrival in Britain. In the US, Postmodernist writers like Pynchon and Barthelme were literary pioneers actively rebelling against established styles. They were part of a movement that emerged organically from within American literature.

In contrast, Postmodernism arrived in Britain as a "pre-packaged phenomenon". British writers encountered it alongside a surge of complex European theory, receiving a fully formed movement from external sources. This suggests they weren't necessarily part of an organic development but rather adopting a pre-defined aesthetic. By the late 1970s, both Postmodernism and post-structuralism were established movements. Both

movements placed a high value on the act of writing itself, and British writers saw them as tools to challenge the existing literary establishment. Writers like Peter Ackroyd and Julian Barnes used French theory to criticize the insular nature and lack of self-awareness in post-war British literature.

Martin Amis and Salman Rushdie combined their own generational frustration with the exciting possibilities of diverse Pan-American literature. They declared existing literary conventions as dead and their own works as representing a new, truly international form of fiction.

While Postmodernism wasn't entirely new by this point, these British writers' pronouncements were still significant. It would have been unusual for them not to make a statement about their innovative approach. Unlike the enthusiastic embrace of earlier movements like Futurism, Postmodernism arrived in Britain with a well-developed theoretical framework already established. This might explain the lack of fervor compared to the excitement surrounding earlier avant-garde movements.

While London played a significant role in the development of Modernism, it wasn't truly a homegrown British movement. Literary critic Perry Anderson emphasizes this point, noting that Britain, a global economic and industrial power, surprisingly lacked a substantial Modernist movement of its own. Major figures like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound weren't even British. This limited engagement with Modernism casts a shadow over British Postmodernism, a movement defined in opposition to its predecessor. If Britain didn't fully experience Modernism, can it fully embrace Postmodernism?

While British writers adopt the movement's critique of the status quo, the established tradition of liberal humanist realism might simply continue unchallenged. This raises the question of whether British Postmodernism will be a transformative force or simply an overlay on existing literary practices.

Thinking of Postmodernism (and Modernism before it) as optional artistic choices creates a sense of irony. However, if we view them as unavoidable responses to a changing global economy, the situation becomes less ironic and more deterministic.

Literary critic Fredric Jameson is introduced here. His theory argues that both Modernism and Postmodernism are “cultural dominants” – dominant cultural movements that arise from specific economic systems. Jameson's concept is illustrated with the rise of Realism in Britain. This literary movement emerged alongside Britain's rise as an industrial and financial power, reflecting the social and economic realities of the time. Modernism, according to Jameson, arose as a complex reaction to the British Empire's system of monopoly capitalism. It was a movement that both critiqued and benefited from the dominant economic order. The US became the center of a new economic and cultural order, leading to the emergence of Postmodernism. This isn't to say that culture suddenly changed on a specific date, but rather that American dominance, particularly through its military-industrial complex and cultural products, established a new "cultural dominant."

The logic of Postmodernism, as influenced by the US, is seen as different from previous movements. There's a blurring of lines between commerce and art, with culture becoming more directly intertwined with economic forces. Jameson argues that

Modernism shattered the idea of art existing in a purely aesthetic space, separate from economic realities. This fragmentation impacted not just American culture but any culture significantly influenced by American products and ideas.

There are some consequences of this new cultural dominant on artistic forms, as outlined by Jameson. These include a loss of depth, a decline in emotional impact, a fragmented sense of self within the work, and a new focus on social spaces. Additionally, historical representation becomes a matter of "pastiche" – a collage of styles from the past rather than a genuine engagement with history.

British Postmodernism often displays a nostalgic yearning for a pre-modern, idyllic rural past. This can be seen as a uniquely "English" reaction to the homogenizing forces of global Postmodernity. However, this nostalgia is always tinged with irony.

Writers like Julian Barnes acknowledge the power of the pastoral ideal but recognize the impossibility of portraying it uncritically. They employ irony or justifications to avoid accusations of naive Romanticism.

Graham Swift navigates the theme of pastoral in two novels:

The novel "Waterland" echoes Thomas Hardy's critique of pastoral myths. Set in the bleak Norfolk Fens, a man-made landscape devoid of natural beauty, it serves as a "non-pastoral" that highlights the artificiality of the pastoral ideal. This "heterotopia" (a space that is neither fully urban nor rural) reflects a common strategy in contemporary fiction – avoiding the complexities of modern cities for a more manageable and relatable setting.

Swift reworks the structure of Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying" to tell a story of lost innocence. The "Garden of England" – the supposed idyllic hopfields of Kent – becomes a backdrop for a love story marred by compromise and disappointment. Authentic passion exists, but not within the confines of the traditional pastoral setting. The lovers' friend's unfulfilled desires are confined to the cramped space of a camper van traversing a post-war highway – a clear subversion of the pastoral ideal.

Modern British fiction tries to revive the pastoral style, but it doesn't quite measure up to J.G. Ballard's groundbreaking work, Crash (1973). Ballard's novel completely destroys the idea of a peaceful countryside. Instead, it presents a cold, modern world with remnants of nature like "an abandoned car lying in rust-stained grass" (implying a forgotten, decaying past). Ballard's world also lacks any sense of history or traditional British identity. It's like a blank slate dominated by concrete and steel.

The only escape from this emptiness is a strange mix of technology and sexuality. People get turned on by car crashes and mangled bodies, like a twisted, futuristic version of Romanticism. The novel even features a character, Vaughan, who seeks a car crash "apotheosis" with a movie star, Elizabeth Taylor, mirroring the influence of American pop culture.

Praised for its historical imitations, Possession reflects a trend in British postmodern fiction. These novels explore the connection between past writing styles and the current state of literature. But Possession goes beyond style. It's also about who gets to control the "treasures" of literature.

The story follows two English academics, Roland and Maud, researching Victorian poets. They face a villain: American money and "theory" (fancy ways of analyzing literature). Byatt seems to suggest that these American approaches are bad for literature, contrasting them with careful, detail-oriented English scholarship. This is shown through her incredible fake manuscripts by the Victorian poets.

In a classic romance twist, Maud is revealed to be a literal descendant of the poets, making her the rightful "possessor" of their legacy. This inheritance trumps any theoretical claims. It's a very "novelistic" solution, highlighting the ventriloquism (speaking through another voice) Byatt uses throughout the story. Possession ultimately argues that true understanding of the past comes through respecting tradition, not fancy theories or money.

The novel Flaubert's Parrot by Julian Barnes explores the concept of imitation (pastiche) through a character named Geoffrey Braithwaite. Braithwaite is obsessed with replicating the writing style of French author Flaubert, to an unhealthy degree. This obsession becomes a way for him to avoid dealing with the emotional pain of his wife's infidelity and suicide.

The novel also discusses the idea of the author "disappearing" from their work, a key concept in modernist literature. Flaubert is used as an example. While modernists saw this as a strength, Barnes suggests Braithwaite uses it as a way to deny his own problems.

Braithwaite fixates on famous Flaubert quotes about writing style, but the novel implies these are just a cover for his personal issues. In the postmodern world, there's no such thing as a truly “authentic” style. You can only borrow from others. Braithwaite, like a weak creature, hides behind the strong "shell" of Flaubert's writing.

Martin Amis is often seen as a leading British Postmodern writer, heavily influenced by American authors like Nabokov and Bellow. However, his portrayal of England is a strange mix.

On the surface, it's full of energy and exaggerations, reminiscent of Charles Dickens. Critic Iain Sinclair calls it “style journalism” – all about trends, slang, and a focus on decline. But beneath the surface, there's a very self-aware, "postmodern" twist. Amis, the author, seems to be constantly commenting on his own characters and stories, blurring the lines between reality and fiction (metafiction). The best example of this is Amis's characters, particularly John Self from Money. John is a caricature, an extreme version of a stereotypical yuppie obsessed with money and American culture. His “authentic” English counterpart (think pubs, gangsters, etc.) gets mocked and blown out of proportion by John's Americanized lifestyle. Amis suggests John is a fool, caught up in a shallow American dream. He's not really English, and the American dream he chases is a fake.

Martin Amis's writing is a complex mix of European and American influences. He uses fancy styles and borrows freely from pop culture, like many European writers. But he also injects American slang, violence, and vulgarity. A critic named Malcolm Bradbury even called Amis's writing “wildly creative, full of wordplay, and eager to absorb different cultures”. However, there's a deeper issue. Amis seems to be searching for something meaningful in his writing, a core value. He can't find it in Europe

(focusing on dark periods like Fascism and Communism) or America (which seems empty). So he turns to exaggerated stereotypes of England itself.

All the clever tricks with language and structure, along with his confident, macho style, are a cover-up. Despite all the flash, the only characters that really come alive in his work are those from the seedier side of English society, like characters from Charles Dickens' novels.

Unlike other postmodern writers, Ian McEwan focuses on specific moments in time that have a huge impact on his characters.

Most modernist writers believed that capturing a perfect, unfiltered moment was impossible. But McEwan excels at portraying these “fateful moments” – shocking, intense events that become turning points in his characters' lives:

- A child's disappearance (The Child in Time)
- Seeing mysterious black dogs (Black Dogs)
- A horrifying accident (Enduring Love)
- A young woman's rape (Atonement)

These events become almost permanent fixtures in the minds of the characters who witness them, transcending time itself. The characters often react in very different ways, with some seeking logical explanations and others feeling a more spiritual connection to the event. Even the main characters can be conflicted, struggling between reason and a deeper understanding.

While some characters doubt the meaning of these "fateful moments," the power of McEwan's writing makes them feel incredibly real and impactful. His flawless and objective prose captures these moments perfectly, even though they exist across multiple points in time and hold a complex meaning. McEwan takes a modernist idea by Charles Baudelaire and flips it on its head. Traditionally, the “now” was seen as fleeting and unimportant compared to eternal truths. But in McEwan's work, these intense moments combine both the fleeting present and a deeper, timeless significance. It's almost like McEwan is creating a literary version of quantum theory, where seemingly contradictory ideas can coexist.

Both Peter Ackroyd and Iain Sinclair explore the idea that places hold onto traces of the past. Ackroyd, in particular, focuses on London's rich and complex history. His nonfiction book, “London”, treats the city almost like a living thing that constantly changes but also carries the weight of its past. Ackroyd's novel “Hawksmoor” is a great example of this concept. The story follows two timelines: modern-day London and the city in the late 1600s. Critic Denis Donoghue argues that Ackroyd doesn't prioritize chronology. Instead, he connects events (real or fictional) based on their similarities, creating a web of connections across time.

The novel has a detective story framework, but the plot isn't the main focus. Instead, Ackroyd uses “folds in time” to reveal timeless elements: poverty, unsettling children's songs, and a sense of underlying evil. Ackroyd excels at imitating different historical writing styles. While the modern parts of the story might be frustrating, the pleasure of reading his well-done historical imitations (pastiche) makes up for it. These historical sections also connect authenticity and beauty to the past, particularly the ideas of the architect Dyer (a Satanist who rejects Enlightenment ideals). Overall,

Ackroyd's postmodern writing can be seen as a rejection of modernism and a return to a more mystical worldview. This, combined with the social climate of Thatcher's era, leads to a somewhat conservative view of England in some of his works (like “English Music” and “Albion”). In this view, England's character is fixed and unchanging, the poor are an inevitable part of society, and critical thinking is pointless.

Despite some surface similarities, Ackroyd and Sinclair's approaches to postmodernism are quite different. More conservative and nationalistic. His writing focuses on the past and rejects modern thought. He excels at historical imitation but can be repetitive and prioritize style over plot. He experiments with form and injects humor into his writing. His work is more complex and open to interpretation, fusing social commentary with historical and theoretical references.

Sinclair isn't interested in the sunshine and tourist attractions; his focus is on London's dark and hidden history, a past that seems to permeate the very bricks and mortar of the city. Like a detective scouring a crime scene, Sinclair explores forgotten corners, uncovering tales of infamous crimes like Jack the Ripper's murders, along with unsettling occurrences and abandoned places. Far from a dry historical account, Sinclair weaves these unearthed narratives with references from a rich tapestry of writers. He draws on both celebrated figures like Blake, Wilde, and Eliot, and lesser-known names. Even scientific minds like Stephen Hawking find their place in his analysis. These literary references aren't mere decoration; they function as cryptic clues, helping to unlock a deeper understanding of London's social fabric. A true enthusiast, Sinclair finds significance in everything he encounters. Chance occurrences, like graffiti on a wall, or seemingly random coincidences, all become pieces in his grand puzzle, hinting at a hidden meaning woven into the city's very existence. The book itself isn't concerned with presenting a polished, aesthetically pleasing narrative. Instead, it offers a fragmented view of London's dark history, as seen through the eyes of a passionate wanderer, a “flaneur” who tirelessly explores the city's streets. Sinclair doesn't shy away from the harsh realities of contemporary London either. Issues like gentrification and the growing homeless population become threads in his exploration, creating a complex and multifaceted portrait of London, encompassing both its past and present.

The unique voice of author Sinclair is likely due to his association with Granta Books, one of the few remaining independent publishers in Britain. It blames the decline of independent publishing for a perceived drop in British literary quality.

Traditionally, independent publishers focused on fostering good literature, even if it wasn't a guaranteed bestseller. Mergers and buyouts changed the game: Large media corporations bought many independent publishers in the 80s and 90s. These corporations prioritized big sales figures over artistic merit. This shift left less space for unconventional or thought-provoking literature.

1.10. American postmodernism

There's no single agreed-upon definition. Some see it as a new style emerging in the 1950s, while others view it as an extension of modernism (post-WWI artistic movement).

Both Modernism and Postmodernism deal with feelings of alienation and fragmentation, but with a key difference. Modernism often tries to create a unified whole from these pieces, while postmodernism embraces the inherent uncertainty (indeterminacy) of existence. In Pynchon's novel “V.”, the character Stencil fails to reconstruct a woman's history. This emphasizes the futility of forcing a clear narrative on fragmented experiences. Postmodern writers have mixed feelings. Some mourn the lack of structure, while others relish the freedom from traditional forms.

There some reasons why postmodern writing might have emerged:

1) The Impact of World War II and Technology

Some critics believe the horrors of World War II, like the atomic bomb and the Holocaust, fundamentally changed humanity's perspective on the world. These events challenged long-held beliefs and traditional storytelling methods used in earlier literature. The rapid advancement of technology might have also contributed to a sense of things falling apart, questioning established narratives.

2) The Influence of Capitalism

Another viewpoint sees postmodernism as a result of capitalism, particularly the ideas of French theorist Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard suggests our world is saturated with copies and simulations, making it difficult to distinguish the real from the fake. This theory connects the changing nature of work (specialization) with the overwhelming influence of advertising and mass media. Postmodern literature often reflects these societal shifts.

Postmodern writing doesn't separate high art (like novels) from popular culture (like comics). Ishmael Reed's novel “Mumbo Jumbo” mixes elements like photographs, illustrations, historical documents, and even footnotes, mimicking the serious style of realist literature but using it for parody. Equal Treatment of Everything approach allows for anything in daily life to be seen as potential artistic material. The Artist's Role raises a question. If everyday life can be art, does that mean the postmodern artist is simply reflecting their world, not critiquing it? So, postmodern writing challenges traditional notions of what art is and can be, and it blurs the line between high and low culture. However, this approach creates a situation where it's unclear if the artist is simply presenting reality or offering a critique of it.

Western philosophy is rooted in the idea of uncovering universal truths that can be applied everywhere, like the laws of science. Postmodernism throws a wrench into this notion by arguing that truth is relative and depends on our individual perspectives and experiences. There's no single, objective reality; what we perceive as true is shaped by our social and cultural contexts.

Postmodernists also reject the idea of grand narratives, these overarching stories that societies have traditionally used to define themselves and make sense of the world. The American Dream is a classic example of a grand narrative, where hard work leads

to success and prosperity. Postmodern thought argues that such narratives are exclusionary and overlook the vast differences in people's experiences. They propose that there's no single, universally true story that dictates how we should live our lives.

This emphasis on relative truths leads to moral relativism, the idea that there's no absolute right or wrong. Morality becomes subjective, defined by the values and beliefs of a particular culture or group. While this perspective can be liberating, encouraging us to question established norms and fight for social justice, it also raises a troubling question: if everything is relative, how can we ever justify judging the actions of others? If someone's belief system condones violence or oppression, can we condemn them from our own moral standpoint? This is a major point of contention for critics of postmodernism, who fear it leads to a world where anything goes.

Postmodernism encourages us to critically examine the dominant cultural myths and narratives that shape our societies. These myths, even if widely accepted, may not reflect the reality of everyone's lives. By deconstructing these cultural myths, postmodernism opens doors to a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of the world.

Postmodernism presents a challenge to traditional ideas about truth and morality. It encourages us to question everything, to think critically about the stories we're told and the values we hold dear. While it can be unsettling to grapple with a world without absolute right and wrong, postmodernism also offers the potential for greater understanding, empathy, and a more just society. It's up to us to navigate this new landscape, embracing the critical thinking it fosters while finding a way to establish a moral framework in a world of relative truths.

John Barth is a prominent postmodernist writer. His diverse works, ranging from historical epics to fantastical reimaginings of myths, embody the hallmarks of postmodernism. Barth challenges traditional storytelling methods and embraces experimentation. Barth's essay “The Literature of Exhaustion” throws a provocative punch. He argues that conventional writing styles and techniques have become stale and worn out. Some critics interpreted this as a declaration of the novel's imminent demise, suggesting the genre is no longer a viable artistic tool. However, Barth clarifies his stance in a later essay titled “The Literature of Replenishment”. He emphasizes that he wasn't pronouncing the death of the novel. Instead, Barth views his ideas as marking the conclusion of a specific period in literary history. He believes traditional storytelling has reached a saturation point, and new approaches are needed. Barth suggests there's room for innovation. His essays can be interpreted as a call for fresh perspectives and forms of expression that can revitalize the genre. Barth leaves the door open for new possibilities, encouraging future generations of writers to push boundaries and redefine the novel.

Kurt Vonnegut is a renowned author known for his poignant and thought-provoking exploration of human nature. Vonnegut's ability to portray complex emotions and grapple with serious themes like war trauma sets him apart. One of Vonnegut's strengths lies in his writing style. He crafts stories that are engaging and easy to read, even when tackling difficult subjects. This accessibility allows him to reach a broad audience and make his ideas resonate with a wide range of readers.

However, beneath the surface of straightforward prose lies a deeper layer of complexity. Vonnegut's narratives often invite contemplation, prompting readers to reflect on the human condition and the world around them.

Slaughterhouse-Five, arguably Vonnegut's most famous work, exemplifies this blend of accessibility and depth. The novel doesn't shy away from the brutality of war. Vonnegut, a prisoner of war himself during the Dresden bombings in World War II, uses the story of Billy Pilgrim, an unstuck-in-time protagonist, to explore the lasting psychological effects of war. The fantastical element of the Tramalfardians, an alien race with a unique perspective on time and free will, serves as a coping mechanism for Billy and allows Vonnegut to explore themes of fate, free will, and the absurdity of war.

Despite the darkness of war, Vonnegut doesn't succumb to despair. A memorable scene depicts a bombing attack being reversed, showcasing a world where humanity prioritizes peace and reconstruction. This act of imagination offers a glimmer of hope, suggesting the potential for humanity to overcome its destructive tendencies and build a better future.

By combining accessible storytelling with profound themes, Vonnegut's works leave a lasting impression. He challenges readers to confront the harsh realities of war while offering a glimmer of hope for a more peaceful world.

Vonnegut isn't afraid to break the mold. He seamlessly blends elements of science fiction, satire, dark humor, and social commentary within a single narrative. This genre-hopping approach allows him to deliver a multifaceted critique of modern society, encompassing everything from consumerism and war to alienation and existential anxieties. But Vonnegut doesn't stop at just mixing genres. He actively deconstructs them, playing with the very form of the novel itself. This playful dismantling challenges readers' expectations and forces them to question the traditional boundaries between fiction and reality.

Breakfast of Champions exemplifies Vonnegut's genre-bending and metafictional mastery. The story follows Dwayne Hoover, a car salesman with a troubled worldview, and Kilgore Trout, a struggling science fiction writer who keeps popping up across Vonnegut's novels, hinting at a deeper connection between them. Perhaps Trout serves as a reflection of Vonnegut himself, an alter ego grappling with the role of the author.

The narrative takes an unexpected turn when Hoover encounters Vonnegut himself in the flesh. This blurring of lines between characters, author, and reality forces the reader to confront the constructed nature of the story and grapple with questions about free will, determinism, and the power of the author over their creations.

Simple Prose, Profound Exploration: While Vonnegut's prose often appears deceptively simple, it tackles complex themes. Breakfast of Champions, through its playful deconstruction of the novel form, uses a childlike voice to discuss weighty concepts like the limitations and possibilities of storytelling itself. It delves into the relationship between an author and the fictional worlds they craft, forcing readers to consider the inherent subjectivity and constructed nature of fiction.

Thomas Pynchon's literary works are celebrated for their complexity and embrace of ambiguity. This aligns perfectly with postmodern ideas that challenge the notion of

a single, unified truth or a central identity. His characters often defy easy categorization, shifting roles and perspectives throughout the narrative. This reflects the postmodern view of the self as fragmented and influenced by a multitude of external forces.

The enigma surrounding Pynchon himself extends beyond his intricate novels and becomes a commentary on postmodernism. Unlike many authors who cultivate a public persona, Pynchon actively avoids the spotlight. Details about his personal life are scarce, and he rarely grants interviews. This elusiveness mirrors a key aspect of postmodern literature – the rejection of grand narratives, the overarching stories that traditionally provided a sense of order and meaning. Pynchon's life story, shrouded in secrecy, becomes a kind of anti-narrative, a deliberate dismantling of the traditional authorial persona.

Pynchon's reclusiveness, however, becomes a curious case. While he clearly seeks to avoid fame in the conventional sense, the very act of disappearing from public view has ironically generated a different kind of celebrity. His status as a literary recluse is well-known, and the mystery surrounding him has piqued the interest of readers and the media alike. In a way, Pynchon's resistance to traditional fame has created a new kind of notoriety – the fame of being a recluse. This paradoxical situation exemplifies the postmodern blurring of lines, where even the rejection of something can become a form of participation in it.

Interconnectedness and Complexity: Pynchon's world is a web of intricate connections. Power and information flow through vast networks that are both highly organized and surprisingly human in their elements. This reflects the postmodern view of reality as fragmented and interconnected, where grand narratives are replaced by a complex web of systems and interactions.

A recurring theme in Pynchon's novels is the presence of multinational conspiracies that transcend national borders. This reflects a growing awareness of globalization during the time Pynchon wrote, where international networks and alliances were becoming increasingly prominent. Pynchon doesn't paint all these networks as inherently evil. Some can be subversive, challenging established power structures. This reflects the rise of countercultural movements and alternative ideologies during the mid-20th century. Pynchon doesn't shy away from exploring the anxieties of a world without clear-cut meaning. His characters often grapple with nihilism, a sense of purposelessness and the absence of absolute truth. This aligns with the postmodern questioning of traditional belief systems and grand narratives.

The Crying of Lot 49: A Postmodern Labyrinth

Thomas Pynchon's novel, "The Crying of Lot 49," stands as a microcosm of postmodern literature. While considered his most accessible work, it dives deep into the core tenets of postmodernism, offering a complex and enigmatic exploration of reality, meaning, and the power of narratives.

"The Crying of Lot 49" serves as a gateway for readers venturing into Pynchon's world. The narrative follows Oedipa Maas, a young woman thrust into a whirlwind after inheriting her deceased boyfriend's estate. As she delves into his affairs, she

stumbles upon clues suggesting the existence of a clandestine network called the Trystero.

The mystery surrounding the Trystero exemplifies a central feature of postmodernism – the rejection of grand narratives, the overarching stories that traditionally provided a sense of order and meaning in the world. The true nature and purpose of the Trystero remain elusive. Is it a vast communication system, a subversive counterculture movement, or something entirely different? The novel offers no definitive answer. This ambiguity reflects the postmodern view of reality as fragmented and open to multiple interpretations. There's no single, unified truth about the Trystero, just like there's no single, unified truth about the world according to postmodern thought.

Oedipa's pursuit of the Trystero's truth leads her down a rabbit hole of conspiracies and hidden connections. However, the more she investigates, the more the Trystero appears to be a labyrinthine structure devoid of real substance. It's a complex network with no clear goals or outcomes. This paradoxical nature embodies a key aspect of postmodern critique. Grand narratives, with their promises of order and purpose, are dismantled. The Trystero, despite its sprawling reach, offers no grand solution or overarching meaning, reflecting the postmodern view that these traditional narratives are no longer reliable guides to understanding the world.

Trystero can be seen as a counterpoint to the dominant culture of America. It represents the existence of alternative realities and the possibility of resistance against established power structures. This aligns with the postmodern emphasis on the multiplicity of perspectives and the potential for subversion against centralized authority. The Trystero, with its shadowy network, challenges the status quo and hints at the existence of unseen forces operating beneath the surface of mainstream society.

The novel takes a fascinating turn towards the end, exploring the power of storytelling and metaphor. It suggests that metaphors, the act of interpreting the world through symbolic comparisons, don't simply reflect reality; they actively create it. Our understanding of the world is shaped by the narratives we construct, and the Trystero, in a way, becomes a metaphor itself – a metaphor for the fragmented, uncertain nature of postmodern existence. In a world lacking clear-cut answers, “The Crying of Lot 49” compels us to confront the role that language plays in constructing our perception of reality.

By weaving together these elements – the questioning of grand narratives, the exploration of fragmented reality, and the power of language – “The Crying of Lot 49” establishes itself as a prime example of postmodern literature. It offers a challenging and thought-provoking journey through a world where meaning is elusive, certainty is unreliable, and the lines between reality and metaphor become increasingly blurred.

Cormac McCarthy (b. 1933) is an important figure in contemporary American literature. His works, often classified as westerns, delve into the violence and mythologies of the Old West. One of his most acclaimed novels is Blood Meridian (1985), a stark and brutal portrayal of life on the Texas-Mexico border in the mid-19th century.

Cormac McCarthy's Blood Meridian carves a distinct path through the landscape of Western literature. Unlike its genre kin that often romanticize the frontier, Blood Meridian delivers a stark and unflinching portrayal of life on the Texas-Mexico border in the mid-19th century.

The novel initially dips its toes into familiar Western tropes. We encounter a nameless young protagonist, the "kid," thrown into the harsh realities of the frontier. Themes of survival and encounters with iconic Western figures like scouts and scalp hunters establish a seemingly familiar setting. But McCarthy swiftly dismantles these expectations. The romanticized gunfights and heroic cowboys are replaced by relentless violence and a pervasive sense of moral ambiguity.

A Catalyst for Chaos Central to this deconstruction is the enigmatic Judge Holden. A figure shrouded in mystery, Holden possesses an unsettling charisma and wields language with masterful precision. However, his pronouncements are a twisted blend of modern philosophies and disturbing justifications for brutality. He embodies a terrifying paradox – a man who champions progress while reveling in the inherent savagery of humanity. Holden's influence serves as a catalyst, guiding the kid down a path of escalating violence and culminating in a potential confrontation that foreshadows an apocalyptic future.

Violence as a Universal Stain Blood Meridian refuses to paint the frontier with rose-tinted glasses. The brutality it depicts extends far beyond romanticized shootouts. McCarthy portrays violence with a horrifying evenhandedness, exposing the savagery of all sides – Americans, Mexicans, and Indians alike. This dismantling of traditional narratives that portray white settlers as heroes and Native Americans as antagonists forces readers to confront the uncomfortable truth: humanity, regardless of ethnicity, is capable of immense cruelty.

A Stark Reflection Blood Meridian offers no easy comfort or moral clarity. The world it portrays is devoid of redemption. Violence reigns supreme, leaving the reader to grapple with the harsh realities of the frontier and the darkness that can fester within humanity. It's a challenging and thought-provoking exploration that transcends the Western genre, prompting readers to confront the complexities of human nature and the potential for descent into nihilism.

In a pivotal scene steeped in postmodern ideology, Cormac McCarthy's Blood Meridian confronts its characters, and by extension the reader, with a radical shift in perspective. The men, struck by snow blindness, are plunged into a world devoid of familiar visual cues. This physical blindness becomes a powerful metaphor, stripping away ingrained ways of seeing and forcing them to confront a new reality.

Shorn of the ability to distinguish between prominent features and background details, the men experience an “optical democracy”. This concept dismantles traditional hierarchies where one element is seen as more important than another. In this newfound levelness, the men are forced to acknowledge an "unguessed kinship" with their surroundings, even the seemingly inanimate rocks.

On the one hand, the breakdown of familiar categories can breed nihilism and indifference. The absence of clear distinctions between man and rock could be interpreted as a justification for the rampant violence that plagues the novel. In a world

stripped of inherent value, brutality becomes a meaningless inevitability. If all things are considered equally devoid of inherent superiority, then an argument can be made for the inherent value of all living things. This newfound appreciation for the interconnectedness of existence could serve as the basis for a more ethical framework, one that respects the sanctity of all life forms.

This scene serves as a microcosm of Blood Meridian's engagement with postmodern themes. By problematizing the characters' sensory perception, McCarthy challenges readers to question traditional ways of knowing and interpreting the world. The snow blindness forces them to confront the limitations of their own perspectives and grapple with the possibility of alternative realities. The openness to these contrasting interpretations – a descent into nihilistic violence or a path towards ecological awareness – reflects the core tenet of postmodern thought, where meaning is not fixed but remains fluid and ever-evolving.

The characters are trapped in a cycle of violence, and the possibility of achieving a harmonious relationship with the natural world seems remote. The scene with snow blindness offers a thought-provoking exploration of perception, but the characters' ultimate fate underscores the harsh realities of the world McCarthy portrays. It's a world where violence reigns supreme, leaving the reader to grapple with the complexities of human nature and the ever-present shadow of nihilism.

1.11. Influence of the traditions of English literature in shaping the literature of Australia and New Zealand

Britain was never the ‘onlie begetter’ of Australia or its literature; but colonised Australia has always been, in some sense and degree, British. It is the nature of the relationship, not the fact of it, that appears complex, difficult to define, and dynamic. P. R Stephensen, in one of the less controversial contentions in The Foundations of Culture in Australia (1936), insisted that Australian culture is both derivative and local; that distinctive non-Aboriginal Australianness is, whatever else, a variant and product of Britishness. Especially in relation to the period before popular and governmental endorsement of a multicultural Australian nation, that suggestion may not seem contentious; and yet the move from a colonial relationship with Britain towards nationhood has influenced many literary nationalists to deny or disown Britishness; or to define “Australianness” by jettisoning certain unwanted aspects of “Britishness” or “Englishness”, while valorising as ‘Australian’ other preferred traits.

In The Australian Legend (1958), for example, Russel Ward uses the words English and British primarily to indicate middle- or upper-class Englishness, and thereby erases cockney and north country Englishness from his discourse. Paradoxically, he demonstrates thoroughly the cultural ‘transmission’ of a particular English literary heritage, a proletarian one, within colonial Australian literature and culture; but he is unwilling to label this process too obviously as English or British, since he perceives a discrete and distinctive Australianness as excluding Britishness.

For A. A. Phillips (in The Australian Tradition, 1958) a key “Australian” quality is the “democratic”, whereas Englishness is defined in relation to class hierarchy. The Marston currency lads in Rolf Boldrewood’s Robbery Under Arms (1888) are,

ideologically and linguistically, on the way to gaining the Australian-ness that Henry Lawson's typical characters later achieve, but squatter Falkland of the colonial gentry is more "English".

This class paradigm has exercised inescapable cultural power, understandably when it is remembered that Australia claims to be one of the world's oldest current democracies. Despite the rejection by recent commentators of the methodologies and the particular brands of nationalism of Ward and of Phillips, a similar image of "British" and "Australian" necessarily persists. Indeed, it may be encouraged by the use of constructs such as Benedict Anderson's national "imaginary" (in Imagined Communities, 1983), which sets up a preferred and consensual ideal nation, or by those post-colonial theories that define an ideological or political opposition between Britain as imperial colonising agent and Australia and its settlers as a "colonized" other. In the late 19th century many settlers began to define "Australia", the "coming nation", as an Andersonian "imaginary": they opted for a construct of nationality not yet validated by political realities or an actual constitution, while maintaining, perhaps covertly, various forms of behavior inconsistent with new national ideals. In this context, the comparison between 'new' and 'old' was inevitably unfavourable to Britishness. In other contexts – where for example an allegiance to Britain was inseparable from most Australian nationalisms, as the Great War – rejection of the "Britishness" of Australia was insupportable. This chapter seeks to discuss British (especially English) literature, ideas and literary conventions in a way that underlines their pre-emptive importance for colonial Australian writing, while acknowledging the possibility of their reconstitution or reformation in local and colonial conditions, and also within international, imperial, or global contexts that bear upon the British-colonial connection. The possibility too that the 19th-century colonial literature affects British culture will not be overlooked.

The discovery of Australia by British writers did not necessarily entail its literal, accurate, or scientific representation; it persists as a metaphysical trope or imaginary wonderland in verse fiction and drama to the present day. Both Enlightenment and medieval imaginary narratives serve as alternative prototypes. For example, Lady Mary Fox, illegitimate daughter of William IV, wrote An Account of an Expedition to the Interior of New Holland (1837); it is difficult to discover whether she knew of the French antecedents 200 years earlier to her gothicised feminist utopian fictional treatise. Even Lewis Carroll's Alice plummets lightly down a hole to, or perhaps past, Australian antipodes. Writers who adhered to certain discourses of "Enlightenment" were disciplined by requirements of empirical accuracy: and the famous narratives of James Cook, Arthur Phillip, John Hunter, Watkin Tench, Charles Darwin and other navigators and explorers that obey this authority contribute to the revered "annals of science". Literary historians, however, while obliged to respect such writings, usually find something else (particularly in Cook, Tench and Darwin) that enlivens the prose, yet is not especially scientific; or (as in the case of Sir Joseph Banks) they find the writing dull. Cook is admired for his unconscious autobiographical revelation of the extraordinary skills of self-control, benevolence, and sheer competence and wisdom, later recognised in Kenneth Slessor's poem "Five Visions of Captain Cook". In Tench

the added dimension includes a wryness and moral charity, an imaginative delight in the novelty of local realities, and compassionate recognition of human similarities as well as exotic differences between Aborigines and Europeans. Colonial immigrants did not simply bring literature to Australia as "cultural baggage'; a genie escaped from the baggage to create a "literary culture", a broad and unconsciously employed heteroglossia that represented forces and ideas beyond the migrant's material individuality. European, American, Asian and Aboriginal influences, from works and dialogue, accompanied and reshaped British negotiations with local topography, climate, flora, fauna and Indigenous and white culture. Literature was obliged to fumble with the demands that Australia made on English words, and to refashion its lens to cope with blur. Such a goal could never be realised quickly, unanimously, and absolutely; but the integrity of the attempts helped to create and individuate a colonial literary culture.

The gold rushes changed both the Australian colonial identity and the preoccupations and infrastructure of literary culture. The goldfields themselves resembled rough moving cities rather than lonely pastoral outposts. The published non-fictional accounts of hundreds of (mainly British) diggers and travellers established a highly literary genre of educative entertainment, now neglected; it complemented idealised narratives of the adventure romance, and emphasised pain, drudgery, failure, natural ugliness and social excess as well as camaraderie and natural beauty. When many years later Henry Handel Richardson claimed some originality for her attempt to write of one of the "failures" in The Fortunes of Richard Mahony (1930), she was obviously omitting from consideration Britain's Australia these non-fictional visitors' narratives, which she herself used as historical sources. The literariness and quality of these genre pieces, particularly their use of the conventions of set-piece description and travel writing, are still neglected by literary critics, and by historians who deploy them simply as tropeless "documentary" evidence. In some respects, too, these works anticipate the later focus on urban literature, not only because cities and towns are now explored, but also because the goldfields experience, and the infrastructure of its entertainments, conflicts, crowds, daily routine and legal controls, are revealed as themselves quasi-urban.

By the 1880s British immigrants, and visiting novelists, poets and journalists, had adopted and introduced urban "presence" and preoccupations into Australian literature. The new focus also redefined earlier perspectives on pastoral operations and wilderness in constructions of the "bush" and the "outback". Catherine Spence, Marcus Clarke, Ada Cambridge, Anthony Trollope, Tasma and other contemporaries examine the multifarious dimensions of urban experience. The love – hate of the inured English Victorian urban writer is now colonialised, manifesting itself in displays of both awe and loathing for the city, and contrariwise for the country and outback. Victorian antiurban sentiment, deriving from earlier English Romanticism, is sometimes projected into the incipient bush nationalism that was demagogically let loose by the Bulletin, and particularly A. B. Paterson in 1889 in "Clancy of the Overflow". The gold rushes and urban growth nourished the development of a panoply of British and European literary and cultural institutions. There were libraries, galleries, mechanics'

institutes, universities, the press, literary societies, and art schools, bookshops, working men's clubs, women's clubs, bohemian and elitist coteries, theatres – almost everything that London could offer (as literary visitors like Trollope, H. M., Hyndman, R. M. Twopeny, J. A. Froude, G. A. Sala, Mark Twain, R. L. Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling were likely to remark). Especially in Melbourne – by 1890 a cosmopolitan city of almost half a million people, one of the largest in the empire – both elitist and popular, both imperial and parochial manifestations of literary consumerism were colourfully prominent. But one commodity that could not in the colonial period be readily produced locally was the Author: not just a struggling Kendall, but an eminent and presiding Dickens or Tennyson. Authors of such stature never migrated (though Carlyle and Dickens thought about it), as to leave home was to depart from one's literary and financial support base. Australian readers were not necessarily disturbed by the need to look to Britain for their great writers – indeed, the eventual canonisation of local authors was a goal of the same general search; but the process entailed, even unconsciously, a dependency and congruency that younger native-born writers, however "British", could not entertain.

The period from the end of World War II has seen at least three major transformations of the Australian literary field. In the 1950s, cultural institutions dedicated to Australian literature or Australian books were still relatively underdeveloped, while publishing and bookselling operated within an established set of relationships with the British publishing industry. In the decade from the late 1950s, local publishing of Australian books expanded, gradually at first, and then rapidly as local branches of British firms developed Australian lists. New and more diverse institutions dedicated to Australian books and authors emerged, as did a generation of writers and readers with new orientations towards both literature and the nation. By the mid-1970s Australian literature was defined through a set of relatively autonomous institutional sites in universities, publishing, criticism, bookselling and professional associations. The presence of contemporary books expanded dramatically, and for the first time something like the literary heritage was available to contemporary readers through numerous reprint series and an increasingly rich critical literature. In the new century, however, some of these achievements seem less secure. Although a mature infrastructure has been established, it exists within a newly globalised international literary system that poses once again some of the recurrent questions for Australian culture: its independence, its national significance, and the role of literature (or books and reading) in those equations.

New Zealand

Over the course of the long nineteenth century, Māori produced thousands of pages of written work, a large selection of which lies on shelves in libraries and other archival institutions in Aotearoa-New Zealand and around the world. Genres include correspondence, whakataukī (proverbs), biography, historical accounts, travel journals, and descriptions of customs, religious beliefs, and more. This collective body of work is written almost exclusively in te reo Māori, the Māori language, and scholarly work has tended to focus on its translation into English. The emphasis on translation is not surprising given the sustained and systematic violence wreaked upon Māori by

European colonisation, and later perpetuated by assimilatory ideology and government policy that severely undermined the health of the Māori language. Despite eff orts to revitalise the Māori language, it remains today in a critically endangered state. Translations are, however, products of their own time, place, and context. Reading the texts in the language in which they were fi rst written, in their own idiom, and with their own turns of phrase, tone, meter, and style enables unparalleled access to the first literature of Aotearoa-New Zealand – to Māori literature. Due to the ruptures caused by ongoing colonial processes, reading early Māori literature often involves intensive upskilling in language profi ciency as well as detective work as we follow leads, peel back layers, explore, search, and rediscover that which has sometimes been right in front of us the whole time.

In June 1852 Hakaraia Kiharoa wrote down the words of some sixty-nine waiata (songs) fi lling eighty-fi ve pages of manuscript. Written into the age-worn pages are examples of all the major types: waiata tangi (laments), waiata aroha (love songs), and oriori or pōpō (lullabies); waiata that form a class of their own such as 'tangi tamaiti' (laments for children), as well as waiata that defy classifi cation altogether. The waiata refer to ancient conflicts, contemporary events, and religious beliefs. They explore the lacerating grief of love lost, and mourn the passing of great rangatira (chiefs). Line upon line spill over the pages in a continuous stream of imagery, metaphor, simile, and all other manner of Māori poetic ornament. Kiharoa writes in clear, slanted, thin, carefully formed and flourished letters of black ink. The visual symmetry of the text is a striking testament to the talent and skill of but one of teao Māori's nineteenth-century writers. Truly, the waiata in Kiharoa's manuscript exemplify what Apirana Ngata referred to as, "Te tohungatanga o nga tautitotito", "The poetic genius of the composers". Like the character of Christian in The Pilgrim's Progress, Kiharoa was guided and taught by people along his journey to Christian enlightenment; someone had first to teach the teacher. Th e man most responsible for Kiharoa's work as a Christian teacher was the venerable Christian Missionary Society missionary Octavius Hadfi eld. Hadfi eld arrived on the Kapiti Coast in 1839 after Tāmihana Te Rauparaha and Mātene Te Whiwhi travelled to Te Waimate in the Bay of Islands to request a missionary for their region. Hadfi eld answered the call and rose to meet the challenges of being responsible for the religious health of a large Māori and increasing white settler population. His people were spread out over an extensive geographic region, taking in Ōtaki and Waikanae and extending out into the Manawatū and Rangitīkei areas, as well as Tōtaranui (Queen Charlotte Sound) at Te Tau Ihu, the top of Te Waipounamu (the South Island). Hadfi eld's lifelong energy, dedication, and passion for his work set him apart from many other missionaries. His opinions on matters concerning Māori, and on the governance of New Zealand, favoured Māori; he publically and vehemently chastised the government's stance on, and involvement in, the Taranaki war, making him for some time 'the most unpopular man in the colony'. Hadfi eld baptised Kiharoa in 1840, a year after arriving on the Kapiti Coast, subsequently appointing him head teacher at Ōtaki with his Ngāti Raukawa people; Rīwai Te Ahu was Kiharoa's counterpart at Waikanae with Te Āti Awa.

The references to a time and place before Māori arrived in Aotearoa come to a resounding conclusion in the fi nal line of the waiata:

Ka tere te papa, ki Nukume Hawaiki e-i.

The figurative waka makes landfall and rests here where the "post of Hine", as well as that at Rarotonga, might be fixed into the earth. A further purpose of these posts was "securing" the waka, anchoring it literally in the land and fastening it to "papa" (a shortened version of the earth mother's full name, Papatūānuku), here reinforced with the phrase, "ki Nuku", another contraction of "Papatūānuku". This reading of just one of the sixty-nine waiata recorded by Kiharoa in his manuscript is neither conclusive nor comprehensive, but is rather offered as a something of a beginning or conversation starter. These and many other early Māori manuscript texts combine to form a substantial body of rich material that remains largely unexplored, yet has so much to contribute within the broader frame of the literary history of these islands.

The writing of the first half of the 20th century often defined by the novelty of its attempt to articulate a sense of national identity through representing the landscape, is productively unsettled by the broader concerns of ecology that would position it within a longer historical arc of settlement's transformation of that landscape. The cultural nationalist writing of the 1930s onwards, as well as the preceding Maoriland era that it sought to differentiate itself from, is equally encompassed by the process described by James Belich as "recolonization", the export-driven expansion of farming that 'transformed the New Zealand countryside, and considerably homogenised it' from the 1880s onwards. As ecologists and environmental historians have pointed out, New Zealand constitutes one of the most extreme examples of the global anti-ecological project of settler colonisation: driven by the economic imperatives of the forestry industry as well as by the expansion of pastoral production, its environmental history until the mid-twentieth century is one of widespread destruction and radical transformation. It was on this violently modified and ever more industrialised terrain that New Zealand literature took its increasingly distinctive shape.

New Zealand writing about nature during the 'recolonial' period is largely predicated on asserting the settler's separation from the ecosystems that surround them yet are doomed by their presence. Th e contradictory mixture of complicity and distance shaping this dynamic – which operate across aesthetic, sentimental, and ideological registers – is given early expression by Lady Barker's account of 'burning the run' in Station Life in New Zealand (1870): 'We always avoided burning where a grove of the pretty City palms grew; but sometimes there would be one or two on a hillside growing by themselves, and then it was most beautiful to see them burn... The poor palm would bend and sway, tossing its leaves like fiery plumes in the air, and then it was reduced to a black stump, and the fi re swept on up the hill'.

One element of the turn against colonial forms of writing from the 1920s onwards is the emergence of an environmentally minded critique that contributes to a broader scepticism about the shallow and instrumentalised attitude towards place produced by capitalist values. When Allen Curnow's poem, "The Unhistoric Story" (1941), turns its disenchanted historiographic gaze to the present moment, it is to mourn the death of the "pilgrim dream" at the hands of a national economy organised around industrialised

agriculture, “Among the chemical farmers, the fresh towns; among / Miners, not husbandmen, who piercing the side / Let the land’s life’. Similarly, Jean Devanny’s notorious account of docking lambs on a King Country sheep station in The Butcher Shop (1926) is in service of a socialist critique of the capitalist legitimation of violence towards the natural world: ‘Savage and brutal, ay? The docker’s teeth are joined in and tear the living fl esh so that there may be prime New Zealand mutton. The poor tiny ear must be slit to preserve property rights, and out of it all, in the end, step the fashionable lady and gentleman’. Such works serve to defamiliarise an emergent, energy-intensive economy of primary production enmeshed within global systems of consumption, a situation that is now so familiar as to be virtually invisible. At the same time, as John Newton points out, ‘we do well to remember that the “hard frost” of literary nationalism, at the same time as freezing out the Tangata Whenua, shut down other settler idioms which inhabited that landscape differently’. One such alternative imaginary is a form of environmental consciousness that began to emerge at this time in works by Ursula Bethell, Robin Hyde, and Herbert Guthrie-Smith. Sharply differentiated by genre, scope, and geography, these texts nevertheless cohere around a project of modernist formal experimentation conducted in the service of an ecological sensibility founded on a complex understanding of difference and connection.

The dominance of the short story as a fictional form in New Zealand literature lasted most of the twentieth century but declined towards the end of the century when the market for novels trumped the market for short fiction all over the world. For decades the tested route to New Zealand authorhood was the publication of short fiction, and New Zealand’s distinctive preference for the form is shown by its major writers – Mansfield, Sargeson, Frame, Gee, Ihimaera , Grace – all of whom began, and in Mansfield’s case concluded, their careers with short fiction. There are many ways of glossing this phenomenon, which has been ably analysed by W. H. New. To some extent modernist tenets applied to Mansfi eld’s choice of form, but for later and New Zealand – based writers who could not make a living writing, and for whom there was a limited range of local publishing venues, it made sense to start small with stories in the Listeneror Landfall, on the radio, or in literary magazines published by small presses that proliferated in the more fluid, diverse, and shoestring publishing landscape of the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the shift towards longer narrative forms took place, and by the 1990s many writers, such as Elizabeth Knox, had begun their careers with a novel. In some respects, then, 1972–90 is a period of intense activity and equally intense change. The reading public expanded and diversified, publishers covered a wide spectrum of size and activity, not yet agglomerated into large multinational imprints, and literature took on a new political edge.

1.12. Canadian literature

Pondering “pivotal moments” in indigenous history, Mohawk writer Brian Maracle (b. 1947) rejects locating his native identity in key Canadian events as they involve “our interactions with so-called ‘white people’”. In other words, from an indigenous perspective, “They were not about us. Most of them involve things that

happened to us. They have helped determine where and how we live but they have not determined how we think or what we believe". Maracle prefers to go back to the moment of creation as the key indigenous founding event, which he narrates in his 'First Words': "With a few quick movements, the glowing being reached down, scooped up a handful of clay from the riverbank, and shaped it into the doll-like form of a man. The being then laid the doll-like figure on the riverbank next to the woman and gently blew into its mouth. Instantly, the clay doll was transformed into a human being". For many indigenous people, history starts with creation stories. The "handful of clay" in "First Words" is indicative of a close relationship between indigenous peoples and the land, a relationship that is honoured from the very beginning of existence.

Names are of great importance: when the spoken stories of Canada's First Peoples, handed on from generation to generation, are called "oral literature" then one cultural tradition – that of "orature" is being interpreted and measured by a different cultural tradition. Renaming was clearly a powerful colonial tool designed to challenge the cultural and political autonomy of Canada's First Peoples. If oral stories are a cultural storehouse, and naming has immense cultural significance, then the impact of the residential school system is clear, even before other aspects of the experience are taken into account. Renaming during the colonial period did not stop at individuals: it included the renaming of indigenous places and nations.

The early colonial history of Canada was fundamentally affected by global rivalry and warfare between European Empires: for over one hundred years, the power of New France and the British, who had an exponentially increasing presence in Canada, depended upon fights that largely took place elsewhere. When the European powers fought their battles in North America, the outcome was usually inconsequential or considered a downright failure.

What did the strengthened, emerging nation after the 1812 war offer Canada's First Peoples? The temporary alliance with Tecumseh and others had helped the British more than the Iroquois. Early European traders had brought some economic prosperity, relying on the knowledge and skill of Native trappers, but they had also brought diseases to which there was no natural immunity among indigenous peoples; perhaps more profoundly in the long term, Europeans also brought Christianity and a missionary zeal for conversion.

As the new nation grew after the War of 1812, so did the need for unencumbered land: treaties were a way of appearing to make a fair exchange for that land, although in reality, they were often convenient ways of ensuring future success for colonial settlers. From an indigenous perspective, treaties are not considered static, closed agreements: they are ongoing, in need of continual reassessment and renewal. From the perspective of the settlers, treaties were legally binding and complete. But there were other methods of reducing the power and autonomy of indigenous peoples, namely the introduction of the residential school system, whereby children were sent to boarding schools and subject to a form of cultural indoctrination, and in some cases physical and sexual abuse.

Starting with three schools in 1883, the residential school system would run until 1996; an apology for this system, given to Canada 's First Peoples, was delivered by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008. Canada's First Peoples, in summary, were useful to the colonizers when it came to trade and assistance in warfare, but overall, they were also considered a barrier to the settling and "civilizing" of the nation. How, then, did this diverse new nation, made up of First Peoples, and Catholic and Protestant colonists, under the control of the British since the Treaty of Paris, turn into the successful and peaceful country now known simply as "Canada"? The answer involves a process of growing autonomy and complexity, in land settlement, political responsibility, and nationality.

Turning to some of the earliest indigenous writers in English, the role of organized Christianity is considerable. Ojibway author George Copway (1818-63) became a Wesleyan Methodist Missionary and later converted to Roman Catholicism shortly before his death; he was one of a group of Ojibway who formed the first indigenous "literary coterie", the others being Peter Jones, George Henry, Peter Jacobs, John Sunday, Allen Salt, and Henry Steinhauer. His prolific output includes the first Canadian Aboriginal book published in English: The life, history, and travels of Kah-gega-gah-bowh (George Copll'ay) (1847), as weIl as The life, letters, and speeches of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (1850), The traditional history and characteristic sketches of the Ojibll'Cly nation (1850); Recollections of a forest life (1851); Indian lile and Indian history (1858); The OjibH'ay Conquest (1860); and Running Sketches (1861). Categorizing Aboriginal stories, Copway labelled them "the Amusing, the Historical, and the Moral"; it is important to recognize that such classifications are also interpretations, and that subsequent attempts to fit orature into English or French narrative concepts invariably distort and re-code the original stories. Copway's notion of indigenous peoples gaining their salvation through Christianity was tempered by his understanding of the damage done by colonialism, especially through the loss of land; early Ojibway missionaries would thus direct energy into attempts to repair some of the damage done to their people, either through their writing or through the political act of visiting England to petition for rights at the highest level, as did Peter Jones (1802-56) when he visited Queen Victoria during his visit of 1837-38. Critic Penny van Toorn makes the important observation that far from turning away from orature, these first Aboriginal writers in English moved "back and forth between oral and literary institutions H'ithin European culture, as weIl as between European and Native cultures". Adopting a highly performative mode gained from knowledge of oral culture, the new Aboriginal writers produced a diverse range of hybrid texts: "Whether in theatrical performances, sermons, or political negotiations, oratorical skills became more, rather than less, important at the interface between Aboriginal and European cultures".

Mohawk poet Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) (1861-1913) utilized the interface or liminal space between Aboriginal and European cultures for her poetry performances whereby she would appear in indigenous and European costume during the same evening; subsequently her publications have a hybrid status, her first book, The White Wampul11 (1895), being a collection of texts for performance. Johnson was

also involved in the textualization of indigenous cultures, her Legends of Vancouver (1911) being a transcription of stories told to her by the Salish Chief Capilano. Johnson differs from the Ojibway "literary coterie" not just in gender, but also in her role as a mediator between indigenous and non-indigenous cultures. The native performer in the nineteenth century, outside of missionary cüdes, was utterly stereotyped, nowhere more so than in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which consisted of "re-enactments" of historical battles between "cowboys and lndians", in effect providing entertainment that also fueled the western fantasy of the "red Indian"; it was crucial, for Pauline Johnson's promoters, to keep her separate from this world, as weIl as that of the more respectable and conservative realm of the missionaries, so that she remained in the liminal space between Aboriginal and "high" European art: in other words, she was indeterminately positioned in her "role as mediator between elite and popular cultures, especially in bringing Natives, commonly reduced to burlesque figures, into arenas of high culture performance, such as drawing-rooms and theatres". Johnson's mediating role can be examined in relation to one of the textualized stories that she published called "The Two Sisters", set in Vancouver at a time when "there were no twin peaks like sentinels guarding the outposts of this sunset coast". This is a time of "Indian" (Johnson's word) domination of the land and law, when a "great Tyee" or chief had two daughters who reached puberty at the same time: this moment must be celebrated with an immense potlatch, arranged during a time of war. The potlatch brings peace to the region, and the "Sagalie Tyee" celebrates by making the chief's daughters immortal: "In the cup of His hands He lifted the chief's two daughters and set them forever in a high place, for they had borne two offspring – Peace and Brotherhood – each of which is now a great Tyee ruling this land". Johnson has textualized an indigenous story concerning belief narratives and the beneficial role of the potlatch; additionally, her version of the story also includes the framing narrative of the situation in which the chief is initially surprised to learn that the "Two Sisters" are called "throughout the British Empire" "The Lions": "He seemed so surprised at the name that l mentioned the reason it had been applied to them, asking him if he had seen the Landseer Lions in Trafalgar Square [in London, England]. Yes, he remembered those splendid sculptures, and his quick eye saw the resemblance instantly". At this point in the story there are two distinct visions of landscape: that of Aboriginal orature and the potlatch, and that of a nineteenth-century English artist Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802-73) and his Lions in London's Trafalgar Square. Johnson does mediate between these two visions, but problematically, she appears to resolve the two opposing perspectives by ma king it clear that one belongs in the present ("The Lions"), and one in the past ("The Two Sisters" or "The Chief's Daughters", which she calls "legend"). In other words, the Landseer Lions remain dominant in the geo-political sense of being transposed to British Columbia, naming two mountain peaks (we now know what they used to be called), and the indigenous "legend" has the slightly quaint air of a Victorian museum-piece. But there is a more subversive side to this mediation: during the period in which the potlatch was made illegal, Johnson's story advocates the potlatch as a peace-making process, and furthermore, the Canadian name for the se mountain peaks is shown to belong to the myth-making history of the British Empire. In other words, the act of

naming geological features has in both ethnic cases cultural significance, and Johnson is allowing the reader to weigh-up the relative merits of this significance.

Johnson's writing was often subtly subversive and at times oppositional in its force, but shortly after her death, literary audiences in Canada would be highly controlled and manipulated by the government as part of its attempt to win the hearts and minds of the nation to support the British in the First World War. If Johnson's persona is criticized for its constructed nature, then a constructed audience needs to be recognized as the next phase in the literary history of Canada, one that took virtually no account of the needs of Canada's First Peoples. It is no coincidence that the most popular "Indians" during the decades following 10hnson's death were in fact imposters: a British man called George Stansfield ("Archie") Belaney (1888-1938) posing as "Grey Owl", and a Black American called Sylvester Clark Long (1890-1932) posing as Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance. Both men served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during World War One, and both did considerably better for themselves in life using their fake identities, especially Long who suffered in the US from racial prejudice.

While the period that follows the death of Johnson up to the 1960s and 1970s is one of great transformation in Aboriginal writing in English, two socio-political factors that contributed to this transformation need to be kept in mind: first, there is evidence that many of the people who had power within the residential school system were attempting to efface indigeneity, replacing native values with those of White culture, and second, out of this cultural genocide would emerge a new native politics and a strong desire to repair and rebuild the expanding (not dying or disappearing) indigenous communities of Canada. Another way of sketching this period, therefore, is to turn to the trope of incarceration, and resistances to this trope (based on actual experiences). Deena Rymhs notes that for many critics and historians, not only does the residential school system prefigure and create the conditions for the prison system, but the trope of incarceration that subsequently emerges functioned across Native society as disrupted and constrained by Whites: "lust as schools and adoptive families have been experienced as prisons, even home, the reserve, in its physical segregation, curtailing of indigenous territory, and concentration of economic poverty, has been compared to a prison". Writing from the prison, however it is conceived, is fundamentally protest writing, and indigenous authors and critics have noted how "much First Nations literature proceeds from a tradition of protest writing that seeks to address, among other things, the historical criminalization of indigenous people and the use of institutions such as prisons to wear away at their cultural identity". Carceral systems and tropes are predicated upon the notion of "aboriginal sin" which can purportedly be transformed by the state or its representatives (religious or secular) in the processes of incarceration. The reality of this situation for indigenous peoples is that the colonial processes of incarceration created damage and resistance to that damage often expressed through journalism and literary texts. As Taiaiake Alfred writes: "The lesson of the past is that indigenous people have less to fear by moving away from colonialism than by remaining bound by it".

Textualization is a way of preserving – but also interpreting and potentially rnisrepresenting – orature, which is a living, developing mode of spoken narrative expression. Early examples of textualization can teach us about the colonial presence in Canada, and it can be reclaimed by First Peoples to help in the recovery of indigenous cultural knowledge and ways of being. Canada's First Peoples survived the impact of colonialism and are in the process of recovering and rebuilding artistic and social forms; orature, as a vehicle for cultural and belief-systems, is as important today as written literature. The narratives of conquest and settlement, as well as political modes of being, form an important part of the colonial era; these narratives have since been critiqued and have at times been replaced by alternative stories concerning colonialism. Canada's ethnic diversity and difference is one of its great strengths; a historical overview reveals how competing notions of the state, alongside allegiances to other dominant forces, such as the Catholic Church in Quebec, shape people's understanding of ethnicity and belonging.

2. ПРАКТИЧЕСКИЙ РАЗДЕЛ

Тематика семинарских занятий

Семинарское занятие №1

THE THEME OF WAR IN THE WORKS OF M. AMIS, K. VONNEGUT

Issues for discussion:

Kurt Vonnegut Slaughterhouse-Five

1. The author starts the book with “All this happened, more or less.” How does this affect your perception of the novel? Are you more inclined to think of this as a fiction, or a nonfiction? Do you think that Vonnegut will prove to be a reliable narrator?
2. What does Starr mean by saying that Vonnegut should write an anti-glacier book? Do you think Starr is for or against war?
3. How do you think the war affected Vonnegut’s views that “nobody was ridiculous or bad or disgusting?” Do you agree with this belief?
4. The narrator remarks that the firebombing of Dresden killed more people than the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Assuming this is true, which, in your opinion, is the worse of the two? The one that killed more people, or the one with atomic weapons?
5. Do you think the “tralfamadorians” represent anything? (Perhaps that the war took his personality and his life away, and when he came back he had the “so it goes” sentiment, because he was immune to people’s death?)
6. What is the significance of the various names of places, both real and unreal? Are these names intentional or coincidental? If intentional, how would these names help to enhance the story?

Martin Amis Time's Arrow

1. Point out several backwards events that have opposite meanings backwards and forwards.
2. Why did Odilo's wife leave him?
3. Name and differentiate the prison/death camps that Odilo worked in.
4. Explain the meaning of the «stormy / sunny weather» postcards from Reverend Kreditor.
5. How did the narrator know he couldn't commit suicide?
6. Why did the narrator feel proud to have worked at Auschwitz?
7. What reasons did John Young have to change his name to Tod Friendly?
8. What aspects of everyday life did the narrator find hardest to understand in his backwards frame of reference?

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Семинарское занятие №2

THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND ALLEGORICAL NOVEL BY W. GOLDING

Issues for discussion:

W. Golding Lord of the Files

1. Give an overview of Golding's life and work.
2. Explain why Golding resorts to the timelessness of myth in his exploration of human nature in the novel.
3. Say why Golding puts the boys in a remote jungle setting. What is the advantage of using children as characters?
4. Comment on Golding's use of point of view as it is presented in Chapter 3 and explain what he manages to achieve by the shifts in the point of view.
5. Explain how you understand the primitive ritual of the pig dance. What makes the boys turn into a mob of savages?
6. Analyze Chapter 8 and comment on the speech of the Lord of the Flies. What is Golding's message? Why is Simon chosen to confront the Lord of the Flies?
7. How do you understand the closing paragraphs of the novel? Why does Golding refer to Joseph Conrad's famous novel in Ralph's phrase "the darkness of man's heart"?
8. What is the theme of Golding's novel? Why does the writer finish the novel with Ralph's appreciation of the tragedy of the loss of innocence?
9. What is Golding's view of human destiny? To what extent does Ralph represent the writer's outlook?
10. How do you understand the title of the novel?
11. What can you say about Golding's methods of characterization?
12. Comment on the structure of the novel and its genre. What is the function of the chapter headings? Is the book fiction, fable, myth, or something else?

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Семинарское занятие №3

LITERATURE OF THE LATE XX TH. CENTURY. ENGLISH POSTMODERNISM. JOHN FOWLES THE FRENCH LIEUTENANT'S WOMAN

Issues for discussion:

1. Dwell on postmodernism as a philosophical phenomenon. Consider the most representative concepts of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Gelles Deleuze, Felix Guattari.
2. Elucidate postmodernism as a literary phenomenon. Speak about Roland Barthes' contribution to postmodern literary theory.
3. Speak on the plot and structure of the novel.
4. Say why the writer chooses to open each chapter with a certain epigraph.
5. Explain why the writer supplies alternative endings and refuses to choose between two (or even three) competing denouements. Classify the endings according to their purpose/nature.
6. Think if the novel is metafictional. Comment on the relevant postmodern techniques.
7. Dwell on the postmodern concepts of "death of God", "death of man", "death of author". Are they applicable to the novel in question?
8. Can one project the "Freudian triangle" (the "id" – the "ego" – the "superego") onto the love triangle presented in the novel?
9. Explain how the concept of archetype is treated in the novel. Consider the characters of Charles Smithson, Ernestina, Sarah Woodruff, Mrs. Poulteney, Sam Farrow.
10. What themes is the novel dedicated to, what problems does it raise?
11. Is the novel multi-leveled? Can one read it as a typical piece of mass literature?
12. Dwell on the principle of deconstruction and decentring in postmodernist fiction. Does the author resort to it in the novel? What for?

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3. Судленкова О.А., Кортес Л.П. 100 писателей Великобритании. – Мн., 1997. С. 203–204.
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3. РАЗДЕЛ КОНТРОЛЯ ЗНАНИЙ

3.1. Текущий контроль знаний (УСР)

Приблизительный перечень заданий УСР студентов

Примерная тематика заданий (темы рефератов):

1. «Черный юмор» в романах Т. Пинчона.
2. Своеобразие романа Т. Пинчона «Радуга земного притяжения».
3. Приемы для создания абсурдной картины мира в романах Дж. Речи.
4. Неоавангардизм в произведениях У. Берроуза.
5. С. Беллоу и современный американский роман.
6. Проблема отчуждения человека в творчестве С. Беллоу.
7. Интеллектуализм творчества Д. Барта.
8. Особенности драматургии Л. Кушнера.
9. А. Уилсон и традиции афро-американской драматургии.
10. Своеобразие художественного метода Т. Моррисон.
11. Фольклорные мотивы и легенды в творчестве Т. Моррисон.
12. Вклад Т. Моррисон в развитие современной афро-американской литературы.
13. Роль афро-американских писательниц в «женской» литературе США.

Форма контроля УСР – защита реферата

3.2. Итоговый контроль знаний (экзамен)

Приблизительный перечень вопросов к экзамену

1. Post-war tendencies in British literature.
2. Post-war tendencies in American literature.
3. American theatre in the second half of XX c.
4. Peculiarities of American anti-war novel.
5. Modernism in American literature.
6. Peculiarities of Postmodernism as a literary method.
7. The theme of war in literature of England.
8. British post-war literature.
9. Philosophy and literature. Philosophical novel.
10. Existential tendencies in English literature.
11. The epoch of 60s. Revolutionary disorders in Western Europe, movement for the human rights in the USA. The Beat generation.
12. Structuralism, Deconstruction. Poststructuralism.
13. Peculiarities of a postmodern novel.
14. The concept of Intertextuality in British literature.
15. American Science Fiction.
16. African-American literature.
17. Feminism in contemporary literature.
18. Influence of the traditions of English literature in shaping the literature of Australia and New Zealand.
19. Main feature of Canadian literature

4. ВСПОМОГАТЕЛЬНЫЙ РАЗДЕЛ

4.1. Рекомендуемая литература

Основная литература

1. Половцев, Д.О. Учебная программа учреждения высшего образования по учебной дисциплине «Современная зарубежная литература» (регистрационный № УД-2220/уч. от 20.06.2016). – [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: https://elib.bsu.by/handle/123456789/252568. – Дата доступа: 17.03.2024.
2. Шарыпина Т.А. История зарубежной литературы XX века : учебник для студентов высших учебных заведений, обучающихся по гуманитарным направлениям : в 2 ч. / Т.А. Шарыпина, В.Г. Новикава, Д.В. Кобленкова. – 2-е изд., испр. и доп. – Москва : Юрайт, 2023. – 269 с.
3. Современный зарубежный роман в контексте времени : пособие для студентов учреждений высшего образования, обучающихся по специальности 1-21 06 01 «Современные иностранные языки» / [авт.: О.А. Судленкова и др. ; под ред. Ю.В. Стулова] ; М-во образования Республики Беларусь, Минский гос. лингвистический ун-т. – Минск : МГЛУ, 2021. – 119 с.
4. Гиленсон Б.А. История зарубежной литературы второй половины XX – начала XXI века : учебник для вузов, для студентов высших учебных заведений, обуч. по гуманитарным направлениям / Б. А. Гиленсон. – 2-е изд., перераб. и доп. – Москва : Юрайт, 2021. – 274 с.

Дополнительная литература

5. Великие писатели XX века. Составление, общая редакция, предисловие, послесловие П.В.Васюченко. – М.: Мартин, 2002.
6. Дудова Л.В., Михальская Н.П., Трыков В.П. Модернизм: Учебное пособие. - М.: Флинта, 2002.
7. Зарубежная литература XX века: Учебник; [Для вузов по направлению и специальности «Филилогия» / Л.Г. Андреев, А.В. Карельский, Н.С. Павлова и др.]; Под ред. Л.Г. Андреева. – М.: Высш. школа, 1999.
8. Ильин И. Постструктурализм. Деконструктивизм. Постмодернизм. – М., 1996
9. История зарубежной литературы XX века: Учеб. / Под ред. Л.Г. Михайловой и Я.Н. Засурского. – М.: ТК Велби, 2003.
10. Кутейщикова В.И., Осповат Л.С. Новый латиноамериканский роман. – М., 1983.
11. Мамонтов С.П. Испаноязычная литература стран Латинской Америки. XX век. – М., 1983.
12. Михальская Н.П. История английской литературы: учебное пособие для студентов высших учебных заведений, обучающихся по специальностям «Русский язык и литература», «Иностранный язык». – М.: Академия, 2009.

13. Основные направления в мировой литературе XX века / автор-составитель Т.Г. Струкова. – Воронеж: ВГУ, 2003.
14. Стулов Ю.В. 100 писателей США. – Мн.: Вышэйшая школа, 1998.
15. Судленкова О.А., Кортес Л.П. 100 писателей Великобритании. – Мн.: Вышэйшая школа, 1997.

4.2. Электронные ресурсы

1. Толмачев В.М., Седельников В.Д., Иванов Д.А. Зарубежная литература XX века [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: http://20v-euro-lit.niv.ru/20v-euro-lit/literatura-xx-veka tolmachev/index.htm – Дата доступа: 15.03.2024.
2. Андреев Л.Г. Зарубежная литература XX века [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: http://20v-euro-lit.niv.ru/20v-euro-lit/hh-vek-andreev/index.htm – Дата доступа: 23.03.2024.
3. Ионкис Г.Э. Английская поэзия 20 века [Электронный ресурс]. – Режим доступа: http://20v-euro-lit.niv.ru/20v-euro-lit/ionkis-anglijskaya-poeziya/index.htm – Дата доступа: 23.13.2024.

1.3. Список художественной литературы к обязательному прочтению

1. V. Woolf Mrs. Dalloway
2. James Joyce A Portrait of the artist as a Young Man
3. D. H Lawrence Lady Chatterly’s Lover
4. William Golding Lord of the Flies
5. Iris Murdoch The Black Prince
6. John Fowles The French Lieutenant’s Woman
7. Martin Amis Time’s Arrow
8. Bernard Shaw Pygmalion
9. Aldous Huxley Brave New World
10. J. Steinbeck The Grapes of Wrath
11. F. Scott Fitzgerald The Great Gatsby
12. Theodore Dreiser An American Tragedy
13. William Faulkner Light in August
14. Joseph Heller Catch 22
15. Kurt Vonnegut Cat’s Cradle
16. Toni Morrison Beloved
17. Ray Bradbury The Martian Chronicles
18. Truman Capote In Cold Blood.
19. John Barth The End of the Road