I. The Beginnings of American Literature; Literary Movements

That literature means the record of human experience is a well-known fact but as concerns American Literature, this means something more: it reflects the pioneers' strife to escape poverty and tyranny and find a new continent to conquer, new lands to people.

The development of American Literature mirrors how much history affects literature but at the same time, how much literature reflects the times in which it was written.

American Literature may be considered the story of the spiritual and physical growth of the American People out of the richly varied community of men and women who three centuries ago rushed to the new continent.

Though white men set foot on the seaboard of America a long time ago, the first permanent settlements were established along the American shore only much later (almost a century). Captain John Smith gives the first account of the permanent colony in America in *A True Relation of such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Has Happened in Virginia since the First Planting of the Colony 1608*.

Some years later, in 1622, about 100 people were brought from England by the Mayflower and landed at Plymouth, Massachusetts. They brought with them the "Mayflower Compact" considered a sort of constitution as it was an agreement among 41 adults binding themselves to frame laws, ordinances, acts, etc. and work for the general welfare of the whole colony.

The Story of American Literature

Old and New Worlds

The story of American Literature begins in the early 1660, long before there were any "Americans". However, to speak of American literature is not to assert that it is completely unlike that of Europe. As Henry James said, "*America and Europe are wedded forever in a church that does not allow divorce. This one is to be one of posterity's surprises that lay in store for the new-old country*" (Cf. Cunliffe: 51). There will always be an amalgam of Old and New Worlds elements, of familiar and strange. America is, of course, an extension of Europe in Europe's expansionist phase. It has been peopled mainly by Europeans. The 'involuntary immigrants' – Negro slaves- from Africa are an exception, and their presence has modified American society. Nevertheless, in general, the U.S. was founded upon European, and especially British, precedents. Culturally speaking, America might be called a European colony. However, to say so is to draw attention to the complexity of the American scene. No other colony has been so heterogeneously populated, or so long politically independent of Europe. No other country whose origins lie in Europe has had so sharp an awareness of its cleavage form, and superiority to, the parent cultures. Running through American history, and therefore through American Literature, is a double consciousness of Old World modes and New World possibilities. (Cf. Cunliffe: 15) Whether they were called settlers or immigrants, with different reasons (exalted reasons, trading prospects, religion, avoid military service, etc.), for most Americans it was the beginning of a myth. In the mythology, Europe was associated with the past, dynastic pride; hunger, poverty, oppression, conservation, and pessimism. America, by contrast, was the

future; plenty, prosperity, freedom, innovation, and optimism. Even today, the future is America's favorite tense.

Thus optimism and pessimism mingle queerly in American writing; Mark Twain is a conspicuous example. American writing is also characterized by didacticism (teaching or intending to teach a moral lesson), with an uneasy combination of ideal ('ought') and real ('is'). Humor was also a means by which the American writers could win popular acceptance.

In the nineteenth century, American fiction (Cf. Ousby: *Introduction*) produced its full share of 'classics' – Melville's *Moby Dick*, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Twain's *Huckleberry's Finn*, and so forth. In the twentieth century, American novelists began to receive international recognition: the award of the Nobel Prize to Sinclair Lewis, in 1930 is an obvious example. Even in America itself, intellectuals often approached their literature in an indifferent spirit. There was a general lack of interest in what might be called American culture and literature. In 1930, the Yale University Library still listed *Moby Dick* under 'Cetology' rather than 'American Literature'. Outside America, the lack of respect for its fiction was even more striking. Sydney Smith, an English clergyman and author, in a review of Seybert's *Annals of the U.S* sadly observed: "*In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture or statue*?" (*Edinburgh Review, January 1820*). There were still other intellectuals who had no heard or read anything about nineteenth century classics, Hawthorne or Melville. Matthew Arnold held the idea that one should not be entitled to speak of an American literature as long as "*we all only contribute to one great literature – the English literature*". Despite all this pessimism, American literature has developed its own individuality and identity. A strong patriotic feeling, as well as the aspiration for independence made the

Americans strive for an authentic literary tradition regardless of all unfavourable material conditions.

Ironically enough, the pioneer of 'American Studies' was an Englishman. In 1923, D.H.Lawrence published his first book on American criticism, *Studies in Classic American Literature*. The book contained essays on 'The Spirit of Place' and eight authors from B. Franklin to W. Whitman. Lawrence detected the new voice in American writing and responded eagerly to it.

After him, many scholars undertook the difficult task of writing classical studies of American culture and fiction. Although interpretations were extremely varied and were followed by many other more modern definitions of the American phenomenon as expressed in literature, the first scholars still form the central core of any reading list. Among them, we can mention: V.L. Parrington's three-volume *Main Currents in American Thought* (1927-1930), Van Wyck Brooks' multi-volume *The Makers and Finders: A History of the Writer in America* (1936-1952), Perry Miller's *The New England Mind* (1939), F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* and Richard Chase's *The American Novel and its Tradition* (1957).

The 'American Voice' / 'Voices'. Regionalism

Identification of an 'American Voice' in fiction can lead to false interpretations. It might imply that Americans started from scratch, with a new tradition that totally disregarded the Old World tradition. All American writers, in fact, started by imitating European, mostly British models. It was only much later that peculiar American characteristics emerged. Even then, the American writer did not break up all his connections with the Old World traditions. Mark Twain, often

praised as ‘uniquely American’ has a lot of affinities with Dickens and the European realists.

Another false interpretation of the existence of an ‘American voice’ might be the uniform and homogeneous character of the American nation. This might be a gross mistake. America is a huge continent with a diversity of people and cultures. It is only normal then for foreigners to have difficulty in appreciating America’s regional varieties. In fact, regional divergences led to the creation of a literature where the inflections of regionalism were all-important. Regionalism resulted in ‘American voices’; writers from different regions (Cooper: New York, Hawthorne: Massachusetts; Twain: Missouri) are all “American” alike, although the reader can detect different notes in their works. However, due to the growth of modern communications, much of the regional flavor of American life and culture has inevitably been destroyed. At the same time, the ‘melting pot’ theory of American society holds true, as well; ‘unity within diversity’ refers to the fact that, despite the great number of ethnic groups and regions who strive to preserve their cultural heritage, it is also true that the country has the ability to assimilate different racial stocks into a unified whole.

The First American Publications

One of the odd comments about American literature (Cf. Morehead: 616) is that its novel appeared very late. English colonial America, counting from 1630, spent over 150 years clearing the land, fighting with the Indians, the French, and finally the English cousins, and feuding locally. With the exception of some verse, writers served religion and politics; controversialists abounded; fiction was imported, but there was no time to write any. The miracle of the American novel is

that in less than a century more it had asserted its independence of England and that with the 1920s the English novel became less interesting than the American – a fact that the English sometimes realized before the Americans did.

On the whole, Americans borrowed their culture from Europe. They read and imitated the fashionable English novels of the day. There were many candidates who claimed the title of "first American novelists". The first full-length novel written in America by an American was *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), attributed to William Hill Brown. Nevertheless, these are American in name only. The French Alexix de Tocqueville in 1831 wrote about the so-called "American novelists": "*They paint with the borrowed colours of foreign manners, and as they hardly ever portray the country of their birth as it actually is, they are seldom popular there … So the Americans have not yet, properly speaking, got any literature*". After numerous females, either in distress or positively ruined, we come to Charles Brockden Brown. Even known names such as Charles Brockden Brown and J.F.Cooper cannot be said to have led to a distinctive "American Voice" in fiction. Brown began as an imitator of the English novelist W.Godwin, and Cooper as a follower of Sir Walter Scott. However, they were the first to make their names known and recognized abroad. It was for the first time that American fiction influenced European literature: Dumas, Eugene Sue, and especially Gustave Aimard from among the French and the German Karl May are all indebted to Cooper; even Joseph Conrad mentions him among his masters. The Europeans were deeply impressed by Cooper's imaginative evocation of America's glorious past that disregarded the "progress" of civilization and emphasized upon the golden age of youth – the lost paradise dreamed of not only by the inhabitants of the New World. (Cf. Perez: 5).

CHAPTER 1: EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1700

Southern and New England Colonies

The Pilgrims had not left Europe to found a democracy or to establish a new state. They merely sought a refuge for their own religious society. Their purpose was not to amass wealth, but to worship God in their own fashion – to establish a "true" religious society.

Almost from the beginning, as the English settled along the Atlantic coast of America, there were important differences between the Southern and the New England colonies. Economic, religious and political differences drove Virginia and New England further and further apart in the early eighteenth century. In the South (Virginia), enormous farms or "plantations" used the labor of black slaves to grow tobacco. As High asserts (*An Outline of American Literature*: 6), the rich and powerful plantation owners were slow to develop a literature of their own. They preferred books imported from England. New England was unsuited for large-scale farming. The Puritan settlers had come to the New World in order to form a society based on strict Christian beliefs. Like the Puritans in England, who were fighting against the English king (in a war that lasted from 1642 to 1652), they believed that society should be based on the laws of God. Therefore, they had a far stronger sense of unity and of a "shared purpose". This was one of the reasons why culture and literature developed much faster than in the South. In 1636, the settlers founded the first North American Institution of higher learning at Newe Towne (Cambridge) named after John Harvard who donated his library to it. Harvard, near Boston, was the first college in the colonies to train new Puritan ministers. Since the very beginning, when a printing press was imported (1638), Harvard produced its own publications. Similarly, America's first newspaper began in Boston in 1704.

The first American literary products of New England and Virginia settlers consisted of topographical descriptions, local histories, religious treaties, diaries, logs, memoirs, and biographies. The religious tradition of Massachusetts resulted in religious works: the poetry of Anne Bradstreet (1612 – 1672), and Edward Taylor (1642 – 1729), and the sermons of Cotton Mather (1663 – 1728) and Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758). In the latter part of the eighteenth century, minor literati began to emerge. Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790), the poet Philip Freneau (1752 – 1832), and W.Irving (1783 – 1859).

Early Writings about Virginia

The earliest attempt to colonize Virginia (along the Eastern Coast of the U.S.A., at the Atlantic Ocean) was made by Sir Walter Raleigh (1552 – 1618). He was an English explorer who made several voyages to America, bringing back tobacco and the potato. His attempt to found a colony called Virginia failed. He had been supported by Elisabeth I, but he fell out of favor when James I came to the throne, and after a last unsuccessful expedition, he was executed for treason.

The first writings from and about Virginia were especially propaganda meant to encourage settlements and investment in Virginia. They did not have a literary value, being inaccurate in details and lacking literacy and color. Richard Hacklvyt (1552 – 1616), was an English geographer, cleric, historian and editor of explorers' narratives. He published *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America* (1582), commissioned by Walter Raleigh; the book advocated colonization of North America as a base for exploration via the Northwest Passage to the East. While he was an English ambassador to Paris, he wrote *Discourse Concerning Western Discoveries* (1584). On his return to England in 1588 he wrote *Principal*

Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation (1588 – 1600), a three-volume work on the history of exploration.

Captain John Smith (1580 – 1631), was an English adventurer and colonist in Virginia. He was known for his accounts of the founding of Jamestown (Virginia) in 1607. His works include *A True Relation of Virginia since the First Planting of that Colony* (1612), *A Description of New England* (1612) and *The Generall Historie* (sic) *of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624).

Although literature developed far more slowly in the South than in New England, a few early writers are worth mentioning. Peter High, in *An Outline of American Literature* (1997: 13) names Robert Beverley (1673 – 1722), a Virginia planter and minor statesman. He wrote intelligently about nature and society. His *History and Present State of Virginia* (1705, enlarged 1722) is written in a plain, clear style, mixing wild humor with scientific observation. His work falls into four parts: (1) history to 1706; (2) natural resources; (3) native Indians; and (4) present state of the country. Although he was a strong defender of black slavery, his section on the Indians of Virginia is free of race hatred. He writes in a shrewd, lively manner, with humor both on the Southern planter and foreign critic.

William Byrd (1674 – 1744), also a Virginia planter, was reputed for the 4000-volume library he owned (the largest in the English colonies). He was a colonial agent in England (1697 – 1705, 1715 – 26). His commission as a surveyor of the boundary line between North Carolina and Virginia is reported in his *History of the Dividing Line* and other frontier expeditions are described in his *Journey to the Land of Eden* and *Progress to the Mines*, posthumously published journals found among his 'Westover Manuscripts'. Writing for London audiences, Byrd used humor and realism to describe life along the dividing line (or frontier) between Virginia's settled areas and the deep forest. His opinions about the Indians

were surprisingly liberal for the time. He felt that the English should marry them rather than fight them. He has a similarly liberal view of blacks: "*We all know that very bright Talents may be lodged under a dark Skin*." These ideas were certainly not shared by the majority of Southern plantation owners.

Early Writings about New England

New England is an area in the Northeast of the United States, including the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The area was colonized by Puritan emigrants from England in the seventeenth century, and it was there that the American independence movement started.

Largely because of their closer social and economic connections, more highly organized political system, and reasonably good network of roads, the New England colonies developed a distinctive intellectual life much more quickly than the southern colonies. New England's emphasis on learning was closely connected with its religious commitment. Illiteracy was considered a tool of Satan. Moreover, *saving grace* came through "*hearing the word preached*". Accordingly, preaching forced men to write. However, besides sermons, New Englanders turned to other kinds of literary productions as well. Massachusetts, a state in the northeastern part of the U.S.A., on the Atlantic Coast, provided first facilities for literature. The Pilgrim Fathers were English Puritans who landed there in 1620 and founded the colony of Plymouth, the oldest town in New England. The first college in the colonies, Harvard was founded in 1636. It is the oldest university (at Cambridge) in the U.S.A. Cambridge had the first printing press in 1638, and the first successful newspaper, *The Boston News Letters* (sic), began publication in 1704.

The seventeenth century was the great age of English religious literature in New England; therefore, it was the great century of Puritan literature.

The Puritans were members of a group of Protestants that arose in the 16th century within the Church of England, demanding the simplification of doctrine and worship and greater strictness in religious discipline. They were persons extremely strict in morals and who tended to regard pleasure as sinful. Their literary style, the famous "plain style" was characterized by directness, lack of ornaments and sophisticated (or elegant) language, homely language used in everyday life. The examples they used were drawn either from the Bible or from the everyday life of farmers and fishermen.

Early New England writing expressed, on the one hand, the experience of building a new land, and, on the other hand, the emotional and spiritual life of the individual. The former appeared in biographies, histories, accounts of exploration, funeral sermons and elegies; the latter was described in autobiographies, diaries and meditations.

The most interesting works of New England Puritan literature were histories (Cf. High: 6). To the Puritans, he goes on, history developed according to " God's plan". In all of their early New England histories, they saw New England as the "Promised Land" of the Bible. The central drama of history was the struggle between Christ and Satan.

William Bradford (1590 – 1657) was an American colonist and religious leader, one of the Pilgrim Fathers. One of the leaders of colonial America, Bradford arrived at Cape Cod on November 11, 1620, on the flagship Mayflower. He was one of the authors of The Mayflower Compact. He also was the second governor of Plymouth Colony (1621-56). He became famous for his *History of Plimmoth (sic) Plantation* (1620 – 1647) considered the most interesting colonial Puritan history.

The book describes the Mayflower voyage (he was one of the moving spirits in the Pilgrim Fathers' expedition to the New World in 1620) and detailed aspects of the life of the Pilgrims. It describes the Puritans' difficult relations with the Indians. It also describes their difficulties during the first winter, when half of the colony died. Besides being a primary historical source, the work has artistic value because of its dignified, sonorous style, deriving from the Geneva Bible. At the same time, his style is plain, homely but concrete, vivid, and dramatic; the sense of humor is also present. At the same time, Bradford's history is deeply influenced by the belief that God directs everything that happens. Each event he writes about begins with, "*It pleased God to* …".

Besides Bradford's history, there were many other minor works of the kind during this epoch, all of them betraying the same sober and vigorous view of life as typical to Puritan mind.

John Winthrop (1588 – 1649) was an English colonist in America and the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony. He arrived in 1630 aboard the flagship Arbella. As governor of the Colony, he established the center of government at Boston. Winthrop began writing his Journal in 1630 and continued it until his death (from 1630 to 1649). It was a rare and rich account of life during that time. However, according to Foerster (*American Poetry and Prose:* 23) it lacks the philosophy, the historical perspective, the art, and the conscious dignity of Bradford's work. On board the Arbella, he prepared his famous sermon "A Model of Christian Charity", in which he proves his deep allegiance to Puritanism: "*to do justly, to love mercy. To walk humbly with our God; … for we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us* …". His writing style is rather cold. He rarely shows shock or sadness, even when he describes scenes of great unhappiness. Sometimes the dryness of his "plain style" is very

effective. This is his description of the New England coast when he arrived on June 7, 1630: "*We had now fair sunshine weather, and so pleasant a sweet air as did much refresh us, and there came a smell off shore like the smell of a garden*".

Anne Bradstreet (1612? – 1672)

In a *Brief Autobiography*, Anne Bradstreet wrote: "*After a short time I changed my condition and was marryed (sic), and came into this country, where I found a new world and new manners, at which my heart rose. But after I was convinced it was the way of God, I submitted to it and joined the church at Boston*". Her condition had indeed changed in many ways. Her father, a steward to the Earl of Lincoln, became one of the leaders of the Great Migration and would alternate with John Winthrop in the governorship of the Massachusetts Bay. Her husband became governor of the Bay himself. On her arrival to America (1630) she started writing poems.

Famous as the first American poet, Bradstreet's first work, published in London in 1650, was called *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*. Her complete works are available in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet in Prose and Verse*, edited by J.H.Ellis, 1932. She refused to "sing of Wars, of Captains, and of Kings". Instead, she gives us a look into the heart of a seventeenth-century American woman. As a poet, she was a very studied, rarely original, and never spontaneous. By imitating the style of Sir Walter Raleigh, whom she admired, she fell into dull didacticism and sterile artifice. However, her personal warmth, attention to the homely details of daily life, and sensitivity to the beauties of her frontier surroundings often enough made her be acknowledged as a poet with a genuine poetic feeling.

Michael Wigglesworth (1631 – 1705) was a minister, like most of the Puritan poets or writers. He is today remembered for two works – *The Day of*

Doom (1662) and *God's Controversy with New England* (written in 1662 but published more than two hundred years later). The first book is known as the first American best seller. It contains an expression of the basic Puritan beliefs described earlier.

Edward Taylor (1645? – 1729), known as the best writer of the Puritan times, Taylor's works were not published until 1939. A minister for sixty years, Taylor's poetry captures the attitudes of the second generation Puritans in its emphasis on self-examination, particularly in an individual's relations to God. A good edition of Taylor'' poetry is *The Poems of Edward Taylor* edited by Donald E. Stanford, 1960.

Samuel Sewall (1652 – 1730) was American jurist, born in England. Famous for his Diary, Sewall was a representative of a new breed of Puritans who took more interest in secular matters like business, politics, and good living. Sewall kept a diary for almost fifty-seven years (1673 – 1729). It was an excellent indicator of the manners and mores of the times. A good edition is *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, edited by M. Halsey Thomas, 1973.

The New Englanders were quite successful at keeping the absolute "purity" of Puritanism during the early, difficult days of settlement. But when the Indians were no longer a danger, the dark forests had become farmland, and more comfortable settlements had grown up, Puritan strictness began to relax. The change was very slow and was not easily recognized by New Englanders at the time. Cotton Mather was illustrative in this sense, showing how the Puritan tradition grew weaker and weaker.

Cotton Mather (1663 – 1728) was an American clergyman and author of more than 450 works. Although his writing is didactic, moralistic, and filled with references to the Bible, it reveals important information on the history and society

of his time. His best known work is *The Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) which gives an insight into Mather's views on Puritan society. It contains the description of the Salem witch trials. He makes it clear that he personally believed that this was an "assault from Hell" and that all of New England was filled with evil spirits from hell. At the same time, he admitted that the witch trials had been a mistake and that it was good that they were finally stopped. Unlike the characteristic Puritan "plain style", Mather used a complicated language, filled with strange Latin words, which made it hard to read. A good edition of his works is *Selections from Cotton Mather*, edited by Kenneth B. Murdock, 1926. Cotton's *Diary* (Cf. High: 10) gives us a clear picture of the inner life of this strange and often unpleasant man. On almost every page, the critic argues, Mather speaks of his special relationship with God. When he had a pain in his stomach or teeth, he thought about how he had broken God's law with his stomach or teeth. During his last years, he expressed shock at the "increasing wickedness" of the people around him, including his own children.

Their inveterate hostility to beauty and art was a hindrance to the creation of valuable literary works. Reasons were multiple. First, the prevailing Calvinism of the American colonists, especially the New England puritans, contributed to aesthetic barrenness in making art seem irrelevant: God's beauty was all-sufficing, and, consequently, works of nature and of art could be only weak reflections. Emphasis was on ideas and themes rather than on beauty of expression. Last, but not least, Americans of the seventeenth century were too busy to establish themselves in the New World to develop and define a literary culture.

SUMMING -UP

I. Basic Puritan Beliefs

- Total Depravity – through Adam's fall, every human is born sinful – concept of Original Sin.
- Unconditional Election – God "saves" those he wishes – only a few are selected for salvation – concept of predestination.
- Limited Atonement – Jesus died for the chosen only, not for everyone.
- Irresistible Grace – God's grace is freely given, it cannot be earned or denied. Grace is defined as the saving and transfiguring power of God.
- Perseverance of the "saints" – those elected by God have full power to interpret the will of God, and to live uprightly. If anyone rejects grace after feeling its power in his life, he will be going against the will of God – something impossible in Puritanism.

II. The Function of Puritan Writers

- To transform a mysterious God – mysterious because he is separate from the world.
- To make him more relevant to the universe
- To glorify God.

III. The Style of Puritan Writing

- Protestant – against ornateness; reverence for the Bible.
- Purposiveness – there was a purpose to Puritan writing – described in Part II above.
- Puritan writing reflected the character and scope of the reading public, which was literate and well grounded in religion.

IV. Common Themes in Early Puritan Writing

- Idealism – both religious and political
- Pragmaticism – practicality and purposesiveness

V. Forces undermining Puritanism

- A person's natural desire to do good – this works against predestination.
- Dislike of a "closed" life.
- Resentment of the power of the few over many.
- Change in economic conditions – growth of fishery, farms, etc.
- Presence of the leaders of dissent – Anne Hutchinson, Roger Williams.
- The presence of the frontier – concept of self-reliance, individualism, and optimism.
- Change in political conditions – Massachusetts became a Crown colony.
- Theocracy suffered from a lack of flexibility.
- Growth of rationality – use of the mind to know God – less dependence on the Bible.
- Cosmopolitanism of the new immigrants.

VI. Visible Signs of Puritan Decay.

- Visible decay of godliness.
- Manifestations of pride – especially among the new rich.
- Presence of "heretics" – Quakers and Anabaptists.
- Violations of the Sabbath and swearing and sleeping during sermons.
- Decay in family government.

- People full of contention – rise in lawsuits and lawyers.
- Sins of sex and alcohol on the increase.
- Decay in business morality – lying, labourers underpaid, etc.
- No disposition to reform.
- Lacking in social behaviour.

VII. Some aspects of the Puritan Legacy: each has positive and negative implications

- The need for moral justification for private, public, and governmental acts.
- The Questing for Freedom – personal, political, economic, and social.
- The Puritan work ethic.
- Elegiac verse – morbid fascination with death.
- The City upon the hill – concept of manifest destiny.

(from Shucard, Alan. *American Poetry: The Puritans through Walt Whitman*. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts P., 1988)

CHAPTER 2: COLONIAL PERIOD: 1700 – 1800 (The Enlightenment or the Age of Science)

A. The Decline of Puritanism. The Beginning of the Eighteenth Century.

The power of God's providence over man, in the Puritan's view, made him a passive tool in an age when men were striving for economic, political, and cultural independence. The new revolutionary discoveries in science were not in accordance with the system of absolutes imposed by the eternal, changeless God.

Puritanism, though still a powerful force, was fast losing its thrust; the new age, in turning away from a God-centered view of life, gave primary allegiance to values it found best exemplified in the classical culture of the ancient Greek world, man-centered and rational, and of the Roman civilization, with its concern for law and form. The Enlightenment, as it arrived in America, was the first nationalized ideological movement in the American experience. Whereas Puritanism was largely provincial, and largely restricted to New England, the ideas of the Age of Reason permeated the colonies, attracting leaders of thought, from John Adams of Massachusetts, to Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, to Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

At the same time, the Puritan's emphasis on reason and his respect for human learning opened the door to scepticism, which soon was to slip towards materialism. Religious thought, as such, became increasingly liberal; new religious sects were set up, while other people became lost their faith in God.

The Great Awakening (1740 – 1745)

This series of religious revivals, which began with the evangelicalism of Jonathan Edwards was known as the Great Awakening. Although Revivalism as a movement centred in New England, it extended throughout the colonies. Preachers like George Whitfield toured the country, telling people to "repent and be saved by the New Light".

This moment of transition in the evolution of colonial America known under the name of "The Great Awakening" had Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758), an American philosopher and theologian as its main representative. Renown for his powerful preaching and hard-line Calvinism, he helped inspire the revivalist movement known as "The Great Awakening". He is regarded as the greatest theologian of American Puritanism, his main doctrinal work being the *Careful and Strict Enquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will* (1754). The sermons of Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758) were so powerful – and so frightening – that his church was often filled with screams and crying: "*The God that holds you over the fire of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you*," he said. The sermon from which this line is taken, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1733) is till famous for its literary quality. Later in life, Edwards developed into a great theologian, or religious philosopher. In his *Freedom of Will* (1754), he tried to build a philosophy based on the Puritan faith. The work became a primary document in Calvinistic theology, and won Edwards eminence among American philosophers. Defining the will as "*that by which the mind chooses anything*", and freedom or liberty as "*the power, opportunity or advantage, that any one has to do as he pleases, or conducting in any respect, according to his pleasure", the author bases his case for predestined necessity on the postulate that every event must have a cause…That whatsoever*

begins to be which before was not, must have a Cause why it then begins to exist, seems to be the first dictate of the common and natural sense which God hath implanted in the minds of all mankind …" Since volitions are events, they must have causes: "*It is that motive, which, as it stands in the view of the mind, it is the strongest, that determines the Will*." Human motives impel us in the direction of what seems most agreeable, and this direction is determined entirely without independent activity on the part of the individual will. There is, then, no liberty of choice; liberty consists in the ability to act as one chooses. This position is at the basis of Calvinistic doctrine.

The Puritans admired science as "the study of God's material creation". Edwards developed this idea further. He said that there was a close relation between knowledge of the physical world and knowledge of the spiritual world. This idea created a bridge between the old strict Puritan society and the new, freer culture that came later, with its scientific study of the world.

After the emotional fervour has spent its force in New England, a liberalism developed that culminated in Unitarianism.

Reformation was the 16th-century movement for reforming the Roman Catholic Church, which resulted in the establishment of the Protestant churches Many Christians felt that the Pope had too much political power, that there were many abuses such as the sale of indulgences, and that the spirit of the early Church had been lost. The Reformation led to many new Churches (Calvinistic, Deistic, Unitarian, and Transcendentalist). They have widely differing teachings, but they all reject papal authority in favour of that of the Bible.

Calvinism was a religious teaching of Calvin or his followers. John Calvin (1509 – 1564), a French Protestant theologian was one of the most important figures of the Reformation. He taught that doctrine should come directly from the

Bible, that Christians are saved by believing and not by doing good works, and that God chooses those who will be saved.

Deism was a belief in the existence of God that was based more on faith than on religious teaching. It was a trend of rational religious thought, characterised by belief in the existence of a God who rules natural phenomenons by established laws, not by miracles, and in the rational nature of men, who are capable of understanding these laws and of guiding their lives by them. In America, deism evolved partly as a protest against Calvinism, partly as an attempt to reconcile religious belief with scientific thought. The former attitude appears in the writings of Charles Chauncey and Jonathan Mayhew, and the latter in Cotton Mather's *The Christian Philosopher* (1721), which attempts to give proof of benevolent design in the universe. A more positive deism, advocating a belief in a natural religion and having a more utilitarian basis, appears in the writings of Benjamin Franklin and the eclectic philosophy of Thomas Jefferson. The extreme expression of deism is Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794 –1795). By about 1810 its force was arrested by the emotional reaction of revivalism. The emphasis on the perfectibility of man and of human institutions, engendered by the Revolution, gave way to renewed concern with the preparation for immortality. Deism thus declined as a movement, but its views continued to appear sporadically in such authors as Abner Kneeland, the two Owens, Orestes Brownson, and Frances Wright, and it is a source of later rational and sceptical philosophic thought, as well as of the liberalism of Unitarianism, Universalism, and other movements.

Unitarianism was a Christian religious sect, which rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and believed that God was one person. Deism served the needs of some of the intellectual, philosophically minded men of the period, but Unitarianism, a somewhat less radical form of religious rationalism, attracted more support. They

emphasised the "unity" of God (single personality). As a religious doctrine, it came into conflict with Traditional Calvinism; it denied Christ's divinity and the whole concept of trinitarianism (the doctrine of the trinity); it emphasised ethical and humanitarian action as the centre of religious worship, i.e. it emphasised the trustworthiness of human reason and moral conscience, but they relied more heavily on the revelations of the Bible; and it affirmed man's potential for achieving perfection. Unitarianism, in effect, pointed the way to American Transcendentalism.

As the impulse that gave seventeenth America its most elaborate culture, and as a formal movement of serious significance in American life, Puritanism was dead, but its elements were deeply infused into American life and thought.

B. The Enlightenment (The "Age of Reason") and the Revolution. Late Eighteenth Century.

Some thinkers and writers believed that reason and science, not religion, would advance human progress. Its foundations were laid by the philosophy of Locke and the science of Newton. It accompanied great social and technological change and many see it as having led to the French and American revolutions. The religion of the Enlightenment was Deism. In philosophy, Naturalism developed that stressed the belief that all phenomena are covered by laws of science and those all-teleological (i.e. all-powerful) explanations are therefore without value. The theory of literary naturalism viewed a literary style combining a deterministic view of human nature and a non-idealistic, detailed observation of events.

The Enlightenment (turning away from a God-centred view of life), as it arrived in America, was the first nationalised ideological movement in the American experience. Whereas Puritanism was regional, and largely restricted to New England, the ideas of the Age of Reason permeated the colonies, attracting leaders of thought, from John Adams of Massachusetts, to Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, to Thomas Jefferson of Virginia.

The Puritan idea according to which man was born sinful and was able to regenerate only through God's grace was replaced by a new one, namely that man was by his own nature capable of improving morally. The optimism of the period was also reflected in the liberalism of thought, favourable to change, the notion of regression being replaced by the idea of "progress".

The Founding Fathers and the American Revolution

The most memorable writing in eighteenth-century America was done, according to High's opinion (*An Outline of American Literature*: 15) by the Founding Fathers, the men who led the Revolution of 1775 – 1783 and who framed the Constitution of 1789. None of them were writers of fiction. Rather, they were practical philosophers, and their most typical product was the political pamphlet. They both admired and were active in the European "Age of Reason" or "Enlightenment". They shared the Enlightenment belief that human intelligence (or "reason") could understand both nature and man. Unlike the Puritans – who saw man as a sinful failure – the Enlightenment thinkers were sure that man could improve himself. They wanted to create a happy society based on justice and freedom. Among the literary representatives of the Enlightenment, Benjamin Franklin is definitely the most important one; there are still others whose names are

worth mentioning: Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Trumbull, Joel Barlow, William Dunlap, and last but not least, St John de Crevecoeur.

The Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. The Revolution forced the colonists to consider much more carefully what "America" and "Americanism" meant, and why they deserved independent existence. They entered the war as a nation, with strong convictions that they knew what they were fighting for; having won, they now had to define that nation. They had to examine and defend their ideas and ideals, their way of life. Repeatedly, they tried to answer the question of the Frenchman St John de Crevecoeur, "What is an American?"

At the end of the Revolution, Americans looked with great hopes towards the future, conscious of being a different civilisation and not a projection of European culture and civilisation.

The political events of the Revolution gave a largely political character to the literature of the time as well. The *Declaration of Independence* is indubitably a highly effective piece of prose. Adopted on 4 July 1776, it was the formal proclamation of the thirteen colonies, announcing their separation from Great Britain. In the second Continental Congress on June 7, Richard Henry Lee, a Virginia delegate, proposed a resolution of independence, and four days later Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston were appointed as a committee to draft the declaration. The actual writing was done by Jefferson, although corrections were made by Franklin, Adams, and the Congress at large. The document is based on the natural-rights theory of government, derived from Locke and eighteenth-century French philosophers, and proclaims that the function of government is to guarantee the inalienable rights with which men are endowed. These include "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness". The declaration

contended that, since George III had wilfully violated these rights, revolution was justifiable and necessary. The document was signed (August 2) by 56 colonial representatives.

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was an U.S. patriot and political writer, born in England. He was neither a learned man nor an original thinker, and many of his ideas he borrowed from his contemporaries. However, he was one of the most gifted and effective political propagandists who ever lived, and no one did more by his pen for revolutionary America. Among his most famous pamphlets, we could mention "Common Sense" (1776) – the first open demand for a declaration of independence. At a time of rising passion against the British government, the work was the first unqualified argument for complete political independence, and turned colonial thought in the direction that, six months later, culminated in the Declaration of Independence. Over 100,000 copies were sold by the end of March, and it is generally considered the most important literary influence on the movement for independence. Other pamphlets by Thomas Paine were "The American Crisis" (1776), "The Rights of Man", "The Age of Reason" – an assault on the kind of conservative, organised religion which he believed supported tyranny, superstition, and human misery everywhere. It was a deistic work, in which he referred to man as having the moral duty to observe the real and ever-existing word of God in the creation and to strive to imitate this liberality and benevolence. Further on he attacked the Bible, its prophets and, in general, its inconsistency.

The Rise of a National Literature

Having won their political independence, Americans searched for ways to create a culture and a literature of their own to express the sense and spirit of their new civilisation. They were no longer British and European, but American. Till then, they only borrowed and imitated European models. America was a new nation with no usable past or literary tradition. As such, there were some who felt that the U.S.A. did not have the necessary resources for a distinctive culture and must always lean on Europe. There were still others who were worried about the lack of national feeling in American literature. The greatest writers, as American literature grew and flowered, knew how to combine the best qualities of the literature of the Old and New Worlds and gave in time its universal character. But to reach that end, American literature passed through several periods of literary development. During the Enlightenment, American literature was still only partially American; largely, it still depended on British models and standards. It was still searching for original ways of presenting its own materials and expressing its own attitudes.

Novels were the first popular literature of the newly independent U.S.A. This was astonishing because almost no American novels were written before the Revolution. Like drama, the novel had been considered a “dangerous” form of literature by the American Puritans. Novels put “immoral” ideas into the heads of young people.

Among the forms which lost considerable ground after the Revolution were the diary and the journal, both favourite means of self-expression in an earlier, more introspective era. The published sermon rapidly declined in popularity and though travel narratives were still common, they were no longer so widely read as earlier.

In the early days of independence, American novels served a useful purpose. Unlike poetry, the language of these novels spoke directly to ordinary Americans. They used realistic details to describe the reality of American life. They helped Americans see themselves as a single nation.

Despite the increasing popularity of the novel, few men of substance believed it worthy of serious consideration as an art form. First, there was very little in America for the novelist to write about; secondly, it was much easier to imitate European novels than to write an American book.

The novel of morality and sentiment, the "Gothic" novel of suspense and emotion, the picaresque-satiric novel and the historical romance started to get their way on the American literary market. William Hill Brown's *Power of Sympathy* (1789), the first successful American sentimental novel, was followed by Susannah Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791), a "tale of truth" who made readers cry over the sad fate of a young girl lured into sin (Cf. High: 28). Royal Tyler's *Algerine Captive* (1797) – an attack on the American government for its support of slavery, and H.H.Brackenridge's *Modern Chivalry* (1792 – 1815) were satiric novels, but the type never attained popularity.

Far more interesting and amusing, **Hugh Henry Brackenridge** (1748 – 1816), born in Scotland, was a minister first and then practised law. He also had an active political career. He was known for his satirical picaresque novel, *Modern Chivalry*. Although influenced by Cervantes, Swift, Fielding, and Samuel Butler, the work is distinguished as the first extended depiction of backwoods life in American fiction. The book is a series of adventures in which the author laughs at America's "backwoods" culture. His targets included religious and national groups (the Quakers, the Irish, the Indians), customs, (slavery, sword or gun fights), and occupations (law, religion, medicine). As in *Don Quixote*, by the Spanish writer

Cervantes, the hero travels around the country with his low-class servant. He experiences problems every step of the way. According to high (28), although it had been called one of the great forgotten books of American literature, the awkward structure and dialogue of *Modern Chivalry* make it rather hard to read today.

The Gothic tradition attracted **Charles Brockden Brown**, the most gifted novelist of the pre-Cooper years, whose *Wieland* (1798) and *Ormond* (1799) were psychological "Gothic novels" in the European style. He had the ability to penetrate the complicated and often cruel minds. His interest in the psychology of horror (he was a sympathiser of Anne Radcliffe) made him present a world of horror with murders, heroines lured into sin on a background of emotional power. Many years later, his influence was felt by such writers as Hawthorne and Poe. He held high critical standards concerning American literature, believed in using distinctively American materials, and in writing novels whose ideas would stir thinkers while their plots would attract ordinary readers. Although Brown was appreciated by Keats, Shelley, and Scott, and even influenced his own master, Godwin, he failed to achieve his aims because of his haste, immaturity, stilted language, fascination by the pathological, and inability to master completely the Godwinian plot structure. Despite his failings, his Gothic romances transferred to an American setting have a dark emotional intensity that gives his work more than historical significance.

SUMMING –UP

I. Common Beliefs of Enlightenment

(a European philosophical movement of the l7th and 18th centuries, characterised by belief in the power of reason and by innovations in political, religious, and educational doctrine), *Deism* (belief in the existence of a God on the evidence of reason and nature, with rejection of supernatural revelation) and *Naturalism* (a literary style combining a deterministic view of human nature and a nonidealistic, detailed observation of events).

- Faith in natural goodness – a human is born without taint or sin; the concept of tabula rasa or blank slate (list).
- Perfectibility of a human being – it is possible to improve situations of birth, economy, society, and religion.
- The sovereignty of reason – echoes of Rene Descartes' 'cogito ergo sum' or 'I think, therefore I am' (as the first certitude in resolving universal doubt).
- Universal benevolence – the attitude of helping everyone.
- Outdated social institutions cause unsociable behaviour – religious, social, economic, and political institutions, which have not modernised, force individuals into unacceptable.

II. Functions of the writers of this Period

- A searching inquiry in all aspects of the world around.
- Interest in the classics as well as in the Bible.
- Interest in nature – the "absentee landlord" phenomenon.
- Interest in science and scientific experiments.
- Optimism – experiments in utopian communities.
- Sense of a person's duty to succeed.

- Constant search of the self – emphasis on individualism in: a. personal religion; b. study of the Bible for personal interpretation.

III. Characteristics of the 18th Century

- Dawn of liberalism: freedom from restraint; age of revolution in America and France; experimentation in science; economic concept of laissez-faire; the presence of the frontier.

IV. Results of Deism

- Rational religion; God considered to be like a clockmaker; the world or the clock operates on its own mechanical and physical laws; if we understand these laws, we will understand the maker; scientific curiosity, revolution, growth in nationalism, growth in materialism, the age of the gifted amateur, and belief in progressivism.

CHAPTER 3: AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

The American Scene

America was quickly expanding its territory and increasing its population. It was the age of railroads, the rush for gold in California; America was the land with a laissez-faire economy, the land of all opportunities where wealth seemed astonishingly easy to attain. Americans seemed to be only interested in getting richer and richer by working twenty-four hours a day. As work had been a virtue among the Puritans, so now the making of money was conceived as a patriotic duty, a contribution to the rapid development of the country. Consequently, literature was not in high favours, because it reduced the speed of moneymaking. Still, an adequate public for the new literary movement was prepared.

The most profound and comprehensive ideal of romanticism is the vision of a greater personal freedom for the individual. Man is something more than a thinking machine in a machine universe. God is not outside the universe, forgetting and forgotten, but in it and in us, an immanent presence. The secret of life in the new outlook, lay not in the head but in the heart. Man must trust his own heart, know the truth through intuition. The inner life and its needs, in the romantic view, are not identical in all men. If men are born free and equal as human beings, they are also born different, no two of them alike. Each should therefore be true to himself, express his uniquely valuable self. The new words in fashion now were self-expression, self-realisation, self-culture, self-help, self-reliance.

"*Who reads an American book*?" – Sydney Smith's question in the Edinburgh Review of 1820 was painful to Americans. They started by imitating

European culture but at the same time, they were ambitious and sensitive, striving hard for an authentic literature. As time went on, the situation was to get better, in that American writing gained in volume and quantity.

The "Knickerbocker Writers"

A national literature began in the city of New York with the "Knickerbocker Writers". A "Knickerbocker" was a native or resident of the state of New York; he was also a descendant of the Dutch settlers of New York. The name is generalised from Diedrich Knickerbocker, a fictitious author of Washington Irving's History of New York (1809). The Knickerbocker Group was a school of writers whose association was primarily geographical and due to similar literary tastes. The period from 1810 to 1840 is known as the "Knickerbocker era" of American literature.

Irving, Cooper, and Bryant are best known within the Knickerbocker Group. They were drawn to New York by advantages it offered literary people.

Characteristics of the Romantic Movement exemplified in American literature are sentimentalism (Charlotte Temple, The Sketch Book); primitivism and the cult of the noble savage (Hiawatha); political liberalism (Jefferson, Paine, Barlow); the celebration of natural beauty and the simple life (Cooper, Emerson, Thoreau); introspection (Poe, Thoreau); idealisation of the common man uncorrupted by civilisation (Whittier, Cooper); interest in the picturesque past (Irving, Hawthorne); interest in remote places (Melville); medievalism (Longfellow); the Gothic romance (Brown); concern with a crepuscular world of mystery (Poe); individualism (Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman); technical innovation (Whitman's prosedy); humanitarianism (*Uncle Toms' Cabin*); morbid melancholy (Poe); native legendry (*Evangeline*); and the historical romance (Simms, Cooper).

SUMMING –UP

Elements of Romanticism

- Frontier: vast expanse, freedom, no geographic limitations.
- Optimism: greater than in Europe because of the presence of frontier.
- Experimentation: in science, in institutions.
- Mingling of races: immigrants in large numbers arrive to the US
- Growth of industrialisation: polarisation of north and south; north becomes industrialised, south remains agricultural.

Romantic Subject Matters

- The quest for beauty: non-didactic, "pure beauty".
- The use of the far-away and non-normal – antique and fanciful:
- In historical perspective: antiquarianism; antiquing or artificially ageing; interest in the past.
- Characterisation and mood: grotesque, gothicism, sense of terror, fear; use of the odd and queer.
- Escapism – from American problems.
- Interest in external nature – for itself, for beauty:
- Nature as source for the knowledge of the primitive.
- Nature as refuge.
- Nature as revelation of God to the individual.

Romantic Attitudes

- Appeals to imagination; use of the "willing suspension of disbelief".
- Stress on emotion rather than reason; optimism, geniality.

- Subjectivity: in form and meaning.

Romantic Techniques

- Remoteness of settings in time and space.
- Improbable plots.
- Inadequate or unlikely characterisation.
- Authorial subjectivity.
- Socially "harmful morality"; a world of "lies".
- Organic principle in writing: form rises out of content, non-formal.
- Experimentation in new forms: picking up and using obsolete patterns.
- Cultivation of the individualised, subjective form of writing.

Philosophical Patterns

- Nineteenth century marked by the influence of French revolution of 1789 and its concepts of liberty, fraternity, equality;
- Jacksonian democracy of the frontier.
- Intellectual and spiritual revolution – rise of Unitarianism.
- Middle colonies – utopian experiments.
- America basically middle-class and English – practising laissez-faire (live and let live), modified because of geographical expansion and the need for subsidies for setting up industries, building of railroads, and others.
- Institution of slavery in the South – myth of the master and slave – modified reference to Greek democracy based on a slave proletariat.

The Renaissance in or the Flowering of American Literature

The decade of 1850 – 59 is unique in the annals of literary production. For a variety of reasons American authors, both African and European published remarkable works in such a concentration of time that this feat, it is safe to say, has not been duplicated in this or any other literary tradition.

Works by European American Writers:

- 1850: Ralph Waldo Emerson – *Representative Men*
- 1850: Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*
- 1851: Herman Melville: *Moby-Dick*
- 1852: Harriet Beecher Stowe: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
- 1854: Henry David Thoreau: *Walden*
- 1855: Walt Whitman: *Leaves of Grass*

Social and political changes

- Andrew Jackson's unsuccessful bid for presidency in 1824, when he won the plurality of votes but lost to John Quincy Adams when the election was decided in the House of Representatives. Jackson, a man of common beginnings, was the first candidate of the new states. In 1828 election, Jackson convincingly defeated Adams bringing to an end the domination of the eastern establishment.
- The beginning of industrial and technological developments – key markers were the introduction of steamboats, spinning mills, Eli Whitney's cotton gin, the clipper ships, railroads, and telegraph.
- "*The success of northern industry made slavery appear anomalous, and to the free labor of the North slavery became … repugnant*."
- The industrial revolution also raised the issue of the overworked labourers. Influenced by the French philosopher Charles Fourier, Albert Brisbane published

The Social destiny of Men (1840). In it Brisbane states: "… *monotony, uniformity, intellectual inaction, and torpor reign: distrust, isolation, separation, conflict and antagonisms are almost universal. … Society is spiritually a desert*."

- Utopian experiments to counter the industrial revolution – Robert Owen's New Harmony in Indiana; George and Sophia Ripley's Brook Farm; Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands; and many Fourierist colonies.
- Other experiments: Amelia Bloomer's bloomers worn by women in some Fourierist colonies, mesmerism, phrenology, hydropathy. Giving up of tobacco or alcohol, the eating of Dr. Graham's bread.
- The major reform movements: abolition of slavery, the rights of women, and the civil war. Reformism was, according to Whittier, "moral steam-enginery" and it was fed by two impulses – the idea of evolution even before Darwin and the idea of the "perfection of the social order."
- Transcendentalism – the philosophical, literary, social, and theological movement.

CHAPTER 4: AMERICAN TRANSCENDENTALISM

The most clearly defined Romantic Movement in the U.S.A. during the mid nineteenth century was Transcendentalism. A Transcendental philosophy was any philosophy based upon the doctrine that the principles of reality are to be discovered by the study of the processes of thought, or a philosophy emphasising the intuitive and spiritual above the empirical; more simply, transcendentalism was a philosophy that stressed belief in transcendental things and the importance of the spiritual rather than material existence; in the U.S.,

it was associated with Emerson. Other leaders included Thoreau, Hawthorne, Alcott and the younger W.E.Channing.

Transcendentalism was a reaction against eighteenth rationalism, the sceptical philosophy of Locke, and the confining religious orthodoxy of New England Calvinism. This romantic, idealistic, mystical, and individualistic belief was more a cast of thought than a systematic philosophy. The name, as well as many of the ideas, was derived from Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) in which he declares: "I call all knowledge *transcendental* which is concerned, not with objects, but with our mode of knowing objects so far as this is possible *a priori*." In its larger outlines, the belief had as its fundamental base a monism holding to the unity of the world and God and the immanence of God in the world. Because of this in-dwelling of divinity, everything in the world is a microcosm containing within itself all the laws and meaning of existence. Likewise, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world, and latently contains all that the world contains. Man may fulfil his divine potentialities either through a (rapt) firm mystical state, in which the divine is infused into the human, or through coming into contact with the truth, beauty and goodness embodied in nature and originating in the Over-Soul. Thus occurs the doctrine of correspondence between the tangible world and the human mind, and the identity of moral and physical laws. Through belief in the divine authority of the soul's intuitions and impulses, based on this identification of the individual soul with God, there developed the doctrine of self-reliance and individualism, the disregard of external authority, tradition and logical demonstration, and the absolute optimism of the movement.

The primary beliefs varied greatly as they were interpreted in the writings of different authors, although the most important literary expression of transcendental thought is considered to lie in Thoreau's *Walden* and in such works of Emerson as

"Nature", "The American Scholar", The Divinity School Address", "The Over-Soul", "Self-Reliance" and "Compensation". The Dial (1840 – 1844), a quarterly magazine of literature, philosophy and religion, was the organ of the New England Transcendentalist movement and grew out of the informal meetings of the Transcendental Club.

Although Alcott, who gave the magazine its title, thought it insufficiently transcendental, it was considered obscure by the general public and savagely attacked by the press. The first editors were Margaret Fuller and George Ripley who failed to give the magazine unity, admitting many contradictory articles; they were followed by Emerson (1842) who gave The Dial a more unified attitude. Among contributors were Thoreau, Emerson, Alcott, Theodore Parker, Elizabeth Peabody, George Ripley, W.H.Channing.

Transcendentalism was often described as "Romanticism on Puritan soil". Unlike Calvinism, it celebrated not the omnipotence of God, but the limitless possibilities of the self.

As a conclusion, the romantic view of life had as **basic tenets**:

- Its revolt against the eighteenth Unitarian rationalism.
- Its affirmation of the supremacy of the heart, the inner life of the self.
- Its expansive, optimistic, young American environment.
- Its romantic quest, "individualism in feeling and imagination", i.e. intuition. The individualism they proclaimed was that of the whole self, in which the affirmation of the feelings and imagination seemed to be central.
- Self-reliance (Rousseau in *Confessions* said: "*All men, it seems, are born free and different, and each should be himself and pursue happiness in his own way*.") The dignity of men requires that a man trust himself / his intuition and never imitate other men; every man is unique (Emerson said: "*Thrust thyself: every heart*

vibrates to that iron string" … "If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him…". This romantic idea of the uniqueness of every man comes in direct contrast with the Enlightenment idea of the universal man, all men being basically the same.

- Feeling (more introverted and personal, but stronger and deeper) – love – the heart were central to the Romantic period as reason had been during the Enlightenment.
- Attraction for the indefinite, the remote and strange (Poe, Emerson).
- Kinship of man and nature (Emerson said: "*Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of the mind*"; or "*Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact*". This led to the doctrine of correspondence between the inner spiritual reality and the outer reality (Thoreau, Emerson).
- Self-expression in literature; as art of the self the classical mind had viewed literature as an imitation of life, a representation of the actions of men; the romantics substituted the concept of literature as an *imitation* by the concept of literature as *expression*.
- The doctrine of organic form according to which a work of art is not a mechanical construction but an organic structure. Romanticism conceives of any work of art as a structure growing in an environment, consciously imposed from the outside. Form grows naturally out of idea (Cf. Emerson); art, according to him should be rational, almost a mathematical logic in which tight economy and perfect harmony have to be closely obeyed.
- Symbolism and allegory used as artistic methods for expressing a complex and difficult kind of meaning (Poe, Hawthorne, Melville).
- A new style in writing prose; the enlightenment writing was characterised by formal clarity and order; proper words were in proper places, and unity, proportion

and balance produced a design that appealed to the mind; the Romantic prose had a more flowing contour, appealing to the senses and emotions. The medium changed as well, from social communication (emphasis on the sameness of men) to self-expression (emphasis on their differences). Consequently, style became more personal and individual (Thoreau).

SUMMING –UP

American Transcendentalism: An Introduction

The Assumed, Presumed, or the Self-Identified Transcendentalists:

The Big Three: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller.

Others: Amos Bronson Alcott, Orestes Augustus Brownson, William Henry Channing, William Elery Channing, James, Freeman Clarke, John Sullivan Dwight, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, Sophia Peabody – Hawthorne, Frederick Hedge, James Marsh, Theodore Parker, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, George and Sophia Ripley, Jones Very, and others.

Central Points of Agreement

NOTE: The Transcendentalists, in keeping with the individualistic nature of this philosophy, disagreed readily with each other.

Here are four points of general agreement:

Basic Assumption:

The intuitive faculty, instead of the rational or sensical, became the means for a conscious union of the individual psyche (known in Sanskrit as Atman) with

the world psyche also known as the Oversoul, life-force, prime mover and God (known in Sanskrit as Brahma).

Basic Premises:

An individual is the spiritual centre of the universe – and in an individual can be found the clue to nature, history and, ultimately, the cosmos itself. It is not a rejection of the existence of God, but a preference to explain an individual and the world in terms of an individual.

The structure of the universe literally duplicates the structure of the individual self – all knowledge, therefore, begins with self-knowledge. This is similar to Aristotle's dictum "know thyself".

Transcendentalists accepted the neo-Platonic conception of nature as a living mystery, full of signs – nature is symbolic.

The belief that individual virtue and happiness depend upon self-realisation – this depends upon the reconciliation of two universal psychological tendencies:

- the expansive of self- transcending tendency – a desire to embrace the whole world – to know and become one with the world.
- the contracting or self-asserting tendency – the desire to withdraw, remain unique and separate – an egotistical existence.

Correspondence

It is a concept which suggests that the external is united with the internal. Physical nature is neutral or indifferent or objective; it is neither helpful nor hurtful; it is neither beautiful nor ugly. What makes one give such attributes to nature is that individual's imposition of her / his temperament or mood or psyche. If I'm feeling

lousy, I may dismiss a gorgeous day; if I'm feeling bright and cheerful then the most dreary of days becomes tolerable. Therefore, the Transcendentalists believed that "knowing yourself" and "studying nature" is the same activity. Nature mirrors our psyche. If I cannot understand myself, maybe understanding nature will help. Here is Darrel Abel'' "take" on this concept:

"*Since one divine character was immanent everywhere in nature and in man, man's reason could discern the spiritual ideas in nature and his senses could register impressions of the material forms of nature. To man the subject, nature the object, which shared the same divine constitution as himself, presented external images to the innate ideas in his soul*".

Transcendentalism and the American Past

Transcendentalism as a movement is rooted in the American past; to Puritanism, it owed its pervasive morality and the "doctrine of divine light". It is also similar to the Quaker "inner light" (a member of the Society of Friends, a Christian denomination founded by George Fox in 1650; Friend). However, both these concepts assume acts of God, whereas intuition is an act of an individual. In Unitarianism, deity was reduced to a kind of immanent principle in every person – an individual was the true source of moral light. To Romanticism, it owed the concept of nature as a living mystery and not a clockwork universe (deism) which is fixed and permanent.

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;

And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.

(Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature", 1836)

Transcendentalism was a 1. religious, 2. philosophical and 3. literary movement and is located in the history of American Thought as post Unitarian and free thinking in religion, Kantian and idealistic in philosophy, and romantic and individualistic in literature.

A Brief Chronology of Events

- 1832 Emerson resigns the ministry of the Unitarian Church – unable to administer the Holy Communion.
- 1836 The annus mirabilis of the movement, during which Emerson published "Nature" (the "gospel" of transcendentalism); George Ripley published "Discourses on the Philosophy of Religion"; Orestes Brownson published "New Views of Christianity, Society, and Church"; Bronson Alcott published "Record of Conversions in the Gospel" (based on classroom discussions in his Temple School in Boston, and provoking severe criticism); the Transcendental Club met for the first time.
- 1837 Emerson delivers his Phi Kappa address on "The American Scholar" at Harvard, which James Russell Lowell called "an event without former parallel in our literary annals".
- 1838 Emerson delivers his Divinity Address at Harvard which touched off a great storm in religious circles.
- 1840 The founding of The Dial, a Transcendental magazine, which "enjoyed its obscurity," to use Emerson's words, for four years.

- 1841 The launching of George Ripley's Brook Farm – a utopian experiment. Hawthorne was a resident there for a short time and wrote *The Blithedale Romance* based upon his experience there.
- 1842 Alcott's utopian experiment at Fruitlands.
- 1845 Thoreau goes to live at Walden Pond.
- 1846 Thoreau is put in jail for his refusal to pay poll tax.
- 1850 Passage of the Fugitive Slave Act. The Transcendentalists found themselves increasingly involved in abolition of slavery.
- 1855 Walt Whitman publishes his Leaves of Grass.
- 1859 Charles Darwin's Origin of Species is published.
- 1862 Henry David Thoreau dies.

Basic Tenets of American Transcendentalism

Note: this list must not be considered a creed common to all transcendentalists. It is merely a grouping of certain important concepts shared by many of them.

- Transcendentalism, essentially, is a form of idealism.
- The transcendentalist "transcends" or rises above the lower animalistic impulses of life (animal drives) and moves from the rational to a spiritual realm.
- The human soul is part of the Oversoul or universal spirit (or "float" for Whitman) to which it and other souls return at death.
- Therefore, every individual is to be respected because everyone has a portion of that Oversoul (God).
- The Oversoul or Life Force or God can be found everywhere – travel to holy places is, therefore, not necessary.
- God can be found in both nature and human nature (Nature, Emerson stated, has spiritual manifestations).

- Jesus also had part of God in himself – he was divine as everyone is divine – except in that he lived a more exemplary and transcendental life than anyone else. In addition, he made the best use of that Power which is within each one.
- "*Miracle is monster*". The miracles of the Bible are not to be regarded as important as they were to the people of the past. Miracles are all about us – the whole world is a miracle and the smallest creature is one. "*A mouse is a miracle enough to stagger quintillions of infidels*". – Whitman
- More important than a concern about the afterlife, should be a concern for this life – "*the one thing in the world of value is the active soul*". - Emerson
- Death is never to be feared, for at death the soul merely passes to the Oversoul.
- Emphasis should be placed on the here and now. "*Give me one world at a time*." – Thoreau
- Evil is a negative – merely an absence of good. Light is more powerful than darkness because one ray of light penetrates the dark.
- Power is to be obtained by defying fate or predestination, which seem to work against humans, by exercising one's own strength. Emphasis on self-reliance.
- Hence, the emphasis is placed on a human thinking.
- The transcendentalists see the necessity of examples of great leaders, writers, philosophers, and others, to show what an individual can become through thinking and action.
- It is foolish to worry about consistence, because what an intelligent person believes tomorrow, if he / she trusts oneself, tomorrow may be completely different from what that person thinks and believes today. "*A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds*." – Emerson
- The unity of life and universe must be realised. There is s relationship between all things.

- One must have faith in intuition, for no church or creed can communicate truth.
- Reform must not be emphasised – true reform comes from within.

Reasons for the Rise of American Transcendentalism

There was no one precise "cause" for the beginning of Transcendentalism. According to Paul Boller, chance, coincidence and several independent events, thoughts and tendencies seemed to have converged in the 1830s in New England. Some of these were:

- The steady erosion of Calvinism.
- The progressive secularisation of modern thought under the impact of science and technology.
- The emergence of a Unitarian intelligentsia with the means, leisure, and training to pursue literature and scholarship.
- The increasing insipidity and irrelevance of liberal religion to questing your minds – lack of involvement in women's rights and abolitionism.
- The intrusion of the machine into the New England garden and the disruption of the old order by the burgeoning industrialism.
- The impact of European ideas on Americans travelling abroad.
- The appearance of talented and energetic young people like Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau on the scene.
- The imperatives of logic itself for those who take ideas seriously – the impossibility, for instance, of accepting modern science without revising traditional religious views.

Important ideas from: Warren, Robert Penn, Cleanth Brooks, and R.W.B.Lewis. "A National Literature and Romantic Individualism" in *Romanticism*. Eds. James Barbour and Thomas Quirk. NY: Garland, 1986. 3-24.

- Transcendentalism was a philosophical, literary, social, and theological movement.
- Its origin is traced to the relaxing of Puritan Calvinism into Unitarianism – a belief very much like Deism. From its early liberalism, Unitarianism developed, for some of the young intellectuals, into "*a new orthodoxy of smug social conformity that denied the spiritual and emotional depths of experience – corpse-cold Unitarianism, as Emerson was to call it*".
- German and English Romanticism provided some inspiration towards the search for some deeper "truth".
- "*Transcendentalism represented a complex response to the democratisation of American life, to the rise of science and the new technology, and to the new industrialism – to the whole question, in short, of the redefinition of the relation of man to nature and to other men that was being demanded by the course of history*".

Influences:

- From Plato came the idealism according to which reality subsists beyond the appearances of the world. Plato also suggests that the world is an expression of spirit, or mind, which is sheer intelligibility and therefore good.
- From Immanuel Kant came the notion of the "*native spontaneity of the human mind*" against the passive conception of the eighteenth century sensational theory (also known as the philosophy of empiricism of John Locke and David Hume; the concept that the mind begins as a tabula rasa and that all knowledge develops from sensation).

- From Coleridge came the importance of wonder, of antirational, and the importance of individual consciousness.
- From Puritanism came the ethical seriousness and the aspect of Jonathan Edwards that suggested that an individual can receive divine light immediately and directly.
- "*Transcendentalism was, at its core, a philosophy of naked individualism, aimed at the creation of the New American, the self-reliant man, complete and independent*".
- "*The achievement of the transcendentalists has a grandeur. They did confront, and helped define, the great issues of their times, and if they did not resolve those issues, we of the late twentieth century, who have not yet resolved them, are in no position to look down our noses at their effort*."

Towards a Definition of Transcendentalism: A Few Comments:

(from Henry David Gray, "Emerson: A Statement of N.E. Transcendentalism as Expressed in the Philosophy of its Chief Exponent", 1917)

- "*The spirit of the time is in every form a protest against usage and a search for principles*" – Emerson in the opening number of *The Dial*.

"*I was given to understand that whatever was unintelligible would be certainly Transcendental*" – Charles Dickens in "American Notes": "*I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations*." – Thoreau, Journal, V: 4.

Authors Life and Literary Activity

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706 – 1790)

He was the first brilliant representative of American literature; at the same time, he was a great statesman, a physicist, a philosopher and as great a publicist as well. He is a typical of the eighteenth century Enlightenment writer.

One of America's Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on 17 January 1706. He was a brilliant, industrious, and versatile man. Starting as a poor boy in a family of seventeen children, he became famous on both sides of the Atlantic as a statesman, scientist and author. Thomas Jefferson characterised him as "*the greatest man and ornament of the age and country in which he lived"*. Despite his fame, however, he always remained a man of industry and simple tastes.

Franklin's writings range from informal sermons on thrift to urbane essays. He wrote gracefully as well as clearly, with a wit that often gave an edge to his words. Though the style he formed came from imitating two noted essayists, Addison and Steele, ("*familiar but not coarse and elegant but not ostentatious*") he made it into his own. He was also influenced, to a certain degree, by Cotton Mather, a prominent figure of the third Puritan generation in New England. Mather taught him "to do Good which perhaps gave me a turn of thinking that had an influence on some of the principal future events of my life… including the creation of Silence Dogood".

His writings show the Enlightenment spirit in America at its best and most optimistic. His style is quite modern and, even today, his works are a joy to read.

Although he strongly disagreed with the opinions of the Puritans, his works show a return to their "plain style". At the same time, there is something "anti-literary" about Franklin. He had no liking for poetry and felt that writing should always have a practical purpose.

We can see these ideas even in his earliest work, the *Dogood Papers* (1722), written when he was only sixteen. These are a series of short pieces, which are very funny, but full of moral advice (praising honesty and attacking drunkenness, etc.). His *Poor Richard's Almanac* (1732 – 1757) gives similar advice. Almanacs, containing much useful information for farmers and sailors (a calendar filled with advertisements, weather forecasts, sea tides, recipes, jokes, etc.), were a popular form of practical literature. Together with the Bible and the newspaper, they were the only reading matters in most Colonial households. Franklin made his *Almanac* interesting by creating the character "Poor Richard". Each new edition continued a simple but realistic story about Richard, his wife and family. He also included many "sayings", about saving money and working hard. These proverbs entered the American mind and stuck: "Lost time is never found again"; "Up sluggard, and waste not life; in the grave will be sleeping enough"; "A rolling stone gathers no moss"; "Honesty is the best policy"; "A penny saved is a penny earned". The *Almanac* became one of the most influential publications in American history, a delight to generations of readers gratified by preachments on the virtues of hard work, thrift, and success.

In 1757, Franklin collected the best of his sayings, making them into an essay called *The Way to Wealth*. This little book became one of the best sellers of the Western world and was translated into many languages.

During the first half of his adult life, Franklin worked as a printer of books and newspapers. Nevertheless, he was an energetic man with wide interests. As a

scientist, he wrote important essays on electricity, which were widely read and admired in Europe. His many inventions, his popularity as a writer and his diplomatic activity in support of the American Revolution made him world-famous in his own lifetime.

Although Franklin wrote a great deal, almost all of his important works are quite short. He invented one type of short prose which greatly influenced the development of a story-telling form in America, called the "hoax", or the "tall tale" (later made famous by Mark Twain). A hoax is funny because it is so clearly a lie. In his *Wonders of Nature in America*, Franklin reports "the great leap of the whale up the falls of Niagara which is esteemed by all who have seen it as one of the finest spectacles in Nature". During the Revolution, he developed this form of humour into a powerful propaganda too for American independence.

His only real book and most famous work is his *Autobiography.*

He wrote slightly more than half of the manuscript at Twyford, Hampshire, England, in 1771; a small portion at Passy, near Paris, in 1784; and the final portions at Philadelphia in 1788-89. Because it was written at different times over a period of eighteen years, an alert reader may discover over the span certain differences of spirit and attitude. At Twyford Franklin, in his mid-sixties, enjoying good health and obviously pleased at the chance to recall his youth, wrote with quiet satisfaction of his upward climb from runaway apprentice to man of fortune and reputation. When he resumed his task at Passy, however, he was an internationally known celebrity, writing not only the story of his life for his son and family, but a much more formal account for posterity of how he attained eminence, virtue, and wealth. He was much more concerned in his portion with the public record of his career as businessman, civic leader, and scientist, than with his inward life. In 1788, he was eighty-two, and in retirement, and while the writing shows

flashes of his old force and spirit, it is for the most part little more than a straightforward account of facts and dates.

The first part of the book, begun in 1771, is an entertaining description of his life up to early manhood. The second part was written in 1784 when Franklin was a tired old man and the style is more serious. Franklin now realises the part he has played in American history and writes about himself "for the improvement of others".

The *Autobiography* carries Franklin's life only until 1757, after which came his careers as colonial agent, scientist, revolutionary leader, diplomat and statesman. It is therefore an unfortunately incomplete picture of the man, since it omits almost half of his life, and seems to emphasise the 'success story' aspects of it. It should be remembered that Franklin retired from business at the age of forty-two years and spent the next forty-two years of his life in the service of his fellowman and his country.

Franklin's *Autobiography* is many things. First, it is an inspiring account of a poor boy's rise to a high position. Franklin tells his story modestly, omitting some of the honours he received and including mention of some of his misdeeds, his errors as he called them. He is not afraid to show himself as being much less than perfect, and he is resigned to the fact that his misdeeds will often receive a punishment of one sort or another. Viewing himself with objectivity, Franklin offers his life story as a lesson to others. It is a positive lesson that teaches the reader to live a useful life. In fact, the *Autobiography* is a how-to-do-it book, a book on the art of self-improvement.

MERITS

- As a homespun (simple, unpretentious) sage, as a statesman, and as a pamphleteer in the cause of liberty, he shaped the character of the nation. He was the only American to sign the four documents that created the republic: the Declaration of Independence, the treaty of alliance with France, the treaty of peace with England, and the Constitution. At the time of his death, his compatriots considered him, more than they considered Washington, to be the father of their country.
- He was a primary figure in the rise of American pragmatism. He helped create the cult of self-reliance that ripened into Emersonian transcendentalism. His life and popular writings became instruments of instruction used by parents to teach their children that public virtue and bravery are keys to success. Businessmen and bankers believed, as Franklin did, that "God helps them that help themselves".
- More than any other patriot, he had created the American republic.
- He was a master of the periodical essay, of satire, and of political journalism.
- He helped establish a tradition in American writing of the simple, utilitarian style.
- With his *Autobiography* (America's first great book) he set the form for autobiography as a genre.
- He invented the "hoax" or the "tall tale", one type of humorous short prose, which is a lie.
- He helped organise the American Philosophical Society, the University of Pennsylvania, and the first charity hospital in the Colonies.
- He studied the Gulf Stream, fossils, and earthquakes; invented bifocal spectacles, the lightening rod (long called the "Franklin Rod"), the first flexible

urinary catheter, the watertight bulkheads, the Franklin stove, the odometer, and the long arm; he also made fundamental discoveries about the character of electricity.

- He was a member of the committee chosen to write the Declaration of Independence, a minister to France (he negotiated the treaty of alliance of 1778 that joined France with America in the war against England; five years later he signed the peace treaty that confirmed the American victory in the Revolution and established the nation's independence). When he returned to America, he was named a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and there he spent the last energies of his life, working to reconcile conflicts between states and to gain ratification of the Constitution.

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783 – 1859)

Washington Irving, American man of letters, was born in New York City, the youngest of 11 children of a prosperous merchant who had sided with the rebels in the Revolution. He was educated privately for the law, but because of his delicate health was sent in 1804 to Europe. He visited Rome, Paris, the Netherlands and London; in 1806 returned to New York, and was admitted to the bar. Precocious and impressionable, the boy was early influenced by the literary interests of his brothers William and Peter, but in 1798 concluded his education at private schools and entered a law office. His legal studies soon lost their appeal, although he continued in various offices until 1804, varying his occupation by a frontier journey (1803) through upper New York state and into Canada, and by writing essays for the *Morning Chronicle* and *The Corrector*, two newspapers edited by his brother Peter. Having decided to follow a literary career, he wrote the "Letters of Jonathan Oldstyle, Gent.," for the *Chronicle*, a series of youthful satires on New York society, which won him recognition.

To restore his failing health and to further his education, he travelled in Europe (1804 –6), where he collected material later used in stories and essays.
Although he was admitted to the bar upon his return, he lost interest in the law and turned seriously to literature. In 1807 and 1808 he published *Salmagundi*, a series of satirical essays concerned with New York society, in semi-monthly sheet in imitation of the *Spectator*, which ran for 20 issues. The leading essays were written by Irving, his brothers, and William Irving's brother-in law, J.K.Paulding, all members of a group known as the "Nine Worthies", or "Lads of Kilkenny" of "Cockloft Hall". Federalist in politics, conservative in social attitude, and humorous in intention, these early essays represent the position and manner to

which Irving was to cling throughout his career. The essays enjoyed a good deal of popularity and showed a great deal of promise.

In 1809 Irving's fiancée, Mathilda Hoffman, died, a tragic loss from which he never recovered. He threw himself into the completion of his *History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker* published that same year, which gave him an immediate reputation as a burlesque humorist and advanced his career another step. This work, called "the first great book of comic literature written by an American" created the comic Dutch-American scholar Diedrich Knickerbocker. Although ostensibly concerned with the history of the Dutch occupation, it was also a Federalist critique of Jeffersonian democracy and a whimsical (light) satire on pedantry and literary classics. The book created a lot of interest in the local history of New York, but it was a humorous rather than a serious history of the city. In the preface, he writes that his purpose is "*to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with imaginative and whimsical associations*". Irving actually invented many of the events and legends he writes about in the book. The idea was to give the region of New York City a special "local color". But more importantly, the book is a masterpiece of comedy which laughs at the Puritans and at New York's early Dutch governors. One such governor is described as a man who had almost nothing to say, and who worried more about his own indigestion than the problems of the city:

It is true he was a man shut up within himself, like an oyster, and rarely spoke … but then it was claimed that he seldom said a foolish thing.

In 1815, in the prime of life, Irving went to England on business, unaware that he was to make his literary reputation abroad and to remain there for seventeen years. The family firm failed not long after, and Irving, for the first time in his life, was thrown upon his own resources. He served as an officer in the 1812 war, wrote

biographies of American naval heroes, became a friend of Sir Walter Scott and under the pseudonym 'Geoffrey Crayon' wrote *The Sketch Book* (1819- 1820), containing in different styles such items as 'Rip Van Winkle', 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' and 'Westminster Abbey', which have something of his sadness at the loss of his beloved fiancée and his brothers' fortune. 'Rip Van Winkle' and 'The Legend of Sleepy Hollow' are two of the best-loved stories from American literature. The plots of both stories are based on old German folk tales. Nevertheless, Irving fills them with the 'local color' of New York's Hudson River Valley. Even today, the real places he mentions are associated with his stories. Peter Hill in *An Outline of American Literature* (31) mentions the Catskill Mountains, on the western side of the Hudson Valley, which are still thought of as the place where Rip Van Winkle fell asleep for twenty years. Sleepy Hollow, just north of the city, is still famous as the place where, late one night, Ichabod Crane was chased by the "Headless Horseman". In his last story, as in many of his others, Irving contrasts the personality of the New England's "Yankees" with that of the New Yorkers. Ichabod Crane, a New Englander, is made a comic figure. He is greedy and superstitious. The "Headless Horseman" who frightens him out of the valley is not real. He was invented by local New Yorkers, in order to frighten outsiders.

The complete edition of *The Sketch Book* contained thirty-two essays and tales; only three of them – "Rip Van Winkle". "The Spectre Bridegroom", and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" – were classifiable as tales, all of them being adaptations of German folk tales to the New York backgrounds of Diedrich Knickerbocker. As its name suggested, the book contained his observations as an American visitor in England; it was chiefly composed of sketches of English life ("A Sunday in London"), comments on English customs ("Rural Funerals"),

observations on famous places ("Westminster Abbey", "Stratford-On-Avon"), literary musings, anecdotes and even two essays on the American Indian. The three tales were Irving's first experiments in the literary form soon to become the short-story, to whose development he made his own unique and decisive contributions. He wrote later: "*I consider a story merely as a frame on which to stretch my materials. It is the play of thought, and sentiment and language; the weaving in of characters, lightly yet expressively delineated; the familiar and faithful exhibition of scenes in common life; and the half concealed vein of humour that is often playing through the whole – these are among what I aim at, and upon which I felicitate myself in proportion as I think I succeed …*

I have preferred adopting a mode of sketches and short tales rather than long works, because I chose to take a line of writing peculiar to myself; rather than fall into the manner or school of any other writer; and there is a constant activity of thought and nicety of execution required in writings of this kind, more than the world appears to imagine … In these shorter writings every page must have its merit. The author must be continually piquant – woe to him if he makes an awkward sentence or writes a stupid page; the critics are sure to pounce upon it. Yet if he succeed; the very variety and piquancy of his writings; nay their very brevity; makes them frequently recurred to – and when the mere interest of the story is exhausted, he begins to get credit for his touches of pathos or humour; his points of wit or turns of language …".

"Rip Van Winkle", also the character who gives the title to the tale, is a ne'er-do-well who sleeps 20 years and upon waking is startled to find how much the world has changed. Rip, an indolent, good-natured Dutch-American, lives with his shrewish wife in a village on the Hudson during the years before the Revolution. One day, while hunting in the Catskills with his dog Wolf, he meets a

dwarf-like stranger dressed in the ancient Dutch fashion. He helps him to carry a keg, and with him joins a party silently engaged in a party of ninepins. After drinking of the liquor they furnish, he falls into a sleep which lasts 20 years, during which the Revolutionary War takes place. He awakes as an old man, returns to his altered village, is greeted by his old dog, who dies of the excitement, and finds that his wife has long been dead. Rip and his associates are almost forgotten, but he goes to live with his daughter, now grown and the mother of a family, and soon wins new friends by his generosity and cheerfulness.

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" has Ichabod Crane as main character. He is an assertive, ingenuous Yankee schoolmaster, lanky (very thin) and angular in appearance, who lives among the Dutch folk of Sleepy Hollow on the Hudson, in post-Revolutionary days. He loves Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of a rich farmer, and is the victim of many pranks by the friends of his chief rival for her affections, Brom Van Brunt or Brom Bones, a reckless horseman and neighbourhood hero. At an autumn party at Van Tassels', the guests entertain themselves with stories of ghosts and witches, and Brom tells of the headless horseman said to haunt the region. Ichabod is discouraged in his suit for Katrina, and on his way home, late at night, riding a borrowed horse, is frightened by a headless apparition that rides after him and throws a round object at his head. Ichabod is never again seen in Sleepy Hollow, although the next morning the round object is discovered to be a pumpkin. Brom marries Katrina, and Ichabod's tale becomes a legend of the countryside.

Like many American writers after him, Irving found that the rich, older culture of the Old World gave him a lot of material for his stories. Not surprisingly, his later works followed English models, too. *Bracebridge Hall* (1822) is a collection of 49 tales and sketches about the old-fashioned English countryside. Resembling its predecessor, *The Sketch Book*, the collection includes stories with

English, French and Spanish settings but is chiefly remembered for “Dolph Heyliger” and its sequel, “The Storm-Ship”, which recount the adventures of a New York lad who undertakes to discredit the legend of a haunted house, but encounters its ghost and recovers a fabulous buried treasure, as well as marrying an heiress. Americanised versions of the Flying Dutchman theme are presented in “The Storm-Ship”, and other stories in the volume are also based on European folklore.

After *Bracebridge Hall* he lived in Germany for one year, published *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), which are set in Europe, spent some months in London and Paris, and went to Madrid to serve in the American Legation. The appeal of Spain to his imagination produced *The Life of Columbus* (1828) and *The Companions of Columbus* (1831); two historical studies, *The Conquest of Granada* (1829) and *The Conquest of Spain* (1835); and his last volume of tales, *The Alhambra* (1832). After *The Alhambra* Irving turned to history, biography, and travel; his work lost much of the imaginativeness and vitality that marked his Hudson Valley, German, English, and Spanish stories and sketches, though it may have gained in prestige.

Irving returned to the United States in 1832, to find its social, political, and economic complexion drastically changed. This was Jacksonian America, in the full flush of its ebullient (enthusiastic) and energetic nationalism and there seemed to be little place for an aristocratic Knickerbocker gentleman. However, Irving adjusted to the new society in time; he became interested in the frontier, took an extensive tour into the prairies, and wrote three books about the new West – *Astoria* (1834), an account of John Jacob Astor’s fur empire; *A Tour on the Prairies* (1835), an expansion of his travel journal; and *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* (1837), a Rocky Mountain scout and explorer.

Irving's literary fame constantly elicited offers of various political sinecures (comfortable job; political plum). He reached the height of his career when he was appointed US ambassador to Spain (1842–46). Then, he returned to New York to settle at Sunnyside, his gracious country home at Tarrytown, near "Sleepy Hollow", where he completed his *Life of Mahomet* (1850) and his five-volume *Life of Washington* (1859).

MERITS

- Irving was the first American to earn his living through literature. He was almost as popular in Europe as he was at home. America's first internationally-known man of letters, an intermediary between the literary Old and New Worlds who impressed his example on both his own and foreign culture.
- He is remembered for his various social, political, and literary activities aiming at consolidating American culture. His literary production includes various works, from newspaper essays to sketches ("The Sketch Book"); folk tales ("Rip Van Winkle", "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"); travel tales ("Tales of a Traveler"); biographies (*Life Of Washington*).
- He was the first American author who achieved world fame not only for his writings but also for his political and diplomatic activity.
- He made first experiments in the literary form soon to become the short-story, to whose development he made his own unique and decisive contributions
- Although he wrote no fiction after 1832, Irving's contributions to the development of the American short tale were of great importance: he lent it style, skill, atmosphere, characterization, and respectability, and both Poe and Hawthorne, who perfected the form after him, owed much to Irving's beginnings.

- He was a pioneer in subject: he did more than describe the contemporary scene, he dug into German and Spanish folk-literature (they were rich sources that America was deficient in). He suggested lines of approach: he translated and adapted.
- Irving lacked a creative gift; he needed plots ready-made. Temperamentally, like Hawthorne, he preferred a plot out of the past; though, more superficial than Hawthorne, he sought for something colourful, whimsical, a little melancholy: something that hinted, not too sternly, at change and alteration. He looked for plots that would please simultaneously audiences on either side of the Atlantic, e.g. he invented an American version ("The Storm-Ship" in *Bracebridge Hall*) of the *Flying Dutchman* legend; he used American material when it was of value to him: he journeyed out into the Indian country, and wrote *A Tour on the Prairie* about his trip; he became interested in the development of the American West, and compiled a competent account in *Astoria* (1836). But he was no frontiersman, and was too much the cosmopolitan to become one.
- His graceful, humorous, stylistically careful writing is in the tradition of Addison, Steele, and Goldsmith. In subject and method he sought the traditional and the picturesque. However, he had many critics, as well. He himself considered "feeling" and language as more important elements in his art than story or character. He regarded the story simply "as a (*picture*) frame on which I sketch my materials".
- He was a pioneer in style; he surpassed his British models by evolving a fluent yet dignified prose that made a successful passage from the eighteenth to nineteenth century.

- Unlike his contemporary, Cooper, Irving saw the European past in an aura of romance, and except for the gentle satire of his early works, consistently avoided coming to grips with modern democratic life.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789 – 1851)

Wilkie Collins, the English novelist, some ten years after Cooper's death called J.F.Cooper "*the greatest artist in the domain of romantic fiction yet produced in America*". Although the American novel appeared very late, in less than a century it had asserted it independence of England. Two factors in American life worked against the acceptance of fiction: the hard political demand on energy in a new country, and the other was Puritanism which adopted the well-known objections to the arts: they tell "lies" – give imitations of things, not reality – and stimulate unhealthy emotionalism.

J.F.Cooper, the American novelist, was born at Burlingham, New Jersey in 1789. When he was only a little more than a year old he was taken to Cooperstown, New York. Cooperstown was a wild frontier settlement of great natural beauty in central New York State, established by his Federalist father, Judge Cooper. There, on the banks of the Otsego Lake, he grew up, watching the frontier continually being pushed back, and always finding a fascination in the strange darkness of the neighbouring wilderness area. Although he saw the white hunters and the numerous wagon trains of settlers that passed through Cooperstown on their way west, he saw little of the once numerous redmen of the eastern forests. Later, he acknowledged, "I was never among the Indians. All that I know of them is from reading and from hearing my father speak of them". His father, a wealthy and aristocratic landowner (of about 40,000 acres) had a strong hand in the affairs of the local community, and the young Cooper (he added Fenimore, his mother's family name, to his own, later) was accustomed to the life of the privileged class of the time, the aristocracy. He was influenced by the gentleness of his simple Quaker mother.

After being privately educated at Albany, he entered Yale College at the age of 15. While at Yale, he studied with the famous scientist, Benjamin Silliman. He was interested in the Roman classical writers, such as Horace and Virgil. He also acquired a lifelong prejudice against New England Calvinists – Puritans).

Two years later, in his junior year, after a series of undergraduate brawls and pranks, he was expelled and went to sea as a common sailor on an Atlantic merchant ship. In 1808, he became a midshipman in the US Army and served on Lake Ontario, and later as a recruiting officer for the famous sloop Wasp, under James Lawrence. In 1811, after the death of his father (who left him an inheritance of $ 50,000) Cooper resigned from the Navy. His naval experience taught him much about the sea, some of which he later incorporated into his famous sea romance, *The Pilot*. He became aware of the value of navy discipline (Obedience to proper authority was the key to numerous situations in his romances, such as *The Pioneers*). His sea experience also made him keenly aware of various social levels of society, which he described in his works (such as *The Pathfinder*).

After marrying Susan DeLancey (1811), daughter of a wealthy and former Tory family, he assumed his inherited role as a cultivated country gentleman on his estate in Westchester County, New York. By 1819, the free-spending life of a wealthy gentleman led him into great debts. To regain his fortunes, he speculated in land, invested in a frontier store and a whaling ship, and in 1820 he began writing the fiction that eventually brought him wealth and world fame. His life in Westchester County admirably equipped him with a proper background for writing the early American historical romance *The Spy* (1821) for he lived in the area known during the American Revolutionary War as the “Neutral Ground”.

Cooper drifted into authorship by accident. At 30, he was suddenly plunged into a literary career, when his wife challenged his claim that he could write a

better book than the English novel he was reading to her. The result was *Precaution* (1820), a conventional novel of manners in genteel English society. The novel, written in emulation of Jane Austen, was good enough to prove his point, but not to satisfy his taste. Thus, he began *The Spy*, an absorbing story of the American Revolution, the best novel yet written in America and a highly popular one. Its chief figure, the shrewd, deceptive, furtive peddler, Harvey Birch, who pays the game of double agent to perfection, is one of the major character creations of early American fiction. He is a tragic character, since almost everyone knows he is really a spy (he is seen in both American and British camps during the Revolution). But which side is he spying for? The Americans are sure he is working for the British and they almost kill him several times. In fact, he is George Washington's most loyal agent. But this secret is kept almost to the end. Up to his death, his is still misunderstood and distrusted by his fellow countrymen.

Cooper moved his next novel to the life he knew as a boy in Cooperstown and in 1823 published *The Pioneers*, the first of the famous *Leather-Stocking Tales*, which eventually included *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1841). The *Leather-Stocking Tales* derives its title from the nickname of the hero Natty Bumppo, so called because of his long deerskin leggings. With Natty Bumppo, Cooper introduced his second and greatest character creation, the noble frontiersman. The hero is known by the following names: Natty Bumppo or Leather-Stocking in *The Pioneers*, Hawk-Eye in *The Last of the Mohicans*, "the trapper" in *Prairie*, Pathfinder in *The Pathfinder*, and Bumppo or Deerslayer in *The Deerslayer*. His character was strikingly consistent throughout the series, which treated his life and adventures from youth to old age and death. The perfect woodsman, who disliked the restraints and destructiveness of settlements, he understood and loved the forest, and his moral

qualities were as great as his understanding. Generous both to friends and to enemies, he possessed a simple, staunch morality and a cool nerve and never-failing resourcefulness. A typical American pioneer figure, he is a master of all the skills needed to live and hunt in the forest. He had an unusually deep love for nature and was afraid of destroying it. His sympathy for all people, including the Indians was unusual. Race conflict – especially between Whites and Indians – was common in America until the end of the nineteenth century. Cooper made that conflict a constant theme throughout the series. He filled his novels with battle scenes between Whites and Indians. But both the author and his character, Natty, clearly disapproved of those who were simply Indian haters. Such people were always seen as the worst sort of American, because they killed both animals and humans "for the sport of it".

Cooper's Indians, even the "bad" ones, were almost always brave. In general, he divided Indians into two types. His "good" ones – like Uncas and Chingachgook (Natty's best friend) – were loyal and affectionate. Some critics complain that they are too good and that Cooper saw them, wrongly, as "noble savages". The "bad" ones are filled with evil and cannot be trusted. Still, according to Hill (34), there is always a sadness in Copper's depiction of the Indians. They are a dying race, sacrificed to the warning of all the humanity that this could be the fate of other races.

The Pioneers, the first of the *Leather-Stocking Tales*, and the fourth in plot sequence, was America's first novel celebrating authentic scenery and life of the American frontier. American wilderness as a theme was developed through the Indians, who, despite their savagery, were attributed many of the traits of the white gentleman. He had no first-hand experience of Indian tribal life, though Otsego lake where he lived and which he chose as the setting for *The Deerslayer* had not

long been Indian country. His Indians, however idealised he presented them, were fascinating figures to Europeans perhaps even more than to Americans. Equally fascinating was the landscape of the wilderness (the forests, the lakes, and the open country across the Mississippi). The dynamic element was provided by the white man, intruding upon the Indian hunting grounds, provoking wars, restless and even villainous, yet certain to conquer finally.

The Pioneers mapped out the life of the hunter. The hero was Natty Bumppo, the noble frontiersman (whose Indian friends Uncas, Chingachgook, and Hardheart were noble savages, too), who, in his simplicity and freedom embodied all the virtues of wilderness life. Natty was now in his old age. He and Chingachgook, now a drunkard, have lost the grace and nobility of their youth. But Chingachgook gets back some of his nobility by returning to the religion of his people before dying. The novel has beautiful scenes describing the seasons and life in a frontier village. The author combines history, adventure and local customs into what he calls "a descriptive tale". Writing in the 1820s Cooper is trying to recreate a pioneer life that already seemed dated to his American contemporaries and was virtually unknown to European readers. He is led continually into historical and sociological commentary – about Indian tribal customs, early American architecture, and the different characteristics of the French, German and English settlers. As a historical novelist, Cooper manages to create a rounded portrait of American settlement life. In Europe, he became known as "the American Walter Scott". (Like Scott, he wrote adventure stories filled with historical details). But this did not please Cooper because he considered his works to be completely original.

Considered as an adventure story the novel is irritatingly slow-moving by modern standards (Ousby: 30). Its exciting incidents are continually interrupted by

lengthy accounts of minor characters (like Major Hartmann and Monique Le Quoi), or by apparently irrelevant episodes (like the Judge's visit to Billy Kirby's maple syrup refinery). Much of this slowness is simply the result of Cooper's relative inexperience as a writer.

Immediately after *The Pioneers*, came *The Pilot* (1824), America's first sea novel. It was the first of eleven sea novels and the one which introduced Cooper's third major character creation, Long Tom Coffin, the prototype of the tough, wise, salty Yankee sailor. The novel was based upon his own vivid imagination, as it worked on his realistic remembrance of his own naval experience. The plot takes place during Revolutionary times. It is a kind of Leatherstocking tale set on the sea, with fierce battles, narrow escapes, and a wise old sailor similar to Natty Bumppo in his old age.

Within three years, therefore, Cooper opened three great veins of native literary materials – the Revolutionary past, the sea, and the frontier – and American fiction was never the same again. Suddenly vaulted to national literary fame and popularity, Cooper and his family moved to New York City, where he was the founder and most influential member of a literary society called the bread and Cheese Club. About this time, he added the "Fenimore" to what had before been only "James Cooper". During the years 1826 – 33 he travelled extensively to Europe, and on his return he became embroiled in a variety of political and literary controversies and an almost equal number of libel (calomnie) suits, most of which he won. A democrat by conviction and an aristocrat by nature and training, Cooper found much in Jackson's America to criticise.

Pursuing an idea that he might write a novel to celebrate each of the original 13 colonies, Copper began and ended this projected series with *Lionel Lincoln* (1825), a romance of Bunker Hill during the American Revolution. He returned to

his frontier hero, Natty Bumppo, by writing what might yet be called his most popular romance, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826). In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Natty – under the name of Hawkeye – is shown at a slightly earlier stage, travelling with Chingachgook and his son Uncas, who are the only survivors of their tribe. It is an exciting story, full of action. Characters fight and are taken prisoners, then escape or are rescued. Uncas, the Mohican, is the last of his tribe. He replaces Natty as the hero in the last half of the novel. Uncas is killed by the evil Indian, Magwa.

A year later, with his family in Paris, Cooper still continued to write of American historical scenes and published *The Prairie* (1827), the last of the five *Leather-Stocking Tales* in chronological sequence. In the novel, Natty, now an old man (in his 80ies) has left his forests, driven out by the advance of civilisation, and is living as a trapper on the Western plains. He is too old for heroism. But Cooper makes him seem like Moses in the Bible as he guides a group of settlers to their new homeland. His beloved forests have all been cleared and are now farmland. To escape "civilization", he must now live on the treeless plains. The novel closes, quietly and poignantly, with the death of Natty.

He returned to the United States in late 1833, after an extended visit to England. He was angered by the way Englishmen spoke unfavourably about his country and, in defence, he wrote *Notions of the Americans* (1824). He felt disappointed with the new America he found on his return – especially some aspects of Jacksonian democracy. He became a political conservative. Meanwhile he published several books among which: *The Red Rover* (1827) – a tale of pirate adventures, set in Revolutionary times, and *The Bravo* (1831). He was American consul at Lyons (1826-1829).

Near the end of his career of writing fiction, Cooper published two more of the *Leather-Stocking* series. Natty Bumppo proved to be too good a character to

lose. Cooper revived him in *The* Pathfinder and *The Deerslayer*. In the latter, Natty is a young man on his first war-path, and in *The Pathfinder* he and Chingachgook are still in their prime. He almost marries a girl called Mabel Dunham, but decides to return to his life in the wilderness. Since the story has been told in reverse, we know that Natty is fated to wander the forests in isolation, until their laceration forces him to move westwards. Cooper also changes his hero's manner of speaking, making him a kind of backwoods philosopher. The idea may have been to make him a more attractive figure for Mabel. But it was not very successful, and the dialogue of this novel is often severely criticised.

The Deerslayer (chronologically first) shows Natty in his early twenties. It pictures the youthful Leather-Stocking, untested by warfare and Indian fighting, but filled with a firm belief in his own strength and powers. Although we see him kill his first Indian, his essential goodness is contrasted with the Indian haters, Hurry Harry and Thomas Hutter. At the end of *The Deerslayer*, 15 years after the main events of the story, Natty revisits Glimmerglass (=Otsego). Here lived a girl who was in love with him; now the only reminder of her is a shred of faded ribbon, and her lake-cabin – a rotted ruin. The touch of the past stirs a strange anguish, in the reader as in Natty Bumppo (Cunliffe: 65).

His later years were much disturbed by literary and newspaper controversies and litigation. He continued to produce books in a steady stream (32 novels alone during his lifetime) but broadened his range to include social criticism, manners, travel, history, biography, political and social commentaries, and satires and allegories, as well as novels of the sea, the frontier and the American past. His family had been part of the farming aristocracy and he wrote the "Little page Trilogy" to support this group. The "Littlepage" series, *Satanstoe* (1845), *The Chainbearer* (1846), and *The Redskins* (1846), for example, dealt with the clash

between aristocrat and democrat in upstate New York during the Anti-Rent troubles of the eighteen-forties. He depicts the greed of the "common man" in a democracy. He regrets the passing of America's landowning aristocracy and the rise of a new class, the "money-grabbers". The *Monikins* (1835), *The Crater* (1848), *Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found* (both 1848) were satires or allegories. *Notions of the Americans* (1828), *A Letter to his Countrymen* (1834) , and *The American Democrat* (1838) were constructive critiques of the American system.

J.F.Cooper, the man who gave the world one of America's most widely admired literary creations – Leatherstocking, a striking representation of frontier freedom and individuality – himself ended his days soured with his world. He, like Leatherstocking, remained an individual; however, the Indian scout, Natty, was always to retreat westward to get away from civilisation and the new virtues (or ideas) he considered questionable, whereas Cooper could only retire to Cooperstown and indulge himself in remembering his lawsuits and his 32 works of fiction. America's first important novelist died in Copperstown, New York, on September 14, 1851, the day before his 62nd birthday.

Strengths and Weaknesses

- Cooper's fictional techniques, drawn from the historical and sentimental novel traditions of the 18th and early 19th century, were unfortunately already obsolescent (outdated) before he finished his work, as compared to those developments in the American novel deriving from more sophisticated and expert practitioners such as Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville. His old-fashioned discursive style and his overly theatrical dramatics no longer attract the modern reader, who is often unwilling to accept the conventions of the older tradition within which

Cooper wrote. However, within the limits of his artistic techniques and concepts, Cooper's work can still generate power, and his epic of the wilderness, *The Leatherstocking Tales*, is so much a part of the mainstream of the American mythos that no student of American literature can afford to lack acquaintance with it. (*American Poetry and Prose*: 312)

- The victory of time and "civilization" over the wilderness is beautifully described by Cooper. His weaknesses as a writer, are almost as well known as his strengths. He is most successful in scenes of violent action or of night-time terror and mystery. But his character descriptions are often unsatisfactory. His descriptions of women characters (whom he always calls "females") are especially weak. Only a few of them are interesting as individuals. We rarely get a deep look at their characters. In fact, almost all of them have the same interests and needs: house-cleaning and love. Occasionally, there are also problems with Coopers' descriptions of action scenes. Mark Twain, in his famous essay "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses", fiercely attacks him for a bad mistake he makes in a scene in *The Deerslayer*. A group of Indians try to jump down onto a riverboat from a tree. According to Cooper's description, however, the boat is no longer under the tree. Still, none of Cooper's "offenses" seriously spoils the reader's enjoyment of his stories. (*An Outline of American Literature*: 37). Other 'offences' committed by Cooper are: the fantastic punctuality of forest meetings between Natty and Chingachgook; rescues are invariably delayed until the moment of extreme peril; dialogue is often awkward; characters usually lack depth; Cooper' attempts at humour are somewhat lame, and he holds up the narrative with interminable stilted conversations, while the bushes fill up with hostile Indians; there is little sensuous immediacy in Cooper; scene and characters are *imagined* rather than *visualised*; where passage calls for direct description, the novelist is apt

to come between the reader and the situation. Thus Natty, spying on enemy Indians around a campfire, "saw at a glance that many of the warriors were absent … Rivenoak, however, was present, being seated in the foreground of a *picture that Salvador Rosa would have delighted to draw* (italics mine) his swarthy features illuminated …" We see what Cooper means by his allusion; but it makes us lose touch with Natty, who has certainly never heard of Salvator Rosa. (*The Literature of The United States*: 65)

- Balzac's is a dense and actual world; Cooper's, by contrast, is a mythological place, where in earlier times the knight-errant might have performed (power of invention) It is the element of myth that makes the Bumppo stories more than mere adventure yarns. But in later times this element was to grow fainter; the adventure lost significance. … It is the invented, mythological tincture that makes us still read Cooper, even if we usually leave his world behind with our childhood. Though his novels of the sea have less of this capacity for magic, they, too, represent the power of Cooper to create fiction out of apparently unpromising material. (*The Literature of The United States*: 68)
- Cooper was also one of the first writers of sea stories in America. These novels have elements of both romanticism and realism. The author is a romantic when he describes the sudden changes of weather, the beauty of the ocean, and the mysterious ships and seamen. The realism comes from Cooper's personal knowledge of the sea; he had been a sailor in his youth. (*An Outline of American Literature*: 37).
- Neither Washington Irving not any of the other Knickerbockers really tried to speak for the whole country. For them, the American world tended to stop at the borders of New York State. Cooper, on the other hand, wanted to speak for all America. Although his books are not seen as great literature, they contain much

thoughtful criticism of American society. In over 30 novels and several works of non-fiction, he pointed out the best parts of American society and the American personality and severely criticised the worst parts. In Europe, he became known as "the American Walter Scott" (*An Outline of American Literature*: 33). Although he resented the label, Cooper's romances of backwoods life borrow and adapt the formulae of Scott's tales of the Highlands. From Scott, too, comes the stiff and formal prose style that continually impedes the narrative, and the pasteboard quality of the heroes and heroines. (*An Introduction to 50 American Novelists*: 26).

- Patriotic, early critics honoured Cooper for creating a literature out of native materials, and they hailed him as the American Scott – an apt but patronising comparison that Cooper came to detest. His greatest achievement was his portrayal of the age-old theme of Christian innocence struggling in a paradise lost, the majestic theme of the irresistible force of civilisation that destroyed the American wilderness and all its noble simplicities. It was a theme that Cooper embodied in his archetypal hero, Natty Bumppo, a character whose flights from society and domesticity mark him as the first of the symbolic rebels in American writing and one of the most memorable characters in all of fiction. (Anthology of American Literature: 665).
- For all his indebtedness to English fiction, Cooper also managed to introduce an authentically American note into his work. In the preface to *Edgar Huntly*, Charles Brockden Brown had grandly announce: "One merit the writer may at least claim: that of calling forth the passions and engaging the sympathy of the reader, by means hitherto unemployed by preceding authors. Puerile superstition and exploded manners; Gothic castles and chimeras; are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility, and the perils of the western wilderness are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook

these would admit of no apology". *Edgar Huntly* scarcely fulfils this claim, but *The Leatherstocking Tales* do. Cooper described the American landscape and its inhabitants with exactitude unprecedented in earlier fiction. He put the Red Indian on the literary map, creating a stereotype that has survived into modern Holliwood films. In addition, in the canny woodsman Natty Bumppo he created the first truly American hero of fiction. ((*An Introduction to 50 American Novelists*: 27).

- Although many of Coopers' best-known works are also set in New York State, their characters are "Americans", not simply "New Yorkers". He describes such American character types as the pioneer, the Indian and the Yankee sailor. But the problems they face are not simply American problems. They are problems faced by people everywhere. (*An Outline of American Literature*: 34).
- Cooper was one of the great innovators of American literature. With *The Pilot* he established a genre of accurate, detailed sea fiction. *The Spy*, with its portraits of Washington and other historical figures and events, was the beginning of the American historical novel. His frontier tales transplanted the chivalric romances of Europe to the forests of the New World and served as the forerunners of an endless series of American stagecoach and wagon train epics. (Anthology of American Literature: 665).
- Cooper's style in *The Last of the Mohicans* includes a list of specific literary devices, techniques, patterns, formulas, and characteristics to remember concerning this romance. They are: (1) masquerades or disguises; (2) detailed description of nature; (3) plot of escape-pursuit-capture; (4) the "stranger"; (5) topographical descriptions of land; (6) tableaux; (7) dialect; (8) caricature of minor characters for humour; (9) various types of Indians –good, bad; (10) pageantry (magnificence) of history; (11) moralising of the hero; (12) kinship with nature; (13) epical hero; (14) frontier wisdom; (15) sense of insecurity; (16) the "chase";

(17) suspense; (18) battle scenes (between two people or massed groups); (19) action; (20) landscape descriptions (panorama, vista, the “sublime”); (21) externals, rather than internals; (22) little character analysis; (23) satisfying conclusions; (24) artificial dialogue; (25) use of water as setting; (26) many incidents; (27) verisimilitude (likeness to truth); (28) operatic action; (29) Shakespearean quotations in mottoes; (30) rapid pace of narration; (31) use of contrasting characters; (32) sense of ritual; (33) association with historic scenes; (34) discussion of birth and parentage; and (35) the journey.

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809 – 1849)

To a world fascinated by the bizarre and the macabre, Poe has often seemed an embodiment of the satanic characters in his own fiction, the archetype of the neurotic genius. He left no diaries, had few intimate friends to set straight the details of his life, and the vivid derangement (delirium, hallucination) portrayed in his writing and the tales of his own depravities (many of which he told himself for their shock effect) created a false portrait not completely corrected to this day.

"*The saddest and the strangest figure in American literary history*", Killis Campbell called him. "*Few writers have lived a life so full of struggle and disappointment, and none have lived and died more completely out of sympathy with their times*". Poe was another writer interested in psychology and the darker side of human nature. His fiction belongs to the Southern, rather than the New England, writing tradition. It is far more romantic in language and imagery. Both Poe's parents had been travelling actors and had died by the time he was three. His bad relationship with his foster father was one of many unhappinesses in his brief life.

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston in 1809 in the North of the US. Nevertheless, he was brought up by a tobacco exporter in Virginia (in the South) and went to school to England for five years. Poe's schoolmaster judged him "not especially studious", but an "excellent classicist" and "the best reader of Latin verse".

When he was 17 (1826), Poe entered the University of Virginia. He distinguished himself in Latin and French and soon gained a reputation as a self-proclaimed "aristocrat", a poet, a wit, a gambler, and a heavy drinker. Offended by

his dissipation and gambling debts, his patron moved him to the counting-room, from where he ran away to Boston where he enlisted as a private in the US Army under the name of Edgar A. Perry. He published his first collection *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827). The title piece is a narrative poem, revised in later editions, which shows the strong influence of Byron and purports (claims) to be the dying confession of the Asiatic conqueror to a strange friar, mainly concerned with memories of a passionate love. In April 1829, he gained his release from the army, and 8 months later, his second volume of poems, *Al Aaraaf Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* was published in Baltimore. Following the death of his foster mother, Poe was briefly reconciled with his foster father, Allan, who helped him secure appointment to West Point Military Academy (1830), but the following March he was dismissed for deliberate neglect of duty. Now he was thrown on his own resources. Just after he left West point his third volume of poetry was published (1831), dedicated to "the US Corps of Cadets". The edition contained "Israfel", his earliest poem of value, and "To Helen". He then moved to Baltimore, where he lived with his aunt and devoted himself to earning his way as a writer. Here he won a prize in 1833 for his story *A MS Found in a Bottle*. The story, written at the age of 24, shows how quickly Poe had mastered the art of the short story. The theme of this strange sea story was used in many later Poe stories: a lonely adventurer meets with physical and psychological horrors.

Poe made important contributions to American literature in three areas: the short story, literary criticism, and poetry. Many of Poe's tales of horror are known throughout the world. His method was to put his characters into unusual situations. Next, he would carefully describe their feelings of terror or guilt. The greatest examples of this kind of story are *The Pit and the Pendulum* (1841), *The Tell-Tale*

Heart (1843) and *The Black Cat* (1843). The author here rarely shows the actual object of horror. Rather, the reader must use his imagination.

"The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) is the best known of Poe's tales. It is a successful example of his theory that in short stories, "unity of effect is everything". The story's setting and its symbols reveal the character of the hero. A crack in the house symbolises the relationship between the adult twins, Roderick and Madeline Usher. When Roderick buries his twin sister before she is really dead, she returns to the house from the grave. When Roderick dies, the house sinks into the black lake surrounding it. Poe's heroines often "return from the grave" by various means. In *Ligeia* (1838) the ghost of the hero's first wife returns to life by stealing the body of his second wife. The story contains a number of allusions which Poe hardly expected the reader to recognise. Many of them are little more than decorative and do not clarify or enrich the meaning. It may be worth noting, however, that in the paragraph beginning "For eyes we have no models" is a reference to a proverb that came from the Greek philosopher Democritus: "*Truth lies at the bottom of a well*". The source of the epigraph has never been identified; Poe may have invented it and attributed it to the English clergyman and philosopher Glanvill (1636-80) who wrote on the occult and supernatural. (CF. *American Poetry and Prose*: 372)

In 1835, after his financial success ($100 for the short story), he became editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, an able and successful editor noted for his caustic book reviews in a day when criticism was indulgent. Here he published a series of stories, poems and acid literary reviews. His reviews were read everywhere in America. He wanted to help develop a national literature for the young country and felt that intelligent criticism was the key. He hated bad books and Russell Lowell complained they also had "*the coldness of mathematical*

demonstrations". This made him many enemies. Even after his death, other writers continued to attack him and tell lies about his personal life. The savagery of his reviews made him be called "i". In "The Poetic Principle", (originally a lecture written in 1848, published in 1850, after Poe's death), the end of art is pleasure, not truth. So that pleasure may be intense, the work of art, whether poetry or prose, must have unity and brevity. In poetry, pleasure should be aroused by the creation of beauty – not a mere duplication of the concrete beauties of the world, but a suggestion of a higher order of beauty which may be called supernal. Since music brings us close to the supernatural, the musical elements of verse – meter, rhythm, and rhyme – are essential.

In "Hawthorne's Twice-Told Tales", Poe included two major essays, mainly theoretical. But he also wrote a great bulk of criticism, discussing particular authors and books, with a high degree of independence, honesty and insight. The two kinds overlap, as in his essay on Hawthorne, where he is reviewing the second edition of *Twice-Told Tales* and at the same time setting forth his theory of the short story. The essay may be read for the light it sheds on his own fiction, examples of which are printed directly after this selection.

When he was 27 he married his 13-yea old cousin Virginia Clemm, and late in 1836 he left the *Messenger* and Richmond after a bitter argument with the owner – an angry scene that Poe was to repeat throughout his carer as a "magazinist".

The remaining years of his life were filled with intense creativity punctuated by fits of acute mental depression and drinking bouts (contest). After quitting *The Messenger* he spent a year in New York, of which chief result was *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, his one full-length novel. Then he settled in Philadelphia, and became co-editor of *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*. Here he published *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840), his first collection of short-stories. He won

another short story competition in 1843 with “the Gold Bug”. But within a few months he was again discharged after an argument with the magazine’s publisher over the severity of Poe’s critical reviews and his irresponsible drinking. Between 1842-1843, he edited *Graham’s Magazine*, where he printed “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, the ancestor of American detective stories. Instead of examining characters and feelings, these detective stories examine mysteries or problems. Examples include “The Murders in the Rue Morgue”, (1841), “The Mystery of Marie Roget” (1842), The Purloined Letter (1845), and “The God Bug” (1843). Except for the last of these, each of the stories has the same hero, the brilliant French detective Monsieur Dupin. This makes Dupin’s genius seem even greater. In many ways, such a narrator reminds one of Doctor Watson, Sherlock Holmes’s friend, who narrates the tales about that great detective. Poe’s detective stories are written in a simple, realistic style. Perhaps this is why they were more popular during his lifetime than his tales of horror. (An Outline of American Literature: 56)

In 1844 he moved to New York, where he wrote “The Raven”, his most famous work and an immediate success. The interest of Poe’s poetry is in its sound, rather than in its content. He constantly experimented with ways to make it musical and defined poetry as “*the rhythmic creation of beauty*”. Even the names he uses have a musical sound: Eulalie, Lenore, Ulalume. In “The Raven” the rhythm allows us to hear the bird’s beak hitting the door: “*While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping, / As of someone gently rapping – rapping at my chamber door*.”. The unhappy young man asks if he will again meet his dead loved one, Lenore. “*Nevermore*!” is the repeated, machine-like answer of the big black bird.

Poe felt that the real goal of poetry is “*pleasure, not truth*”. But for him, “*pleasure*” did not mean happiness. Rather, a good poem creates in the reader a

feeling of gentle sadness. In "Ulalume" (1847), another of his many poems about beautiful women who are now dead, Poe mixes sadness with horror. Again, the sound is more important than the theme (conflict between physical and spiritual love).

"The Cask of Amontillado" is a story of revenge that illustrates admirably Poe's doctrines of unity and economy. The theme is announced in the first sentence and sustained undeviatingly to the last ("*may he rest in peace*"). While the plot is very simple, some intellectual complexity is attained through irony: the meaning of an act or speech is often contrary to that seemingly indicated.

In 1847 his wife died. Assaulted by her death, his extreme poverty, and his own instability, Poe nonetheless continued to write, saying: "*I have a great deal to do; and I have made up my mind not to die till it is done*". In 1847 he was working on his "Eureka: an Essay on Material and Spiritual Universe", when his wife died. The rest of the story is one of poverty, intoxication, frequent illness, mistaken love affairs and fine poems. In 1848 he attempted suicide with laudanum. In 1849 he visited Richmond for the last time, and became engaged to a sweetheart of his youth, now a wealthy widow. The remaining events are obscure. After a largely unhappy life with little success, he died an alcoholic. In Baltimore he was found unconscious at a ward-polling place, and died for days later, at age 40.

Short Considerations about his Work (Cunliffe: 74-79)

If we are to understand why Poe is thought a major figure, we have to look at his stories. His stories, according to Cunliffe (74) fall roughly into two kinds; Those of horror and those of 'ratiocination'. Under the first head may be listed such stories as "The Black Cat", The Cask of Amontillado", "The Fall of the House of Usher", and "Ligeia"; while the second group includes "The Gold Bug", "The Purloined Letter", etc. The distinction is not a precise one; stories like "The

Muredrs in the Rue Rogue " combine the macabre with the methodical. The distinction is not a precise one; stories like 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' combine the macabre with the methodical. … Many of them are set in strange places – a ruined abbey, a castle on the Rhine – with elaborate and dimly or luridly lit *decors*. (His ideal room, as depicted in 'The Philosophy of Furniture' has window-panes of crimson-tinted glass). Things usually happen at night, or in unlit interiors. The heroes and heroines are of ancient and aristocratic lineage (rarely are they American): they are erudite and accomplished – yet doomed. … The 'tale of effect' was by no means invented by Poe. (The Literature of the US: 75)

The hero in Poe's tales destroys himself. Yet, his destruction involves others, and in particular the heroine. In "The Philosophy of Composition", in which Poe analyses the structure of "The Raven" and implies that he wrote it according to formula, there occurs his much-quoted passage:

"*I asked myself –'Of all melancholy topics, what, according to the universal understanding of mankind, is the <u>most</u> melancholy?' Death – was the obvious reply. 'and when,' I said, 'is this most melancholy of topics most poetical?' From what I have already explained … the answer … is obvious – 'When it most closely allies itself to <u>Beauty'</u>: the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world – and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such topic are those of a bereaved lover*".

There is perhaps nothing in this statement to startle; love and death run together in the world's literature, and the death of a beautiful woman is the theme of the unhysterical Henry James, in *The Wings of the Dove*.

But Poe's deaths are of special order. It is the no man's land between death and life that obssesses him, and the strange, incestuous vampirism of the dead with the living. Ligeia and her husband; Roderick Usher and his twin sister Madeline;

the painter and his wife in “The Oval Portrait”; Berenice and her cousin; Morella and her nameless daughter – in all these cases the dead return from unquiet graves, as Poe’s own cousin-wife seemed to slip from life to death and back again. Only in “Eleonora” do the dead relinquish (abandon) their hold upon the living; but even here there have been ties across limbo (emptiness, nothingness). This is the desperation of Poe’s story-world: life ebbs away (regress), swiftly and remorselessly, yet death does not bring peace. For him nothing is stable or sweet. Even his beautiful women are described as though they were corpses; they are like human beings with marble poured over them, smooth, white, monumental, and a little gruesome – like the academic sculpture of the period.

In common with such sculpture, some of Poe’s stories leave us indifferent or seem repellent (e.g. “Ligeia”, despite being considered by Poe as one of his best grotesque stories), while others retained their sinister spell (and these are the ones which avoid vampirism, and concentrate upon various forms of suffering). His imaginative narratives, with their evocation of the unknown, the marvellous, the sinister, the ominous and the supernatural resembled those of a imaginative child. Like a child he dreams of power, but at the same time, he fears to open the doors to get into adulthood (many of his plots are claustrophobic, vertiginous: victims are walled in, entombed alive, sucked down into whirlpools). Similarly, he is vulnerable to night-time fears (lamps blown out, waving curtains, etc).

As to his critical essays, he cannot be compared to his master, Coleridge. His insistence upon precision of language might seem fussy (imperious); his larger theories may seem questionable, and the philosophising in “Eureka” is mediocre. Nevertheless, he is full of perceptive comment. Above all, he takes his criticism seriously. Even if he is not consistent, he provides theories for all that he has tried to write theories that may serve others. Poetry should aim at beauty, but should be

composed in obedience to rigorous technical standards. Like stories, poems achieve their maximum effect if they are fairly short; there is no place in Poe's system for the epic poem or for the novel. He pleaded for the "*poem written solely for the poem's sake*". Yet, although "*with me poetry has not been a purpose, but a passion*", intellect came to the rescue of imagination. Human behaviour is frequently cruel and irrational. In "The Black Cat", Poe asks himself: "*Who has not, a hundred times, for no other reason than because he knows he should <u>not</u>*?". For the French (such as Baudelaire), such insights established Poe as one of the great forerunners of modern literature, and they came to venerate him as a symbolic figure as much as for his various discoveries. It took much longer to the Americans to see him thus; Whitman was not blind to his inner meanings, when he described Poe as "*a slender, slight, beautiful figure, a dim man, apparently enjoying all the terror, the murk, and the dislocation of which he was the centre and the victim. That figure might stand for Edgar Poe, his spirit, his fortunes, and his poems*…".

Merits and Weaknesses

- The literati complained of his vituperative (abusive) coarseness and his false erudition. Emerson called him "*the jingle man*", and Henry James pronounced that admiration of Poe's work was "*the mark of a decidedly primitive stage of development*". Patriots seeking a national literature complained that he lacked an American vision. The literary realists of the next generations complained that his work ignored American themes – Mark Twain pronounced that he would read him only "on salary". (*Anthology of American Literature*: 946)
- Poe's work was sometimes careless and derivative. He was rarely able to break free from the need to do profitable hack (trite) work. The gothic terror he

achieved was often commonplace, little above the popular, overheated romantic fiction of the times. Poe found his inspiration in a romanticism divorced from the actualities of American life, a world of disorder, perversity, and romantic emotion. He helped establish one of the world's most popular literary genres, the detective story. His writing influenced a variety of writers who range from A. Conan Doyle and Robert Louis Stevenson to William Faulkner and T.S.Eliot. He was among the first modern literary theorists of America, and his arguments against the didactic motive for literature and for the creation of beauty and intensity of emotion, although they ran counter to the prevailing literary ideals of his time, have had profound effect on the writers and critics who followed him. To the modern age he stands as one of the foremost writers of America, and he is now, almost a century and a half after his death, one of the most popular authors in the world. (*Anthology of American Literature*: 946)

- Critical opinion of Poe's writings has veered between extremes of enthusiasm and distaste. The Irish poet Yeats judged Poe to be "*always and for all lands a great lyric poet*", and many French authors, such as Maupassant, Baudelaire, and Valery, extolled him as an original artist of high distinction. In France, indeed, Poe has generally been hailed as the founder of modern poetry, especially Symbolist poetry. In the US, on the other hand, he has been disparaged by writers in many camps. Emerson once summed him up as "the jingle man", and Henry James pronounced an enthusiasm for Poe's work as "*the mark of a decidedly primitive stage of reflection*". Still others have dismissed him as vague, disorderly, perverse, or simply monotonous. (*American Poetry and Prose*: 347)
- Poe was a writer who could not embrace America as Emerson or Whitman could. On the contrary, he rejected a great deal of contemporary cultural scene: he disliked America's early subservience to British standards, the narrow

provincialism that replaced it, and the general anti-poetic quality of American life. Along with the dominant culture, Poe repudiated the scientific spirit and the prevailing commercial values that, according to him, had taken over America. He looked elsewhere for significance and fulfilment. In his writing he explored the possibilities of experience beyond the factual, ordinary world. He sought a transcendental world of inviolate beauty; he explored the chaos and terror of psychological disintegration and madness; and he tried to transform the mundane world with the power of a brilliant critical and analytic mind.

"THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO" (tale, published in *Godey's Lady's Book*: 1846)

During the excitement of the carnival in an Italian city, Montresor determines to avenge "the thousand injuries" of Fortunato, a connoisseur of wines who has offended him. He finds Fortunato drunk, but eager to taste the choice Amontillado that Montressor claims to have stored in his underground vaults. Although he has a cough, made worse by the damp air and clinging nitre of the tunnels through which they go, he refuses to turn back when he hears that his rival, Luchresi, may be allowed to try the wine. At last they reach a crypt at the end of a passage, where Montressor shackles the stupefied Fortunato and proceeds to wall him up with stone and mortar. Fortunato cries for help, but there is no one to hear, and Montressor completes his work, the last sound from his victim being a faint jingling of bells on his carnival motley.

"THE MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH" (story, published in *Graham's Magazine*: 1842)

In a land devastated by a horrible plague, the “Red Death”, Prince Prospero determines to preserve himself and his friends, and removes to a secluded castle, where, with 1000 knights and ladies, he spends several months in extravagantly gay pursuits. At a masquerade in the imperial suite, when the courtiers appear in masks and fantastic costumes, a terrifying corpse-like figure joins them, garbed as the Red Death. Attempting to stab him, the Prince dies; when others seize the apparition, it is discovered to have no tangible body. They realise that this is the red Death itself, and, as midnight strikes, they die: “and Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all”.

“THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER”

(story, published in 1839, and reprinted in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*: 1840). It contains the poem “The Haunted Palace”.

A childhood companion of Roderick Usher, who has not seen him for many years, is summoned to the gloomy House of Usher to comfort his sick friend. The decayed mansion stands on the edge of a tarn, and is fungus-grown and dreary. Roderick and his twin Madeline are the only surviving members of the family, and both suffer serious physical and nervous maladies. Roderick entertains his friend with curious musical and poetic improvisations, indicating his morbid tastes by his choice of reading. Madeline, in a cateleptic trance, is thought to be dead, and her body is place in the family vault. During a storm, Roderick is overcome by a severe nervous agitation and his friend reads aloud from a medieval romance, whose horrifying episodes coincide with strange sounds from outside the room. Finally Madeline appears, enshrouded, and she and her brother fall dead together. The

friend rushes from the house, and, as he looks back in the moonlight, sees the whole House of Usher split asunder (to shreds) and sink into the tar.

"MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE"

(story, published in 1841 and collected in the *Prose Tales of Edgar A. Poe*: 1843)

It is his first tale of ratiocination and in it he is considered to have created the genre of the detective story.

The narrator lives in Paris with his friend C.Auguste Dupin, an eccentric genius of extraordinary analytic powers. They read an account of the murders of a Mme L'Espanaye and her daughter Camille in their fourth-story apartment in the Rue Morgue. The police are puzzled by the crime, for its brutal manner indicates that the murderer possessed superhuman strength and agility; his voice, overhead by neighbours, was grotesque and unintelligible; and they can discover no motive. Dupin undertakes to solve the mystery as an exercise in ratiocination (breakdown). After examining the evidence and visiting the scene of the murders to find new clues, he deduces the fact that the criminal is an ape. An advertisement brings to Dupin's apartment a sailor who confesses that an orangutan, which he brought to Paris to sell, escaped and committed the murders. The police release a former suspect, and the ape is recaptured and sold to the Jardin des Plantes.

"THE GOLD-BUG"

(tale, published as a prize story in the Philadelphia *Dollar Magazine* (1843) and reprinted in *Tales*: 1845. The cryptograph on which the story depends is a development of the interest that prompted Poe's essay "Cryptography" (*Graham's Magazine*, 1841).

William Legrand, an impoverished Southern gentleman, lives in seclusion on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, his only companion being the black servant Jupiter. One day, when they capture a rare golden scarab beetle, marked with a sort of death's-head, they come upon a curious piece of parchment, which when heated proves to contain a secret cipher and a drawing of a death's-head. Legrand ingeniously decodes the cipher, which directs them to the buried treasure of Captain Kidd. With the aid of a friend and the superstitious Jupiter, both of whom he deliberately mystifies, Legrand locates an indicated tree, in which a skull is nailed, and, by dropping the beetle through an eye of the skull, they are able to establish a line on the position of the cache (treasure). Besides several skeletons, they exhume a fortune in old coins and jewels, with which Legrand reestablishes himself in society.

"THE BLACK CAT"

(story, published in 1843, collected in *Tales*: 1845)

A condemned murderer tells of his crime and its discovery. For years he cherished a pet black cat, Pluto, until intemperate drinking led him to destroy one of its eyes during a fit of malevolence. The cat recovered, but its master's perverse mood continued. And he tied it by the neck to a tree. The same night, his home was destroyed by fire, except for a newly plastered wall that bore the image of a cat with a noose about its neck. Now poverty-stricken and degenerate, the man was haunted by this image, but nevertheless brought home s tray one-eyed cat, which had a single white mark on its black breast, resembling a gallows. He came to hate the animal, and one day attempted to kill it with an axe; murdering his wife when

she interfered, he placed her body in a cellar recess that he concealed with plaster. When police came to make a search, they found nothing until a ghastly scream from the walled recess caused them to open it and discover the cat seated upon the head of the corpse.

"THE MYSTERY OF MARIE ROGET"

(detective story, published in 1842-43, as a sequel to "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", and reprinted in *Tales*: 1845. The principal details are based on the actual New York murder case of Mary Cecilia Rogers.

Maria Roget, a Parisian beauty of uncertain reputation, leaves her mothers' home, saying she intends to spend the day with an aunt, but is not seen again. Four days later, her corpse is recovered from the Seine. The Prefect of Police offers a reward to C.Auguste Dupin, scholarly amateur detective, for a solution to the puzzle. One of the girl's admirers, St. Eustache, is proved innocent after his suicide, and by a process of ratiocination Dupin shows that another, Beauvais, cannot be guilty. The newspapers have hinted that the corpse may not be that of Marie, but Dupin refutes (disproves) this possibility. He sets aside other suggestions, also by logical proof, and decides that the murder must have been committed by a secret lover, who would have thrown the body into the river from a boat, and then cast the boat adrift after reaching shore. Dupin's proposal that the boat be found and examined for clues is followed by the successful solution of the mystery.

“THE TELL-TALE HEART”

(story, published in *The Pioneer*: 1843. It has been considered the most influential of Poe’s stories in the later development of stream-of consciousness fiction.

A victim of a nervous disease is overcome my homicidal mania and murders an innocent old man in whose house he lives. He confuses the ticking of the old man’s watch with an excited heartbeat, and although he dismembers the body he neglects to remove the watch when he buries the pieces beneath the floor. The old man’s dying shriek has been overheard, and three police officers come to investigate. They discover nothing, and the murderer claims that the old man is absent in the country, but when they remain to question him he hears a loud rhythmic sound that he believes to be the beating of the buried heart. This so distracts his diseased mind that he suspects the officers know the truth and are merely trying his patience, and in an insane fit he confesses his crime.

Poe’s interest in feelings of terror and guilt led him to write stories which were often pathological in their content and macabre in their atmosphere. This is the opening of The Tell-Tale Heart (1843): “*True! – nervous – very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad?….. Upon the eighth night I was more than cautious in opening the door”.*)

What do we know about the man the narrator has decided to kill? Is it clear why he has decided to kill him?

The story takes place inside the narrator’s mind. How would you describe the state of his mind?

How is the narrator’s intensity shown in the style of writing?

“NARRATIVE OF ARTHUR GORDON PYM, OF NANTUCKET”

(novelette, published in 1838. Like “The Journal of Julius Rodman”, it is an account of exploration and adventure, heightened by fictional additions, but based on fact. It is extensively paraphrased from Benjamin Morell’s *Narrative of Four Voyages to the South Seas and Pacific* (1832) and a manual of seamanship, and owes it origin to a “Report of the Committee on Naval Affairs” (1836), concerning the expedition proposed by J.N.Reynolds, with whom Poe was acquainted).

In the novelette, the fictitious Pym recounts his experiences as a passenger on the *Grampus*, which sailed from Nantucket from the South Seas in June 1827. Mutiny, shipwreck, and “horrible sufferings” are followed by a rescue and further sensational adventures in the Antarctic Ocean and on Pacific islands.

“EUREKA: a Prose Poem”

(metaphysical work, published in 1848)

Based on the author’s reading in Newton, Laplace, and others, the work accepts intuition, as well as induction and deduction, among legitimate paths to knowledge. Unity and diffusion are truths, because they are felt to be so, and “*irradiation, by which alone these two truths are reconciled, is a consequent truth – I perceive it*”. The universe, composed of atoms radiated outward from a primary divine unity to an almost infinite variety, is conceived to be governed by the complementary laws of attraction and repulsion, in terms of which all phenomena are explicable. This is shown by mathematical proof, and by reference to the principles of heat, light, and electricity. This view of a harmoniously ordered,

perfect universe is extended in a discussion of literary criticism, especially applied to fiction. "*In the construction of plot ... we should aim at so arranging the incidents that we shall not be able to determine, or any one of them, whether it depends from any one other or upholds it*". The view has also an ethical application: "*God – the material and spiritual God – now exists solely in the diffused Matter and Spirit of the Universe*," and the regathering of these elements will reconstitute "*the purely Spiritual and individual God*," so that the operations of "*Divine Injustice*" or "*Inexorable Fate*" may at last be understood. We "*no longer rebel at a Sorrow which we ourselves have imposed upon ourselves*," and "*in this view alone the existence of Evil becomes intelligible ... it becomes endurable*."

"LIGEIA"

(tale, published in 1838 and reprinted in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*: 1840. The poem "The Conqueror Worm" was not included in the tale until 1845).

An aristocratic young man marries Ligeia, a woman of strange, dark beauty and great learning. They are deeply in love, and share an interest in the occult, until a wasting illness triumphs over Ligeia's passionate will to live, and she dies. In melancholy grief, her husband leaves his lonely home on the Rhine to purchase an English abbey, where he grows mentally deranged under the influence of opium. He marries fair-haired Lady Rowena Trevanion, although they are not in love, and Rowena soon dies in a strange manner. Her husband watches by the bier (catafalc) and sees signs of returning life in the body, but considers these to be hallucinations. At last, she rises to her feet and loosens the cerements (shroud) from her head so that masses of black hair stream forth. When she opens her eyes, he realises that the

lost Ligeia's will to live has triumphed, for she has assumed what was formerly the body of Rowena.

"THE PURLOINED LETTER"

(detective story, published in his *Tales*: 1845).

The prefect of the Paris police visits C.Augustine Dupin, scholarly amateur detective, for advice on a baffling case concerning a cabinet minister who has gained power over, and consequently practiced blackmail upon, a royal lady from whom he has stolen a letter that she cannot have made public. After several months of elaborate search, the prefect concludes that the letter is not on the minister's person or premises. Dupin soon finds the letter, explaining later that the police seek only obscure hiding places such as would be avoided by the acute minister. Dupin, therefore, visited him openly, looked in the most obvious places, and found the letter, turned inside out and disguised in an exposed card rack. Diverting the minister the next day by means of an arranged street disturbance, he substituted a facsimile and took the purloined (stolen) letter with him.

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMPOSITION"

(critical essay, published in *Graham's Magazine*: 1846).

It purports to describe the author's usual procedure in composing poetry and is mainly devoted to an analysis of "The Raven" as an example of this procedure. Among the famous dicta announced in the essay are: "*If any literary work is too long to be read at one sitting, we must be content to dispense with the immensely important effect derivable from unity of impression … What we term a long poem*

is, in fact, merely a succession of brief ones"; "*Beauty is the sole legitimate province of the poem*"; "*Beauty ... in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears. Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all poetical tones*"; "*The death of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world*." Poe further discusses his principles of versification, use of a refrain, diction, and imagery, and the primary importance of the climax ("The Raven", stanza 16), which was written first so that every effect in the poem should lead in its direction.

"THE POETIC PRINCIPLE"

(lecture delivered in various cities: 1848-49 and posthumously published in *The Union Magazine*: 1850. Partly an elocutionary (expressive) vehicle, it contains short poems by Willis, Longfellow, Bryant, Shelley, Thomas Moore, Hood, Byron, and Tennyson).

Developing the theories already stated in The Philosophy of Composition" and other places, Poe declares that "*a long poem does not exist ... . A poem deserves it title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. ... That degree of excitement ... cannot be sustained throughout a composition of any great length*." This is true because of "*that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity*", and the "*absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun is nullity*". He proceeds to "*the heresy of the Didactic*": "*there neither exists nor can exist any work more thoroughly dignified, more supremely noble than [the] poem which is a poem and nothing more - [the] poem written solely for the poem's sake*." The proper mood for teaching a truth is completely opposed to the poetic mood. Poetry arises in the passionate reaching out "*to apprehend the supernal Loveliness*," to attain a vision,

however brief, of the ideal beauty which is usually beyond our ken (reach). "*I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as* *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. *Its sole arbiter is Taste*." Love, "*the purest and truest of all poetical themes*," is the highest variety of beauty, and beauty is "*the province of the poem, ... The incitements (catalyst) of Passion, or the precepts (principle) of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may ... be introduced ... but the true artist will always contribute to tone them down (become moderated) in proper subjection to ... Beauty*."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803 – 1882)

R.W.Emerson, American poet and essayist, was born in Boston, the son of a Unitarian minister who was a member of an old Puritan family. The moral enthusiasm of his Puritan heritage mingled with the buoyant (light) optimism of the new and young nation. The latter, according to Charles Eliot Norton, a professor of fine art at Harvard, encouraged him in an optimism that became bigotry. (American Poetry and Prose: 400).

While Poe became the advocate of art for art's sake (the writer as an artist) Emerson believed in art for life's sake – or morals' sake (the writer as a preacher). A typical New England Bostonian, as Poe called him, with a great impact on his literary beliefs. Boston was both the cultural and religious centre of the United States. Although religion was not confined to New England, it was there that it was more felt. The region around Boston was still simple, unspoiled countryside, in which writers could find inspiration, and form a strong community of literati. Here, at the outskirts of Boston appeared the phenomenon of Transcendentalism. In 1836, Emerson founded "The Transcendental Club". Paradoxically, Emerson did not believe it was really a club. There were few friends with whom to associate, so to speak, professionally. "How insular, and pathetically solitary are all the people we know", Emerson confided to his journal. They knew each other, but even more, they knew *about* one another. Emerson, Thoreau and Hawthorne lived for a while in the same village, Concord. To the very end of their lives they had the feeling of speaking to *unknown friends*.

Transcendentalism, a philosophic and literary movement associated with Emerson, is based upon the doctrine that the principles of reality are to be discovered by the study of the processes of thought; a reaction to 18th century

rationalism, it is also a philosophy emphasising the intuitive and spiritual above the empirical. This romantic, idealistic, mystical and individualistic belief had as its fundamental base a monism holding to the unity of the world and God and the immanence of God in the world. Thus, everything in the world is a microcosm containing within itself all the laws and meaning of existence. Likewise, the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world, and latently contains all that the world contains. Man will fulfil his divine potentialities either through a mystical state ("mysticism for mysticism's sake", as Poe said), in which the divine is infused into the human, or through coming into contact with the truth, beauty and the goodness embodied in nature and originating in the Over-Soul. Thus occurs the doctrine of correspondence between the tangible world and the human mind, and the identity of moral and physical laws. Through belief in the divine authority of the soul's intuitions and impulses, based on this identification of the individual soul with God, there developed the doctrine of self-reliance and individualism, the disregard of external authority, tradition, and logical demonstration, and the absolute optimism of the movement. Emerson's dedication to self-reliant individualism inspired his fellow transcendentalist Bronson Alcott to observe, "Emerson's church consists of one member – himself. He waits for the world to agree with him".

More a cast of thought than a systematic philosophy, its diversity of concepts, and its eclectic sources made of the transcendentalist magazine, *The Dial* a source of criticism for its vague or silly ideas. Still, it was the true voice of their thoughts and feelings. For a time, the movement had an experimental community, the Brook Farm institute. But this came to an end when the Transcendentalists divided into two groups: those interested in social reform, and those (like Emerson and Thoreau) who were more interested in the individual.

After his father's death, Emerson was raised by his mother and an aunt, Mary Moody Emerson, a zealously pious woman who expressed her sardonically critical mind in a style her nephew admired and imitated. He graduated at Harvard in 1821. At Harvard in 1820 he began to keep the voluminous journals that he continued throughout his life, and that formed the basis of most of his essays and poems. After his graduation Emerson taught in a Boston school for young ladies. When he moved to Canterbury with his family in 1823 he expressed his relief at returning to the beauties of the countryside in the poem "Good-Bye". He taught for two more years, then in 1825 he entered the Harvard Divinity School, where he absorbed the liberal, intellectualised Christianity of Unitarianism, which rejected the Calvinist ideas of predestination and total depravity, substituting instead a faith in the saving grace of divine love and a belief in the eventual brotherhood of man in a Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Ill health and doubts on dogma made him a desultory student. Although approved as a candidate for the Unitarian ministry (1826), he had to go to Georgia and Florida for the winter because of a pulmonary disease. In 1829 he became pastor of the Second Church (Unitarian) in Boston, and married his first wife, Ellen Louisa Tucker, 17-year old. (who died in 1831 of tuberculosis). Despite being an effective and popular preacher, preaching views on the Lord's Supper which were disapproved by the majority of his congregation, led him finally resign the pulpit, a great turning point in his life.

In 1833 he went to Europe, and visited Carlyle, next year beginning that 38 years' correspondence which shows the two men with all their characteristics, different as optimist and pessimist, yet with many profound sympathies. Emerson was strongly influenced by the ideas of European romanticism represented by Carlyle, Coleridge and Wordsworth. Through them, he also became intimately associated with the transcendental thought and its sources in German idealism. On

his return to Boston, he did some preaching, but turned more and more to lyceum lecturing, for which he drew materials from his journals. His addresses, presented in such series as “The Philosophy of History”, “Human Culture”, “Human Life”, and “The Present Age”, in turn furnished the basis for his later essays. Without formal unity, they are bound together by pithy (epigrammatic), stimulating sentences that contain the quintessence of his philosophy. (“Self-Reliance”, “The Over-Soul”, etc). Emerson’s journal was his life’s task. For over fifty years, Emerson set down in it his reflections, without any attempt at regularity, but giving great care to indexing the volumes. First he would “deposit” ideas in his journal (which he called “my bank account”) and then he developed his lectures from the notes in his journal. Next, he rewrote them into essays. Their central theme was “the infinitude of the private man”. His journal entries were sometimes anecdotes, sometimes references to nature. His lectures were an assembly of aphorisms. Combining concrete facts with allusion, he was fascinated by the organic properties of language (”the word made one with the thing”). The want of form is backed by an acute sense of contradiction to reconcile good with evil the individual with society, scholarship with intuition, etc. This sense of polarity fascinated him. “Good and bad were impossible to separate. Money was a curse, but also the expression of improvement. Change was unsettling, but also imperative. American expansionism was a greedy phenomenon but had a kind of rightness” (Cunliffe: 98-99). However, there was no cruel war of irreconcilable extremes; they simply lay very close to each other in their eagerness to come together (Cunliffe: 94). Likewise, his life was a unremitting effort to find the truth by being true to himself. He was a New England seer and seeker, both an acceptor and a renouncer, a quiet man and a busy man, who liked “dry light, and hard clouds, hard expressions, and hard manners”. He was, as Cunliffe said, a modest man of boundless ambition.

In 1835 he married his second wife, Lydia Jackson and removed to Concord, Massachusetts. There he associated with Thoreau, Hawthorne, Bronson Alcott, Margaret Fuller, and others who belonged to the informal Transcendentalist Club. In Concord, Emerson became the chief spokesman of transcendentalism in America. His philosophy was a compound of Yankee Puritanism and Unitarianism merged with the teachings of European romanticism. The word "transcendental" had long been used in philosophy to describe truths that were beyond the reach of man's limited senses, and as a transcendentalist, Emerson argued for intuition as a guide to universal truths that could not be reached by reason alone. He believed that God is al-loving and all-pervading, that there is an essential unity in apparent variety, that there is a correspondence between the world and the spirit, that nature is an image in which man can perceive the divine.

Emerson stated the transcendentalist outlook more fully than any of his fellows. His main beliefs were indicated fairly early in his life, in three works: *Nature*, a small book of which only 500 copies were sold in twelve years; *The American Scholar* lecture; and the Harvard *Divinity School* address. In these he asserted that man and his world formed a perfect harmony, whose proofs were evident in every fact of nature and of human experience; that the voices of orthodoxy, of tradition, of the past were to be ignored in favour of one's own intuitive searchings. "Books", therefore, "are for the scholar's idle times". Man's only duty was to be true to himself; and all his introspection, far from isolating him, would bring him out into the great arena of a common truth: "the deeper he dives into his privatest, secretest presentiment, to his wonder he finds this is the most acceptable, most public, and universally true. The people delight in it; the better part of every man feels. This is my music; this is myself".

Each Divinity School student was “a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost”, whom Emerson exhorted to “cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity”. The advice was considered shocking by the elders who heard his address; Deity had lost its definite article, even for Unitarians themselves. Life was full of prizes, mostly for the active and observant ones. Power, activity, genius were considered qualities versus disabilities such as torpor (apathy), incuriosity, or such excess of temperament, e.g. sensuality.

Nature was the great source of inspiration, for him as for Wordsworth. In 1836 he published his first book, *Nature*. *Nature* is the fundamental document of his philosophy (the manifesto of the Transcendental movement) and expresses also his constant, deeply felt love for the natural scenes in which he passed so much of his time. It was also the summation of Emerson’s previous thinking, and a ground-plan for his future work. It stated the case for a philosophy of idealism suggested to Emerson by the romantic Coleridge and, behind him, by the new German philosophers. In it he stated that man should not see nature merely as something to be used; that man’s relationship with nature *transcends* the idea of usefulness. He saw an important difference between *Understanding* (judging things only according to the senses) and “*Reason*”: “When the eye of Reason opens … outlines and surfaces become transparent and are no longer seen; causes and spirits are seen through them. The best moments of life are these delicious awakenings. The book is not easy reading. Despite a show of method, it is the work of a mind impatient of close logical thinking. Emerson does not attempt, in the manner of philosophers, carefully to build a demonstration. He throws out affirmations supported by images rather than arguments, and appeals for an instinctive response rather than rational assent. It is, actually, a meditative prose poem. The slow sale of the book showed how small in numbers the Transcendentalists really were.

Soon after the challenge in the field of philosophy, there came another challenge, this time concerning "the study of letters", i.e. literature. His Transcendental ideas were next applied to cultural and national problems in his famous speech at Harvard University *The American Scholar* (1837). He attacked the influence of tradition and the past, and called for a new burst of American creativity. He spoke to the hearts of the young, reaching depths they had not been aware of. To him, the word scholar did not refer to the man of "book learning", but to the original thinker. Such a man knows himself through intuition and the study of nature, not of books. He must act, as well as think and write, i.e he must know himself, study nature and interpret the distinctive new culture, for "Each age must write its own books". His duties are all implied in the term "self-trust"; knowing himself and his function. Called "our intellectual Declaration of Independence" by Holmes, the work was immediately influential and remains important as an idealistic appeal for the active leadership of American society by native thinkers, developed through contact with the best products of former cultures and through free intercourse with nature and their fellow men. Earlier announcements of American cultural self-reliance had been premature or superficial; Emerson's was timely and profound. It was profound because the independent mind, as he conceived it, rested upon principles not simply national but universal, valid for all men. And it was timely because the hope which romanticism had encouraged in the few could be offered to the educated public at a moment when its wise and courageous leadership was badly needed. "The present generation," Emerson had written in his journal, "is bankrupt of principles and hope, as of property." It was the time of the panic of 1837, the most severe business panic the country had known. It was a time of economic fear that accented the timidity and conformity in all realms of thought, political, moral, religious, and educational. Far from leading

the way with courage and wisdom, the scholar class, as Emerson described it, had itself succumbed to timidity and conformity. He felt obliged to state the case for self-reliance strongly, even exaggeratedly, in order to awaken a response.

A year later, in 1838, a third challenge, that in religion came with his "Divinity-School Address" (at Cambridge), where he defined his position in, or out of the church in which he had been a minister. In "The American Scholar", the author appeals for a return to original intellectual experience; here he appeals for a return to original spiritual experience (i.e. Deity, Virtue and moral sentiment). Thus, he attacked formal religion and championed intuitive spiritual experience. Truth is attainable only through intuition, "it cannot be received at second hand". The address includes a bold criticism of historical or institutional Christianity. Since historical Christianity has fallen into errors, its influence is baneful (evil). By emphasising past revolutions, it limits and discourages the direct exploration of Moral Nature, which alone communicates spiritual greatness and the divine spirit. The formal church is dry, false and moribund (dying); the "great and perpetual office of the preacher is not discharged". Young men entering the ministry must search their own hearts, preach their own message: "speak the very truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelations". A plea for the individual consciousness, (as against all historical creeds, bibles, churches) for the soul of each man as the supreme judge in spiritual matters, it produced a great sensation, especially among the Unitarians, and much controversy followed in which Emerson took no part. Consequently, it was 30 years before he was again invited to speak at Harvard.

To promulgate his ideas further, in 1840 he joined with other Transcendentalists in publishing *The Dial* and, though he did not sympathise with the communal experiments at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, he became interested in

many contemporary reform movements and extended the sphere of his lecturing. Some of these lectures received their final form in the first series of *Essays* (1841) whose 12 pieces were: “History”, “Self-Reliance”, “Compensation”, “Spiritual Laws”, “Love”, “Friendship”, “Prudence”, “Heroism”, “The Over-Soul”, “Circles”, “Intellect”, and “Art”.

His essay “Self-Reliance” is one of the most famous of these lectures/essays, and is widely read in American high schools today. Emerson asserts that a good society is a society of good individuals, and the only fundamental reform is the reform of one’s self. The aims and effects of those known as reformers and humanitarians are superficial, and social progress is an illusion. Conformity, the virtue most widely valued, is the means by which free men are intimidated into slavery to society. In affirming self-reliance vs. conformity, independence vs. subjection, the individual vs. society, Emerson had behind him an immense amount of American experience, including the settlement of New England by nonconformists, the stand of Roger Williams in favour of the individual conscience, the Inner Light of the Quakers, the passion of Jefferson for all freedoms, the Jacksonian assertion of the common man. Emerson’s was a democratic individualism, but at the same time, it was a spiritual individualism deeply related to European traditions reaching far back to early Christianity and the philosophy of Plato. The essay is filled with memorable lines, familiar to most Americans: “To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men – that is genius” (a special and unusual power of the mind); “to be great is to be misunderstood”; “A foolish consistency (not changing one’s mind) is the hobgoblin (spirit that plays tricks and misleads) of little minds”. In “The American Scholar” and “The Divinity School Address” Emerson’s art was that of the orator adapting its speech to a dignified occasion. Now he is an

informal essayist. He is still, in a sense, addressing an audience, ("you"), and he is still, in a sense, ministerial (sustaining), seeking to stir unused depths in the listener's experience. Full of his subject and purpose, he sustains them through, a lengthy discourse, repeating his main point – "trust thyself" – in many statements and over-statements, testing it by many applications to situations in life, alerting the reader by changes in tone and attitude. The essay is studded with pithy, quotable epigrams and with telling metaphors. And the diction, as Lowell said, is at once rich and homely, "like home-spun cloth-of-gold".

Equally important is Emerson's essay "The Over-Soul". The "Over-Soul" is "that unity … within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all things". Flowing out of that unity, "Man is a stream whose source is hidden". From the Over-Soul come all ideas and intelligence: "We do not determine what we think. We only open our senses … and suffer (allow) the intellect to see".

A second series of essays were published in 1844. He dealt mostly with abstractions, such as self-reliance, compensation, love, the over-soul, manners, politics, etc. In many of the essays his faith in the religion of the self was at its height, but in a few, such as that on "Experience", we could see another Emerson, a more experienced one, one who became aware of the fact that man was not always good but a creature limited by heredity, temperament, circumstance, suffering. He speaks here from the point of view of a sceptic. Emerson is deeply aware of the paradox man lives – he lives in time, yet he conceives of a world beyond – and of the great limiting forces over which man has no control. The essay conveys Emerson's overwhelming sense of being trapped within experience and of being isolated from the ideal or spirit of the thought world, as Emerson refers to it. Nevertheless, Emerson expresses a continued faith in the thought world, although

he knows that it cannot immediately, if ever, be realised. The essay does not express Emerson's final view of experience, but it does show how seriously he grappled with contradictions, limitation, illusion, and change.

In 1849, he revisited England to lecture on *Representative Men* (published in 1850). His *English Traits* appeared in 1856, *The Conduct of Life* in 1860, *Society and Solitude* in 1870, *Letters and Social Aims* in 1876. Here, as well, we see, on the one hand, the same optimism of Emerson, but at the same time one that was not blind anymore to the dark realities of the human fate. During the 1850s, Emerson's journals exhibit his great interest in antislavery, and he was an active sympathiser with the Northern struggle in the Civil War.

MERITS AND WEAKNESSES (Critical references)

- Although Emerson's thought is often considered the core of Transcendentalism, he stood apart from much of the activity of the movement, and though he summed up the major development of romanticism in America, his philosophy is rooted in the Puritan background and tempered by the many systems of thought that converged in him. He had no complete philosophical system, but with a style now vibrant, now flinty (firm), preached the great doctrine of a higher individualism, the spiritual nature of reality, the importance of self-reliance, the obedience to instinct, the obligation of optimism and hope, and the existing of a unifying Over-Soul which explains the many diverse phenomena of life. (*The Oxford Companion to American Literature*: 198)
- The idealist or transcendentalist in philosophy, the rationalist in religion, the bold advocate of spiritual independence, of intuition as a divine guidance, of instinct as a heaven-born impulse, of individualism in its fullest extent, making

each life a kind of theocratic egotism – this is the Emerson of his larger utterances. For him nature was a sphinx, covered with hieroglyphics, for which the spirit of man is to find the key. (*Chambers Biographical* Dictionary: 478)

- Emerson's beliefs were a balance of scepticism and faith, stirred by moral fervour. To many of his readers, they have seemed neither coherent nor complete. Devout Christians rejected his early writings as "the latest form of infidelity". He has been called "St Ralph, the Optimist" and charged with having a serene ignorance of the true nature of evil. His exaltation of intuition over reason has been dismissed as a justification of infantile enthusiasm; his celebration of individualism has been judged an argument for mindless self-assertiveness. (*Anthology of American Literature*: 1040)
- Emerson was a seer and poet, not a man of cool logic. In his letters, essays, and poems he sought to inspire a cultural rejuvenation, to transmit to his listeners and readers his own lofty perceptions. His appeal lay in his rejection of outworn traditions and in his faith in goodness and inevitable progress. His words both dazzled and puzzled his audience. Like his philosophy, his writing seemed to lack organisation, but it swarmed with epigrams and memorable passages. The nineteenth century found him a man who had "something capital to say about everything", and his ideas influenced American writers from Melville, Thoreau, Whitman, and Emily Dickinson in the nineteenth century to E.A.Robinson, Robert Frost, Hart Crane, and Wallace Stevens in the twentieth century. (*Anthology of American Literature*: 1040)
- Emerson's perceptions of man and nature as symbols of universal truth encouraged the development of the symbolist movement in American writing. His assertion that even the commonplaces of American life were worthy of the highest art helped to establish a national literature. His repudiation of established traditions

and institutions encouraged a literary revolution; his ideas, expressed in his own writing and in the works of others, have been taken as an intellectual foundation for movements of social change that have profoundly altered modern America. Emerson was no political revolutionary. He preached harmony in a discordant age, and he recognised the needs of human society as incompatible with unrestrained individualism. As he grew older he became increasingly conservative, but he remained a firm advocate of self-reliant idealism, and in his writings and in the example of his life Emerson has endured as a guide for those who would shun all foolish consistencies and escape blind submission to fate. (*Anthology of American Literature*: 1041)

- Critics often complained, not without justification, of his bland optimism, or his insistent preaching, or his rhetorical eloquence, or his intangible pantheism and mysticism, or his indifference to reason. In the years that have followed, he has impressed scholars with his important place in the development of American civilisation, and interested critics in his qualities of mind and personality, especially in his "psychological ambivalence", i.e. his effort to perceive sharply, and keep himself posed between, the conflicting elements of life, such as free will and fate (*American Poetry and Prose*: 401-402).

HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817 – 1862)

Thoreau, American essayist and poet, also known as "the hermit of Walden" was born in Concord, Massachusetts of a family whose French, Scottish, Quaker, and Puritan stock helps to account for his temper of mind. Just as his heritage was mixed, so his philosophy of life combined diverse strains, and he called himself "*a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot*". At heart, he was predominantly individualistic, and his great interest was "to observe what transpires, not in the street, but in the mind and heart of me!" Although his reading carried him far away from home, he could truthfully say, "I have travelled a good deal in Concord".

"*Whoever would be a man*", Emerson had said, "*must be a non-conformist*". None took this advice more to heart than his disciple and fellow Transcendentalist, H.D.Thoreau. At first glance, no two authors seem closer than Emerson and Thoreau. Both lived in Concord, stirred by the same impulses. Like Emerson, the younger man – deeply influenced by reading "Nature" – began to keep a journal, from which he extracted items for publication: "*My journal is that for me which would else spill over and run to waste*." Nevertheless, what he wrote there (*An Outline of American Literature*: 46), and in his books, was written in a far more lively style than Emerson's. Emerson wrote about nature in the abstract. Thoreau, however, was an experienced woodsman and his works are filled with details about plans, rivers and wildlife. Like Emerson, he preached the gospel of independence and the great outdoors. Likewise, the issue of anti-slavery affected him. His home became a meeting place for anti-slavery groups. He was an active member of a group that helped slaves escape to freedom. The two men even looked alike. For two years, Thoreau lived in Emerson's home. It was natural, then, that Thoreau

should be widely regarded as a disciple. Emerson himself felt Thoreau's ideas were extensions of his own. It has been frequently said that Thoreau was the answer to Emerson's plea for an "American Scholar".

In fact (Cunliffe: 97) the two men had different personalities, and somewhat different aspirations. What they had in common, it might be said, kept them apart. As the years passed, contact became harder. They both wrote of friendship as something idealistic and self-centred. In May 1853, Thoreau wrote in his journal that he had "*talked, or tried to talk*" with Emerson: "*Lost my time – nay, almost my identity. He, assuming a false opposition where there was no difference of opinion, talked to the wind – told me what I knew – and I lost my time trying to imagine myself somebody else to oppose him*".

At about the same time, Emerson was complaining to his journal that: "*As Webster could never speak without an antagonist, so Henry Thoreau does not feel himself except in opposition. He wants a fallacy to expose, a blunder to pillory, requires a little sense of victory, a roll of the drums, to call his powers into full exercise*".

Despite all surface similarities, there were dissimilarities, as well. Thoreau had something to communicate that we miss in Emerson's writings. Emerson's feeling for nature was real enough; but in comparison with that of Thoreau, it was limited and 'literary'. Emerson was a professional naturalist; he was an educated man. Unlike him, Thoreau went farther into the secrets of nature. His problem was that of a complicated man seeking simplicity. He had to make a living, but one that would leave him free of any entanglement. Like Emerson, he was concerned with the individual in relation to society, but in a special way. He would say in "Walden", "*Wherever a man goes, men will pursue and paw him with their dirty*

institutions, and, if they can, constrain him to belong to their desperate odd-fellow society".

Thoreau was an original mind who tried – and managed to illustrate –through his writing – that the pursuit of material things had no value. He desired a life of contemplation, of being in harmony with nature, and of acting on his own principles. Thoreau also rebelled against bourgeois –capitalist values, demanding the unimpeded development of the individual. He was an idealist also influenced by Rousseau, and a social reformer, a nature and philosophical observer.

Thoreau's style is often conversational in tone, similar to that found in Emerson's journals, so on the surface his books seem to be nothing more than casual accounts of his trips or experiences. In reality, however, they are carefully arranged, their design helping to convey Thoreau's meaning.

His answers to his various dilemmas were uncompromising. Never married, he had no commitment to provide for others. Part of a homogeneous community, he felt no need to seek a place in it. His place was understood; though neighbours disapproved of his vagaries (whims) they did not treat him with hostility. He could live in a civilised village with men like Emerson, Hawthorne and Alcott to talk to, and still find his beloved wilderness at the end of the street. Walden Pond, where he built his hut, was only a mile and a half from Concord.

In addition to his natural education in the woods near Concord, and the ordinary preparatory schooling, he graduated from Harvard (1837), where he was primarily influenced by E.T.Channing's teaching of composition, and the knowledge of Greek and the metaphysical poets that he derived from Jones Very. His temporary residence in the home of Orestes Brownson, from whom he learned German, was also influential.

After graduation he became a teacher in Concord, and lectured. He soon gave up teaching, and joined his father in making lead pencils, but about 1839 he began his walks and studies of nature as the serious occupation of his life. In 1839, he made a trip with his brother John on the Concord and Merrimack rivers, to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, of which he wrote during his residence at Walden in *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849). The autobiographical narrative describes the seven days spent in a small boat during that trip. From the description of the home-made dory, (a small boat with a narrow, flat bottom, high bow, and flaring sides) which was "*painted green below, with a border of blue, with reference to the two elements I which it was to spend its existence*," to the account of New Hampshire people, the book maintains a certain air of romantic adventure, but the travel narrative is subordinated to learned digressions into history, religion, and philosophy; poetry; discussions of literary classics; and such Emersonian essays as the one on friendship. Some of the passages have been frequently quoted, for Thoreau's style was already fully developed, and was said by Lowell to have "*an antique purity*". During the author's lifetime, the book was not popular. Later editors, like H.S.Canby, have given it a more compact form by eliminating "*indoor additions*".

After closing his school, he lived with Emerson (1841-43), serving him as a general handyman, although their relation was also one of master and disciple. At this time, he became an intimate of the members of the Transcendental Club, and a contributor to *The Dial* and other magazines.

After his return to Concord (1845), Thoreau built himself a hut in the woods by Walden Pond, where he lived from July 4, 1845, to September 6, 1847, a period of which he wrote in his most famous book, *Walden* (1845). While other Transcendentalists sought a retreat at Brook Farm, Thoreau, ever an individualist,

having no use for co-operative plans, found his solution at Walden. He wanted to get back to the naked simplicity of life, where he might "*subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh*", chew the cud of his thoughts, and get to the very core of the universe, by living deep and sucking out all the "*marrow of life*". His desire was "*so to love wisdom as to live according to the dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust ... to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically*." He wanted neither to be interfered with not to interfere with others, and he declared, "*I would not have anyone to adopt my mode of living, each should find out his own way, not his neighbor's or his parents*".

On the surface, *Walden* speaks only of the practical side of living alone in the woods, of the plants, animals and insects one finds there, and of the changing seasons. However, in fact it is a completely Transcendentalist work. The author tries to "*live through the visible to the invisible, through the temporal to the eternal*". He rejects the things ordinary people desire in life, such as money and possessions. Instead, he emphasises the search for true wisdom: "*While civilization has been improving our homes, it has not equally improved those who live in them*". True enjoyment comes only when one throws off all unnecessary things. Describing his little home, he says, "*My best room ... always ready for company ... was the pine woods behind my house*". *Walden* (*An Outline of American Literature*: 47) is a hopeful book, encouraging people to lead sincere, joyous lives. The author sees the world as "*more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful*".

His residence at the Pond was interrupted in 1846 when Thoreau was arrested and put in jail for one night because he had refused to pay his taxes. It was a protest against the U.S. government's acceptance of slavery in the South and its war with the Mexico. He wrote about his experience in jail in his essay "Civil

Disobedience" (1849): "*As I stood considering the walls of solid stone … and the iron grating (crossed bars) which strained the light, I could not help being struck with the foolishness of the institution which treated me as if I were flesh and bones, to be locked up … As they could not reach me, they had resolved (determined) to punish my body*". The theme of this work – "*that we should be men first and subjects afterward*" – made it a great influence on Tolstoy, Gandhi and Martin Luther King. It is probably the best-known American essay outside the United States.

His belief in passive resistance expressed earlier in *Walden* was even more stressed in his essay "Civil Disobedience", that each man should save himself and all would be saved. He not only believed with Jefferson that that government is best which governs least, but he also contended that "*they are the lovers of law and order who observe the law when the government breaks it*". His belief in the individual and in a moral law superior to statutes and constitutions was also expressed in "Life Without Principle" (1863).

In the essay, modern American culture is criticised as being excessively preoccupied with acquisition, at the expense of awareness of values. "*The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living … but to perform well a certain work … An efficient and valuable man does what he can, whether the community pay him for it or not*…" Most men dwell thoughtlessly on the surface of existence, obsessed by the need for busyness, small gossip, and conformance to convention. They lack independence and self-expression, as appears in such phenomena as the gold rush to California: "*The philosophy and poetry and religion of such a mankind are not worth the dust of a puffball*".

All of us have desecrated (become impure) ourselves: "*the remedy will be by weariness and devotion to reconsecrate ourselves, and make once more a fane of*

the mind … Even the facts of science may dust the mind by their dryness, unless they are … rendered fertile by the dews of fresh and living truth".

Thoreau stated his prickly doctrine of independence as powerfully in "Life without Principle" as in any of his essays. He condemned all kinds of compromise, and advised his fellow citizens to enjoy life for its own sake. They should spend their time, he told them, living rather than getting a living. Thoreau considered most activities of the average American to be a waste of time.

After his return to Concord, he lived for a year in Emerson's home while the essayist was abroad, and during this period formed his close friendship with the younger W.E.Channing, who in writing the first biography of Thoreau aptly called him "the poet-naturalist". His observations of nature were distinguished not merely by his scientific knowledge, which was occasionally erroneous, but by his all-inclusive love of life, expressed now in an earthy manner with a Yankee twang (a sharp sound), now with a sweet, pure English, having, as Lowell said, "*an antique purity like wine grown colorless with age*". Though he enjoyed the scientific view of nature, he was also a Transcendentalist, defining his attitude when he said he wanted more the wideness of heaven than the limit of the microscope. His statement that he liked "*better the surliness (hostility) with which the wood chopper speaks of his woods, handling them as indifferently as his axe, than the mealy-mouthed (avoiding the use of plain or honest language; deceitful) enthusiasm of the lover of nature*" shows him as an observer who wanted his answers concerning nature not only in facts but in terms of faith, as well.

After the Walden episode, he supported himself by whitewashing, gardening, fence building and land surveying. He also lectured now and then, and wrote for magazines. He made three trips to the Maine woods in 1846, 1853, and 1857, described in papers collected after his death (1864). In 1850, he made a trip to

Canada, which produced *A Yankee in Canada* (1866). In 1835, he began to keep a daily journal of his walks and observations, containing some two million words, the basis of all his books. He also made a trip to New York, where he met W.Whitman. Unfortunately, he was a victim of tuberculosis, which gradually weakened him and finally caused his death. He worked, in spite of this handicap, on a long, unpublished ethnological study of the Indians and continued to make scientific observations and to carry on his own way of life both privately and as a lyceum lecturer. An invalid, he made an attempt to recapture health by making a journey to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi (1861), but returned home; knowing that he was shortly to die, he engaged in a last attempt to edit his journals for publication. He published two books and a few articles and speeches during his lifetime, but it was not until his death that selections form his journals were edited by his friend Harrison G.O.Blake: *Early Spring in Massachusetts* (1881), *Summer* (1884), and *Winter* (1887), and *Autumn* (1892). Other publications are *Excursions in Field and Forest*, with memoir by Emerson (1863), *Cape Cod* (1865), *Letters to Various Persons*, with nine poems (1865), *Familiar Letters* (1894), and *Poems of Nature* (1896), and the celebrated essay *Civil Disobedience* (1849).

Nathaniel Hawthorne (

MORAL AMBIGUITY AND BIPOLARITY IN HAWTHORNE'S FICTION

(see the Annex for flow-charts)

We started the journey into Nathaniel Hawthorne's work with the premise that the uniqueness of the author's vision lies in his sense of form, in the shape he gives this vision. Analysis has been made on his four main romances, *The Scarlet Letter, The House of the Seven Gables, The Blithedale Romance, and The Marble Faun.*

Hawthorne's treatment of themes, characters, and the narrative strategies he uses, have been all discussed in the light of particular character of Hawthorne's vision of life, in the shape he gave to this organic vision of life (that of a sphere in which characters are presented as ascending spiral curves found in an ever-going on quest journey for self-identity.

Hawthorne was one of those who believed in the dual nature of existence. His vision of life is characterized by bipolarity and ambiguity. In an age that ascribed certainties only to external reality, he denied the possibility of perfect reflection of the world. Because the actual is material, it lacks meaning and has no relation to human needs and desires. Actualities are given meaning and brought into relation with feelings by the act of imagination, which recreates the actual in conformity with human pressures. The actual itself (Cf. Baym), lacking the human dimension, is basically empty even though it may be dense and crowded with events: it is empty of meaning.

As such, life is seen as a continuous fight between opposing forces that are both complementary to each other and antithetical. The form Hawthorne gives to

his fiction is apparent in the continuous interplay and balance of these dualities, which in the end make up a total vision of the human world.

The SELF and the OTHER are the key opposing forces that through interplay and interaction finally get to become one. Human beings have inherent potential for both good and evil. Each character has to descend into one's own humanity to realize the dual nature of man. From the outside reality, which stands for lack of identity and meaning, characters get involved on a quest journey for identity that is achieved at the level of the heart. There subject (reader) and object (creation) become one, i.e. they turn into a THING. Heidegger calls a 'thing' a gathering or assembly ('correspondence') achieved through identification of the object's external appearance with internal expressiveness. Balance is achieved through self-awareness and awareness of the other. The instrument used to achieve balance is SYMPATHY. Through sympathy characters get linked to all other characters in the common bond/chain of humanity. The journey is a quest journey for an illusive truth (i.e. perfection). As there is no perfection, life is presented under the shape of a sphere in which, "We come from nothing and return to nothing. From the silence of the womb to the silence of the tomb" (Derrida). From non-identity (lack of meaning), characters take an endless journey within the heart where things get meaning (identity) only to get to the outside reality with the original non-identity. As Frye says, "*The end is the beginning transformed*".

Similarly, fiction is a reconstruction of something considered dead which comes back to life, (it gets meaning) by means of imagination only to go back and be some time in the future recaptured again in the permanent discourse created between SELf (work) and OTHER (reader).

Hawthorne's vision of life is seen as starting from the dual character of the eye (external/internal) and the difference he makes between VISION (visual

representation) and PERCEPTION (with its metaphorical interpretation made at the level of the heart with the power of the internal eye, caled GAZE by Dollis).

Referring to the split between the eye (external) and gaze (internal), Hawthorne anticipates Lacan who said a century later: "*I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides*". While the eye is used as a means of visual representation, the gaze functions as a means of perception.

Hawthorne was much interpreted as using the daguerreotype (photographic realism) technique. The author's arguments contradict this comparison. While the daguerreotype was a static visual representation of a model that the omniscient photographer had in mind, Hawthorne's image (obtained as a result of the object's defragmentation at the level of the heart) denies possibility of perfect reflection of the world. By using the mirror effect, visual representation (the eye) is doubled by affective perception (the gaze). The object (model, creation) is offered to the subject (reader) who offers multiple configurations of it. Unlike the daguerreotype that perceived the whole object uniformly and at the same time, Hawthorne's metaphorical gaze perceives it gradually and differently depending on the time of perception. Unlike the portrait or the photograph, which do have a meaning only when they are finished, the image, through its various aspects comprehended differently by various "perceivers" of perception has meaning from the very beginning; similarly, we can say that the thing is never fully and actually achieved (Cf. Merleau-Ponty). The object is taken out from the outside reality, which represents only a static framework for the object to be contextualized. From there, by means of indirect lighting, the object is taken to the internal reality to be interpreted, to get expressiveness. Whereas in the case of the daguerreotype the object is presented in direct light against a dark background, Hawthorne's object appears as black (i.e. lacking meaning). At the level of the heart, the object is

defragmented into smaller aspects which, each in turn, gets meaning according to individual perceivers who perceive it at different times and from changing angles. The only common link between the daguerreotype technique and Hawthorne's mirror technique is the transcendental perception, which allows seeing something beyond it (Cf. Emerson).

Another theory which Hawthorne has affinities with is Emerson's individualistic theory. However, unlike Emerson who believed only in the SELF and in the individual who contained all, Hawthorne's dualistic vision saw man as being made up of both the SELF and the OTHER, while the individual human being becomes a full character only by recognizing the dual nature of existence (GOOD+BAD) and, consequently he gets linked to all others though brotherhood. To recognize sinful nature of man he has to suffer isolation, which is real and painful unlike Emerson' s disbelief of them.

Hawthorne was also indebted to the rationalist philosopher Leibnitz and his theory of the monads. According to him human beings are made up of the same substance, God. He disregarded the sinful nature of man. Each human being has a definite number of monads, i.e. characteristics. They do not interact causally but constitute a synchronized harmony (achieved through sympathy) with material phenomena. If one link of the system fails, he gets isolated. From him Hawthorne applied the theory of monads upon his characters but with slight changes of meaning: human beings are made up of both good and evil, whereas monads interact. This is best to be seen in the way he approached character interaction. All characters interact, and by interaction they get characteristics from each other. A good example is Hester who starts by being an active character only to become passive at the end of the romance as a result of her interaction with Dimmesdale. Similarly, Dimmesdale follows the same route but in the opposed direction: from a

passive character he turns into an active one who acknowledges and gives a name to his daughter Pearl; previously, he lived a life of hypocrisy, not daring to recognize his sin publicly.

Last, Hawthorne is seen as having started from the Puritan doctrine, which is characterized by a bipolar HEAD (Reason) – HEART (Imagination) conflict. The latter considered Imagination a sink of evil, equating it with witchcraft and demonism. According to McPherson, in Hawthorne's personal vision the HEART is central, common to all, flanked by the empirical (in the sense of concreteness, experience) daylight faculty of Reason, and the nocturnal, magical power of Imagination. Hawthorne's redefinition of the relationships of the HEART to Reason and Imagination brings us to the place of the individual in the community. For Hawthorne's characters, whether through reason or imagination, whether passively or actively, or both, participate, as we have seen, in a journey of initiation whose end is, or ought to be (in Hawthorne's view) a return to the community. Hawthorne's journey into the labyrinth of experience is different from the Puritan journey. Hawthorne saw Puritans as inflexible materialists who did not believe in redemption here on earth. John Frederick remarks that unlike Puritanism in whose view God arbitrarily chooses those few to be atoned, Hawthorne imagines a God whose supreme virtue is forgiveness rather than damnation. This power of forgiveness he gives to those on earth as well. Sin remains sin and adultery remains adultery, yet for Hawthorne sin can educate and so in Hester and Dimmesdale, and most clearly in Donatello it can have a humanizing effect. In Murphy's view, there are various means of compensating sinfulness, such as remorse, confession or penance which result from isolation as a prerequisite for self-awareness and awareness of the other. For both the Puritans and Hawthorne the quest begins in the empirical realm, the daylight world and descends into the realm of imagination, the

moonlit world in which the character explores the darkness of his or her own identity. And here the similarity ends. Hawthorne's journey is a long one and from it the character, ideally, comes out full of self-awareness (regarding the imperfect, bipolar, ambiguous nature of man, whose sphere is made up of both good and evil, reason and imagination). That self-awareness, though, is not the end for Hawthorne. The Ideal end of the quest or private 'initiation' is the achievement of a new balance between the opposing forces of matter and spirit, reason and imagination, self and other through the common bond of sympathy.

Unlike this belief, in the Puritan vision the journey ends with the thought that the night side of man's nature is monstrous, and therefore denies the imaginative side of the self. However, even with Hawthorne, not all quests are successful. The new age, to whose ideals Hawthorne wants to adhere, similarly stressed the daylight, empirical side of experience. In the face of this materialism, the man of vision was still suspect. For Hawthorne's characters whose quest fails there is no 'return' from the quest, meaning no application of their knowledge of themselves and others to the needs of humanity. They fail because they consider themselves superior to their fellows. The result is the denial of the values of the Heart (love and sympathy).

Hawthorne and the Romance Tradition (see the Annex).

Hawthorne obviously adopted the conventions of the romance tradition. The assumption has been that the Romance, as a narrative form, rather than trying to reproduce reality, aims at purposefully creating a reality that is set at a distance from ordinary experience, a reality which, as Northrop Frye noted, tends to be introverted and personal, rather than extroverted and social. It seems to have perfectly suited Hawthorne, who found in this distance the freedom to reshape

reality as he saw it, while at the same time, letting the reader participate in the creative process.

It is important to note that for Hawthorne the distance and latitude given by the Romance did not represent a flight from human experience, but a different attempt to approach it from a moral, intellectual, and emotional standpoint of his own.

The proof of Hawthorne's need to control the process of shaping a vision of reality is apparent throughout his fiction in his constant attempts to balance and blend the three antitheses of verisimilitude and ideality, the natural and the marvelous, and history and its conceptualization in fiction. Their complicated interplay gives shape to Hawthorne's ideas and images of a descending and ascending reality and better tell the truths that lie in Hawthorne's heart, i.e. his philosophy of life (Cf. Frye).

Besides, in his non-fiction (his prefaces, letters, and notebooks), as well as in the lengthy discussions and the questions voiced by the narrator and by characters in his fiction, the author is asking us to suspend disbelief and join him in the world he creates. The conscious and systematic strategy is also proof of Hawthorne's control of form

Theme and Structure in Hawthorne's Fiction (see the Annex).

The themes of his fiction will speak of the vision of a highly moral artist whose ambiguities tell throughout of his belief in the complexity of human condition. The premise here is that his fiction is thematically structured (organized). Various themes are identified, all having existential tones. The two themes that are seen standing at the core of Hawthorne's philosophy of life are sin and sympathy. In work after work he explores them in greater and greater depth, reflecting not only on what they mean but also on their relation to each other.

Although most of the texts have the same components as a starting point, different insights and different thematic pairs are drawn from them. The author has traced the development of these themes as they come into antithetical and complementary connection with one another forming thus interconnected facets of a thematic unity, and contributing to the building of Hawthorne's organic view of the world. The thematic pairs of sin and salvation, isolation and community, permanence and change, good and evil, tradition and reform, nature and civilization, marriage and isolation are all explained in their relation to each other and to the main themes.

Hawthorne's themes are seen as giving meaning to his organic view of life, which he represented as a sphere; they all start from community, and return to it after they passed through the isolation stage: COMMUNITY – ISOLATION – COMMUNITY. Isolation, as a prerequisite for the return to community, with its lack of emotional security inherent in FELLOWSHIP can be voluntary (which results in the acceptance of society, e.g. Hester), or involuntary (which results in its rejection, e.g. Dimmesdale).

Isolation can have various causes: sin (Hester), pride (Chillingworth), negation of the OTHER (Coverdale), individualistic (Hilda), reform (Hollingsworth), social outcast (Holgrave), devotion to a faded aristocratic past (Hepzibah), loss of house (Phoebe), mysterious past (Zenobia), expatriation (Hilda, Kenyon), etc.

Return to community can take different forms: love (Priscilla, Hollingsworth), marriage (Phoebe, Holgrave), remorse (confession), letter (the end of The Scarlet Letter), etc.

Particularly when following the themes of permanence versus change, nature versus civilization, and reform versus tradition, one can note the deep ambivalence of the romancer. The purity of nature is contrasted with the corruption of

civilization, but its lawlessness is expressed in his fear that the beauty of nature will be violated by the pace of civilization. At the same time, he knows that the advance of civilization into nature is inevitable.

While considering the possibility of reform, which was very real in his time, Hawthorne's belief in the sinfulness of man (which is part of his theology) makes him skeptical of it. Change will be slow and gradual, while tradition will always be there to depend on. Still, the dilemma is always there between the permanence of history (the dialectic, cyclical movement of history) and the idea of history as progress or change.

Isolation as the antithesis of sympathy and brotherhood appears under different aspects in all four of Hawthorne's major novels. In *The Scarlet Letter* sin produces isolation, and alienation. Each of the characters in *The House of the Seven Gables* is isolated from the world outside the house. The group of people embarked on an idealistic communal endeavor in *The Blithedale Romance* is individually isolated within the community. Having abandoned normal social relationships to establish an ideal community, the characters isolate themselves. The irony is that reform here brings about isolation. Finally, the little group of *The Marble Faun* leads an unnatural life, which contributes to their isolation.

Hawthorne's Characters as Shapers of his Artistic Vision (see the Annex)

The characters that inhabit Hawthorne's world give life to his unitary vision of life. All characters start their quest journey from community, with lack of identity, descend within their own humanity to achieve identity, and from there they return to the original lack of identity within the community. So the line they follow is: NON-IDENTITY – IDENTITY – NON-IDENTITY.

Characters are divided into active and passive within both the Empirical and Imaginative Realm (Cf. McPherson). They combine within different realms, not within the same one. If they belong to the same realm, they have too strong or too weak personalities, and find themselves in a continuous fight for dominance (see similar characters as Zenobia and Hollingsworth).

The end of the journey can result in:

- unchangeable types, failures whose journey ends in a doubling of the SELF (Cf. Sartre). It is the case of narcissists, as Coverdale is who refuses to accept the dual nature of the eye. He accepts only to see the Other (power of the eye), while refusing to be seen by the Other (power of the gaze).
- changeable types, whose quest journey is successful. Characters like Hester, Dimmesdale, and Pearl acknowledge dual nature of man and manage to fill the gap between SELF and the OTHER. They realize the dual nature of the eye, and accept both to see and be seen. The desired outcome of the journey is in Hawthorne's view self-awareness, and beyond, an awareness of the common bond of all humanity. This awareness brings sympathy which has the power to create a balance within the self, and to melt the opposing forces of SELF and OTHER.

Hawthorne's Narrative Strategies

Hawthorne's narrative strategies are relevant in order to answer the question as to how the author manages to express his vision, his idea about reality and to give life to his characters. In his symbolic imagery, the interplay of light and shadow, his ambiguous, indirect lighting create a universe in which objects reflect the opacity and ambiguity of human consciousness. His cinematic vision of the world transforms the transparency of an objective world 'without' into the ambiguous subjectivity of an interior world, the world of perception, thus blurring the distinctions between the subject and the object of perception.

A. The object is taken to internal reality and defragmented into various and chaotic images: OBJECT → INNER IMAGE. The techniques he uses are:

Metonymy or the correspondence ('thing') achieved between external description of the object and its metaphorical interpretation at the level of the heart:

- e.g. the brook
- Metaphors (emblems): e.g. Hepzibah's scowl
- Synecdochic oscillations (part for the whole): e.g. arms/hands/legs/feet to describe Miriam's drowned body)
- Moral "diseases" (i.e. sins) seen as physical "diseases" (Cf. Cowley who considers Hawthorne as an anticipator of psychoanalysis in this sense)
- A fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world (Cf. Emerson).
- Eye – Gaze split (the gaze used as an instrument to penetrate inner consciousness); characters accept the dual nature of the eye: seeing and be seen.
- Cinematic devices, Hawthorne being one of the first to exploit the cinematic resources of the soul (Cf. Normand):
- the <u>dream</u> (which is the starting point in any act of perception). Dream is also a precondition for involvement, a threshold between author and reader, subject and object. Dreams are particularly fond of reducing antitheses to uniformity, or representing them as one and the same thing (Cf. Freud).
- Another cinematic technique Hawthorne uses is the <u>reverie</u> as a form of contemplation. <u>Fire</u> is used as an element of human thought, the prime element of reverie. Reverie causes <u>transformation</u> (Cf. Bachelard).
- Self-expression always comes first, e.g. The Judge's empty stare which points to the vacancy of his existence

- Self-expression is always counterbalanced by self-repression, e.g. Dimmesdale scene in the forest followed by the sermon.

The frame is allegorical, while the expressiveness is symbolical

B. The inner image returns the object to the outside reality, transformed but ready for a new beginning: INNER IMAGE→OBJECT. The object returns to outside reality through language (discourse), e.g. Dimmesdale's sermon, or through the letter, "On a Field, Sable, the Letter A, Gules". Thus, Hawthorne restates his belief in only that real which always comes back to the same place (Cf. Lacan). Being is round, as Bachelard observes. Similarly, after the moment of expression achieved by Dimmesdale by means of his sermon, communication is established with the rest of humanity. Dimmesdale's story came full circle. (to the community that had given it). The letter has been returned, anonymous (meaningless) just like it was in the beginning, only to be reinterpreted (given meaning) by another subject in another journey of identity. The end coincides with the beginning.

The artist's attempt to balance the common opposing forces throughout the journey is endless. In fact he has no choice but to leave the reader (the 'subject') the legacy of the same task – taking possession of the 'object' (the artist's creation) and reinterpreting and rediscovering its lessons for himself. Similarly, the author of this dissertation leaves the reinterpretation and judgment of her own interpretation (the 'object') to the readers (the 'subjects') of this paper, in the hope that they will read it not only with their mind's eyes, but also with the Heart, and show Sympathy.

Nathaniel Hawthorne in Romania (see the Annex)

Despite appearances, Hawthorne's work has been received and understood by the Romanian reading public through time. In the following lines, one can find an incursion into Romanian translations, prefaces to Romanian versions, dictionary

entries, articles and reviews from newspapers, editorials, journals and reference books between 1865 – 1990.

The little interest shown in a fictional work such as Hawthorne's, dominated by symbol, allegory, and often an ambiguous balance of contrasts could be explained by the poor literary experience of both the readers and of the Romanian translators and editors of the time, and in general, by the absence of a mature critical tradition in Romania. As a result, such eclectic works as Hawthorne's were, had to wait for more favorable times in terms of culture and educational environment to be read and understood by the Romanian readers. Literary and critical trends had to become maturer to be able to give rise to pertinent translations and later on, to critical responses to literary works.

While the reception during the second half of the nineteenth century could be described as modest, the following period witnessed a gradual, (smaller in rate at the beginning of the twentieth century and growing towards the middle of the century) increase in the interest expressed by the Romanian translators, editors, readers and critics towards Hawthorne's fiction. The number and the quality of the published volumes containing either translated works or critical evaluations of his literary work attest to the change in his reception.

The conclusion (see the Annex) that can be drawn is that, though his major novels and a number of his most memorable tales have been translated and prefaced, the relatively small number of articles in literary publications give the reader only disparate, marginal help in appreciating the richness of the text, its imagery and symbols, the psychological intricacy of his themes and characters, and the control the writer exerts in general on the shape of his creation. The necessity arises then for the identification and critical consideration of new aspects of his

work, but, above all, a more systematic critical analysis based on contemporary literary theories, emphasizing the writer's modern day appeal.

In conclusion Hawthorne's fiction can be compared to a tapestry, in which worthless fragments need to be woven together. The instruments used are the needle (Hester), the voice (Dimmesdale's sermon). The story is the threshold between Self and Other; it is the intercourse with the world: "*thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some relation with his audience*" (I: 4). Upon the threshold of his 'house' (story) Hawthorne's discourse exposes the world in a way that give it a meaning, an identity, an inscription.

The work of the subject (signifier, character, Hawthorne, reader) is one of construction and restoration of the text. The subject constructs the narrative; constructs meanings; fills the void; puts the pieces of the story together. The allegorical threads are sometimes difficult to explain or other times impossible. Within this introspective journey the romancer and his characters negotiate between fact and fiction, actual and imaginary, trying to strike a balance between the two. But, since Hawthorne denies any certitude whatsoever, the moment balance is achieved, it turns into a struggle of opposing forces again in this ever-going on fluctuation between the outside and the inside world.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1817? – 1895)

Frederick Douglass, originally Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born into slavery in Maryland: "*I was born in Tuckahoe, near Hillsborough, and about twelve miles from Easton, in Talbot Country, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age … . I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday*". Although Frederick Douglass never learned the exact date of his birth, he clearly remembered the details of his early life as a slave on a Maryland plantation. He was exposed to the degradations of slavery, witnessing firsthand brutal whippings and spending much time in cold and hungry. He was the son of an unknown white father and a black mother from whom he was separated in infancy. When he was about eight years old he was sent to Baltimore to be house-boy in the home of relatives of his master. His master was Hugh Auld and he was a ship carpenter. There he heard the words *abolition* and *abolitionism* for the first time: "Going to live at Baltimore", Douglass would later say, "*laid the foundation, and opened the gateway to all my subsequent prosperity*". His new mistress kindly yielded to his plea to be taught to read, though it was illegal to instruct slaves and the lessons ended abruptly when the master of the household discovered what was going on. But the seed had been sown: the child now understood what gave the white man his power over the black man, and saw that education was the pathway to freedom. Secretly, painfully, he persevered with his reading and taught himself to write.

At fifteen he was returned to work on a plantation, but he proved so rebellious that he was sent to a "slave-breaker" named Covey for a year to have his spirit tamed. The year spent there hardened his determination to escape to freedom. After one unsuccessful attempt, he managed in 1838 to escape from a Baltimore

shipyard. He reached New York, and then New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he found work as a laborer. To mark his entry on the life of a free man, he changed his name into Douglass, after the fugitive chieftain in Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*.

The public career of Frederick Douglass began in 1841. When attending an antislavery convention at Nantucket, the young ex-slave was unexpectedly called upon to speak, and though trembling with stage-fright before the audience of distinguished New Englanders, he spoke so movingly that the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at once offered him a position as lecturer and agent. From that time on, Douglass committed himself to the antislavery cause, as speaker, writer and founder and editor of several newspapers and periodicals. He was a naturally endowed orator – six feet tall, broad-shouldered, with fine strong features, a melodious voice, an eloquent command of language, and a sincerity and conviction stemming from twenty-one bitter years of bondage. For the next four years he toured the North, speaking in favor of abolition. Because many people found it hard to believe that the literate, polished speaker was actually a fugitive slave, he wrote and published the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* in 1845, naming names, dates, and places – and indeed so exposing himself that he found it expedient to spend the next two years in England to avoid possible re-enslavement. In these two years he toured Great Britain, lecturing on the evils of American slavery.

Members of the Society of Friends arranged the purchase of his freedom, and in 1847 he returned to America, moving to Rochester, New York. There he continued to lecture and wrote magazine articles and newspaper editorials. He founded and edited antislavery journals – the *North Star* and *Douglass's Monthly* – and twice revised and expanded his autobiography, first as *My Bondage and My*

Freedom (1855) and later as *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881, 1892).

In 1859 he again fled the country to avoid arrest for alleged complicity in John Brown's raid. Returning to the United States in 1860, he supported Lincoln and was thereafter active in Republican Party counsels and in national affairs. He fought for the adoption of constitutional amendments that guaranteed voting rights and other civil liberties for blacks. He provided a powerful voice for human rights during this period of American history and is still revered today for his contributions against racial injustice. During the Civil War he helped recruit troops for the Union Army, and following the war he was appointed to political office (as Marshall) in the District of Columbia. Later he became United States minister to Haiti. No gradualist and no theorist, he fought Jim Crow practices and racism in the same practical, hard-line terms that he had fought slavery.

Critical References

Douglass's autobiography stands as one of the most notable examples of the fugitive slave narratives that appeared in the North (and were banned in the South) before the Civil War, eloquent stories of runaways to freedom that exposed both the terrors of Southern slavery and the cruelties of Northern discrimination. Douglass's revelations supplied such antislavery writers as Harriet Beecher Stowe with details of slave life for books that indicated slavery with increasing effectiveness as the Civil War approached. His writing, his oratory, and the example of his life were effective instruments in battling the myth that Negroes were a subhuman species, members of a "knee-bending" race, bereft of intellect and fit only to labor for the white man. (*Anthology of American Literature:* 1826)

Douglass was one of the nineteenth century's foremost spokesmen for the American Negro and for equal rights, a writer and orator of international fame. His autobiography was one of the few slave narratives wholly written by a former slave himself. Its ironies and burning indignation, its penetrating characterizations, and its portrayal of brutalizing slavery retain their power after more than a century. (*Anthology of American Literature:* 1826 –1827)

In assessing his career, his most recent biographer, Benjamin Quarles, quotes from a *Memorial* by Albion W. Tourgee, published the year after Douglass's death: "Three classes of the American people are under special obligation to him: the colored bondman whom he helped to free from the chains which he himself had worn; the free persons of color whom he had helped make citizens; the white people of the United States whom he sought to free from the bondage of caste and relieve from the odium of slavery". (*American Poetry and Prose*: 807)

Frederick Douglass was one of the foremost leaders of the abolitionist movement, which fought to end slavery within the United States in the decades prior to the Civil War.

HARRRIET BEECHER STOWE (1811 – 1896)

In 1842, Calvin Stowe wrote to his wife, "*You must be a literary woman. It is so written in the book of fate*". (As quoted in Joan Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe, a Life*: 138). Fate would indeed make her a literary woman, but her other callings – motherhood and reform – were the work of her environment and her vocation.

In 1863, when Lincoln met Harriet Beecher Stowe in Washington, he greeted her with, "*So you're the little woman who made the book that made the Great War*". There is some truth in this. According to Peter High (*An Outline of American Literature*: 74) just as Paine's *Common Sense* unified American feelings for the Revolution, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) unified Northern feelings against slavery.

The woman credited with sparking the Civil War came to Christ at thirteen, during one of her fathers' sermons. She wrestled throughout her eighty-five years with questions and spiritual conflicts for she endured great trials: her mother died while Harriet was a very young child; her husband, though an erudite theologian, could not provide financially and suffered bouts of poor health; she lost four children tragically; and she enjoyed the acclaim of the rich and powerful of her generation. In spite of these upheavals, her basic faith in the Lord Jesus Christ held and sustained her.

Born in 1811 in Connecticut, Harriet Beecher Stowe was the daughter of Lyman Beecher, one of the early republic's most influential ministers, a persuasive preacher, theologian, a founder of the American Bible Society who was active in the antislavery movement, and the father of thirteen children. Her mother was

Roxana Foote, a well-educated, religious and refined granddaughter of one of Washington's generals. She died when Harriet was four years old. After her mother's death Harriet grew up mostly under the care of her oldest sister, Catharine, who later became Harriet's teacher and colleague. Harriet taught in her school and wrote books with her soon after she was thirteen. She was brilliant and scholarly, and idolized the poetry of Lord Byron.

When her father became president of Lane Theological Seminary in Ohio, she moved with him and met Calvin Stowe – a professor and clergyman who fervently opposed slavery. He was nine years older than her and the widower of a dear friend of hers, Eliza Tyler. Their marriage in 1836 was the result of the common grief they shared. She gave birth to seven children, which put a big burden over Calvin's shoulders, whose salary from the college diminished. As a homemaker she lovingly and kindly cared for her children while she wrote for local magazines and papers. Throughout the years their loving commitment grew solidly. He helped her to establish a writing career, and served as her literary agent in both America and England. Harriet wrote to her husband: "*If you were not already my dearly beloved husband, I should certainly fall in love with you*".

For almost thirty years she produced a book a year and through her writing supplemented her husband's modest earnings. Her husband was regarded as a distinguished Biblical scholar, and she persisted in nagging him to write; eventually he published *The Origin and History of the Books of the Bible*, which was well received and financially successful.

As a mother who grieved for lost children, she felt a bond with slave mothers who lost their children to the auction block. She lost four of her seven children. Samuel Charles, "Charley" died at eighteen months from cholera and an older son, Henry drowned while a student at Dartmouth College. Years later, her son

Frederick who was an alcoholic from the age of sixteen, died. He never recovered from the wounds he sustained at Gettysburg in the Civil War, nor could he cope with his mother's success. He simply disappeared in San Francisco after the war despite his mother's attempts to rescue him. Georgiana, married to an Episcopal priest and a mother, died in her forties, having lost her health and mind to morphine addiction. Twin daughters, Eliza and Isabella, and a son, Charles Edward lived and were comforts to their parents.

Although she was almost anonymous within her first forty-one years, she became famous and gained popular success immediately with the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), first printed as a serial in the National Era. She wrote it soon after passage of Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which granted Southerners the right to pursue fugitive slaves into free slaves. This law aroused many abolitionists to action – and writing. She created memorable characters who portrayed the inhumanity of slavery and the insidious, corrupting influence this "peculiar institution" had upon the whole nation. Uncle Tom, Little Eliza, George Shelby, Cassy, Chloe, Topsy, and Simon Legree galvanized antislavery sentiment.

Her literary models were the Bible, Cooper, Scott, Dickens, and Defoe. She had also been influenced by her wide reading of antislavery literature, by stories of literature she had heard from black freedmen and white travelers in the South, by her years in southern Ohio, where she saw the operation of the Underground Railway, (they sheltered fugitive slaves in their homes until they moved to Maine when Calvin accepted a position at Bowdoin College in 1850) and by her visits to Kentucky plantations across the river from Cincinnati.

Uncle Tom's Cabin has been called the "*Iliad of the blacks*", the "*cornerstone of American protest fiction*". It was considered the first "*social*" novel of the nineteenth century.

The book's pathos, sensationalism, and timeliness made it enormously popular. Hundreds of thousands of copies were sold in America before the Civil War (3,000 copies on the first day, 300,000 the first year); since then it has been translated into twenty-two different languages and millions of copies have been sold worldwide (more than 3,000,000 copies). It inspired a literary genre (*Anthology of American Literature*: 1806): Anti-Uncle Tom novels written by proslavery opponents of abolition. It was abridged in religious tracts, versified, set to music, and dramatized by numerous barnstorming theatrical companies – "Tom shows" – whose melodramatic productions still appear in America.

The importance of the novel does not consist in the conciliatory solutions given by the author such as religion, faith, love, friendship, but in the fact that it is a dramatic and vivid (realistic) description of the American slavery.

In the preface to her novel, Stowe clearly showed her aim. She wanted to bring about a confrontation of the two "races": a hard and dominant "race", i.e. of the American slave-owners, and the other "race", that of the negroes, tortured and dominated. Using the religious influence of Christianity, the novelist wanted to change the relationships between the two "races", as she said through "*the hand of benevolence proved by Christianity*" and at length to be towards it in mercy as "*it has been how far nobler it is to nations to protect the feeble than to oppress them*".

The ideological position of the novelist was thus fully revealed. Stowe fought against slavery, she militated for the liberation of the slaves but this should be started, in her view, from the upper classes downward, through religious magnanimity, as a kind of gift of kindness. However, we must recognize, such a conception was quite limited, despite the profound influence of this anti-slavery book.

It is the story of an old black slave, Uncle Tom, who has the hope of freedom held before him but who never escapes from his slavery. In the end, he welcomes the death caused by his cruel master, Simon Legree.

Uncle Tom is a noble, high-minded, devoutly Christian black slave in the kindly Shelby family. The Shelbys, in financial difficulties, are about to sell their slaves and the mulatto girl Eliza and her child escape across the frozen Ohio River, but Tom remains because he does not wish to embarrass his master. Separated from his wife and children, he is sold to a slave trader, and young George Shelby promises some day to redeem him. On the voyage down the Mississippi, Tom saves the life of little Eva, the daughter of St. Clare, who in gratitude purchases him as a servant for his New Orleans home. Tom is happy for two years with the easygoing St. Clare, the angelic little Eva, and her mischievous companion, the black child Topsy, who, when questioned about her family, says: "*Never was born, never had no father, nor mother, nor nothin… I 'spect I growed*". Eva's delicate constitution fails, and she soon dies. St. Clare is accidentally killed, and Tom is sold at auction to Simon Legree, a brutal, drunken, degenerate planter. The slave's courage and religious fortitude impress his criminal master, who becomes desperately fear-ridden. Cassie and Emmaline, two female slaves, take advantage of his state of mind and pretend to escape. When Tom refuses to reveal their hiding place, Legree is furious, and has him flogged to death. George Shelby arrives as Tom is dying, and vows to devote himself to the cause of abolition.

Although she was not an abolitionist, Stowe's supporters were, and to defend herself from attacks on the accuracy of her book she wrote *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin: Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon which it is Based* (1853), a compilation of facts drawn from the laws, court records, newspapers, and private letters.

The historical significance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has caused it to obscure its author's other literary achievements. Her earliest works were journalistic essays and sketches of New England scenes and characters such as those that appeared in her first book, *The Mayflower* (1843). After the enormous success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, she eventually returned to writing New England local-color tales, among them *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), *The Pearl of Orr's Island* (1862), and *Oldtown Folks* (1869), a series of sketches loosely connected in novel form, which she called her masterpiece – "*my resume of the whole spirit and body of New England*".

Notably among the sixteen volumes she wrote a second novel of slavery, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). The novel (that had a record sale in England) complements *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by showing the demoralizing influence of slavery on the whites. Dred is modeled on Nat Turner. Nina Gordon places the management of her deceased father's North Carolina estate in the hands of Harry, a mulatto half-brother. On her sudden death from cholera, her brother Tom comes into possession of the property and cruelly forces Harry to flee. Seeking refuge in the Swamp, Harry is protected by Dred, a black religious fanatic, who is killed when Tom comes to search for his half-brother. A subplot tells a parallel story of a worthless trader, John Cripps, whose cruelty drives his slave, old Tiff, to take Cripps's children to the Swamp among other refugees. Through Edward Clayton, Nina's former fiancé, the fugitives are transported to Canada and safety.

The American writer also has a historical novel, *Agnes of Sorrento* (1862), and a volume of poems, *Religious Poems* (1867). She used the pseudonym of Christopher Crowfield in the case of her volume of poems.

She lived ten years after her husband died, but retired from the limelight, and died in 1896.

Critical References

Harriet Beecher Stowe's collected works eventually totaled sixteen volumes. Like many literary ladies of the nineteenth century, she had turned to writing primarily to earn money; yet, she succeeded in shaping the history and the social standards of her age. Just as her antislavery writing helped bring the Civil War, the abundant morality of her fiction helped end nineteenth-century prejudices against novel reading and theater going – all seemingly in divine confirmation of her husband's pious observation, made when she first set out on her career: "God has written it in His book that you just be a literary woman, and who are we that we should contend against God?" (*Anthology of American Literature*: 1806)

Uncle Tom's Cabin is both a good read and an important document of history – an illuminating companion to any study of the Civil War. It is one of the most influential books written, and is a useful guide to understanding how the exploitation of one generation continues to afflict us today. If you consider reading this novel aloud around the dining room table, be mindful of the gravity of the novel's theme. (Families who are looking for literature for younger children about abolitionists might consider reading *Thee, Hannah!* By Marguerite de Angeli around the table). Read and appraise the success of the work. This woman wrote passionately to prick her countrymen's consciences to end their blind allegiance to an inhuman institution. We would de well to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and ask God for the zeal and talent to speak equally well to our generation. (Barbara Smith: "Harriet Beecher Stowe: 'A Little Bit of a Woman'".

Although some episodes are sentimental and melodramatic, and the narrative is sometimes artificial, the work does not lack in realistic spirit, manifested first of all in the delineation of vivid and convincing characters. That's why H.B.Stowe was called "the mother of American realism". (*A Guide to American Literature for Teacher Training and Refresher Courses*: 62)

III. TASKS

1. Benjamin's Franklin *Autobiography* – Context

2. Themes (self-betterment, religion)

3. Summary and Characters

4. How would you describe Franklin's style?

5. What is the purpose of the *Autobiography* and how does that purpose change throughout the work?

6. Franklin intended the *Autobiography* to be a united work; he drew up an outline and tried to stick with it. In what ways does the book seem to be unified? How can one tell that the book was written over the course of eighteen years?

7. "Rip Van Winkle" – a political satire

8. J.F. Cooper – *The Last of the Mohicans* – Context and Plot Overview

9. Romantic features of Cooper's characters

10. Themes explored (the consequences of interracial love and friendship, literal and metaphorical nature, the role of religion in the wilderness, the changing idea of family, hybridity, disguise, inheritance)

11. Cooper's women

12. Hawkeye's code

13. Techniques to develop suspense

14. One of the literary techniques Cooper uses is the introduction of an unknown character, often called "the stranger". Discuss Cooper's use of this character in *The Last of the Mohicans.*

15. Discuss several of the disguises (or masquerades) in *The Last of the Mohicans*, why each one is adopted.

16. Symbols (emblems) are physical objects sometimes used to represent spiritual / intellectual points of view which are not concrete in nature (such as the valentine being a representation of love on Valentine's Day). Discuss four symbols in *The Last of the Mohicans* (Hawkeye, "the last of the mohicans")

17. The nineteenth-century language of the novel can seem excessively formal and elaborate to modern readers. Do you think the novel's language interferes with the excitement of its story? Why or why not?

18. A.E.Poe – Which stories of Poe's seem like grotesque tales and which seem like arabesque? Why?

19. How does Poe's use of the doubling in "The Fall of the House of Usher" increase the scariness of the tale?

20. The use of irony (dramatic and verbal) in "The Cask of Amontillado"

21. "The Cask of Amontillado" – a horror story

22. "The Masque of the Red Death" – symbolism of the number seven

23. The theme of death in "The Masque of the Red Death" (the stranger)

24. "The Black Cat" - symbolism of names (Pluto)

25. The theme of domestic violence and guilt in "The Black Cat"

26. "The Black Cat" – a perverse, grotesque short story

27. 'The Evil Eye' in "The Black Cat"

28. Human nature (balance of light / dark or good / evil as a theme in "The Tell-Tale Heart"

29. Poe's Doppelganger as reflected in Roderick Usher (unity of effect – pervasive gloom)

30. Poe's women – the transitory women as ideal subjects of beauty

31. Irreconcilable paradoxes in "The Cask of Amontillado"

32. Poe's ideas on "The Philosophy of Composition"

33. Poe's ideas on "The Poetic Principle"

34. R.W.Emerson and Transcendentalism

35. What is the "American Scholar" like?

36. What are the duties of an "American Scholar"?

37. Emerson and "Self-Reliance"

38. "Nature" as an anticipator of the symbolist movement

39. "Nature" and its three functions: primacy of the soul, sufficiency of nature, immediacy of God

40. H.D.Thoreau and Transcendentalism

41. Context

42. Thoreau and "Civil Disobedience" (democracy)

43. Thoreau and "Life without Principle"

44. Thoreau and Emerson – similarities

45. What might Thoreau think about the role of government in today's society? (In particular, think about the modern welfare state and the military complex)

46. Thoreau asks rhetorically, "Must the citizen ever for a moment, or in the least degree, resign his conscience to the legislator?" How would you answer this question? In compromise on moral issues a necessary part of living with other people?

47. How does Thoreau justify the moral need for civil disobedience? What principles does he rely on in his justification?

48. In what ways is Thoreau's essay based on the concepts of individualism and self-reliance?

49. Thoreau combines his arguments about why people should practise civil disobedience with personal anecdotes and discussions specific to his own time and place. Is this rhetorically useful approach? Why or why not?

50. Would you describe Thoreau as optimistic or pessimistic about people's ability to improve the world? Explain.

51. N. Hawthorne – Transcendental Doctrines in the four romances: Self-Reliance, Compensation; Circles.

52. Hawthorne and Puritanism

53. Hawthorne and the use of moral ambiguity and bipolarity (his moral vision of life)

54. Themes explored in the four romances (ancestral sin, knowledge, and the human condition, the nature/ discovery of evil, identity and society, the nature of women, the power of passion, the role of the artist, alienation, initiation, the problem of guilt, pride, individual vs society, self-fulfillment vs accommodation or frustration, hypocrisy vs integrity, love vs hate, exploitation vs hurting, fate vs free will, isolation)

55. Motifs that help to develop and inform the text's major themes (civilization versus wilderness, night versus day, evocative names)

56. Hawthorne's Symbols: objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas or concepts (the scarlet letter, the meteor, Pearl, the rosebud next to the prison door)

57. What are the principles of Blithedale as a community – that is, what do its inhabitants claim they want from the experiment? What do they really want?

58. In what way does the image of the Veiled Lady set the stage for what follows?

59. Explain the continuing metaphors of drama and the stage in the novel. In what sense are all the characters "actors" or performers?

60. Comment on the references to fire in the story. What might they signify?

61. Looking at the text as a whole, what does Hawthorne mean to symbolize with his continual references to nature (such as the fite at Blithedale, the Hermitage, and

the dove he sees from the hotel)? Is he using these to describe one great opinion or does each situation serve as a particular and singular metaphor?

62. What might the dove signify? To whom might it refer?

63. Hawthorne's use of symbols in *The House of the Seven Gables* (the house, the portrait, the deed, Maule's well, the mirror)

64. Donatello- The Faun of Praxiteles

65. Explain how Hawthorne has succeeded in transforming the character of Hepzibah

66. Phoebe's arrival at the house of the seven gables brings about a reversal of fortunes in the lives of the inhabitants. Explain how this happens.

67. What are the changes that occur in Clifford's character? Is there a complete change in his character?

68. Holgrave has often been described as a representative American. Do you agree with this view? Give reasons for your answer.

69. How does Hawthorne explore the theme of isolation in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

70. How does Hawthorne manage to convey the dual nature of the Judge? Explain with reference to his actions and the symbolism used.

71. How does Hawthorne create an atmosphere of evil in the novel?

72. *The Marble Faun* – a parable of the Fall of Man.

73. Hawthorne's use of numerous representations of the characters in inanimate objects in *The Marble Faun*.

74. Hilda's transformation in *The Marble Faun*.

75. Moral transformation of the *real* faun, Donatello.

76. Themes in *The House of the Seven Gables*.

77. Hawthorne's Use of the Visual Arts in *The Marble Faun*.

78. Fr. Douglass - *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* – Context

79. Douglass and the slave narrative

80. The quest of identity as a prevalent theme in the work of Afro-American writers

81. Summary and characters

82. Preface (Garrison's Preface) and letter (Phillip's private letter) – their function

83. Themes explored (dehumanization, self-reliance, religion, freedom)

84. What crucial piece of information did Hugh Auld let slip when he ordered Sophia to stop educating Douglass? What effect did this information have on Douglass?

85. Why didn't Douglass reveal the identity of the slave who betrayed his first escape attempt?

86. How does Douglass' s description of New Bedford attack slavery on economic grounds?

87. H.B.Stowe and the Civil War – Context

88. Stowe and the Slave Narrative

89. H.B.Stowe – *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – plot overview

90. Explanation of the title- Symbolism of the word 'cabin' as expressed in the theme of the novel

91. Character analysis

92. Themes explored (the evil of slavery, the incompatibility of slavery and Christian values, the moral power of women)

93. Motifs explored (Christ Figure, the Supernatural)

94. Symbols (cabin, Eliza's leap, geography)

95. 19th century humor pictured in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

96. *Uncle Tom's* women and mothers

IV. STUDY QUESTIONS

1. **Study Questions:** Discuss the *Autobiography* as a reflection of 18th c Idealism and Renaissance spirit

Sample Answer: There are many answers to this question, some of which are mentioned here. First, Franklin shows from a sociological standpoint the possibilities for economic mobility in colonial America. After all, Franklin himself arrived in Philadelphia at 17 years old without a penny to his name, and from those beginnings he worked his way up to being a successful printer, a talented inventor and a Founding Father of America. Second, Franklin's idealism and faith in the betterment of mankind, as well as his Deism and utilitarianism places him intellectually in the Age of Reason, a time when people often believed optimistically that the world and man could be perfected through its science. Religion was also questioned during this age, and that questioning manifests itself in Franklin's philosophy.

2. S**tudy Questions**: - Franklin often struggles to strike a balance between promoting humility and promoting his accomplishments. How successful is he in maintaining this balance?
3. **Study Questions:** Discuss Franklin's optimism as a young man versus the diminished optimism he has as an adult looking back on his life. How do the two work together?
4. **Study Questions:** What motivates Franklin? Why does he choose to spend so much of his life making things better for his fellow countrymen?
5. **Study Questions:** W. Irving – creator of humor in "Rip Van Winkle"
6. **Study Questions:** "The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow" – ghost story

7. **Study Questions:** Romantic and comic elements in "The Legend of the Sleepy Hollow"
8. **Study Questions:** "Rip Van Winkle" and the American Dream
9. **Study Questions:** How does *The Last of the Mohicans* bring together elements of the sentimental novel and the frontier adventure story? (A)
10. **Study Questions:** Discuss the relationship between history and fiction in *The Last of the Mohicans*. How do historical events relate to the literary genres that classify Cooper's novel? (A)
11. **Study Questions:** What role does the concept of the frontier play in *The Last of the Mohicans*? (A)
12. **Study Questions:** The Native Americans in Cooper's novel seem either entirely good (Uncas and Chingachgook) or entirely bad (Magua and most of the Hurons). Are there any believable Indian characters in the novel? Is Cooper guilty of invoking racial stereotypes in his portrayal of Indians?
13. **Study Questions:** Compare and contrast the father-son relationship of Chingachgook and Uncas with the father-daughter relationship of Munro and his daughters.
14. **Study Questions:** In what ways is Hawkeye the hero of the book? As the hero, why isn't Hawkeye involved in either of the novel's love stories?
15. **Study Questions:** Discuss three examples of the clash between races and cultures. What do the three examples show about Cooper's views on racism?
16. **Study questions:** How does fear function in the story "The Tell-Tale Heart"?

Sample answer: In the "Tell-Tale Heart", fear acts as the narrator's motive to kill, as part of the murder, and as the reason that the narrator turns himself in. The narrator is clearly somewhat deranged and is horribly afraid of the old man's blue eyes. This fear of the eye causes the narrator to want to kill the old man. The

narrator even reveals that he understands the fear that the old man is feeling at one point because he often feels it himself. Indeed, the murderer seems to want to kill the old man just so that someone besides himself will feel fear. Secondly, fear functions as part of the crime, because the old man wakes up and waits in mortal fear for something to happen to him. This fear seems to be almost worse than the actual death because it torments him so. Finally, we see that even killing the old man has not dispelled the narrator's fear. Now he is afraid that the police will figure out what he has done. In another attempt to end his fear, the murderer turns himself in.

17. **Study questions:** How does using a developed character as a narrator in "The Purloined Letter" and in "The Fall of the House of Usher" change the story (given that Poe could have told it from the perspective of someone uninvolved in the story's events)? (A)
18. **Study questions:** Compare and contrast the ways in which the family is important in the stories "The Cask of Amontillado" and "The Fall of the House of Usher". (A)
19. **Study questions:** Why might the rooms of the palace in "The Masque of the Red Death" be different colors? (A)
20. **Study questions:** Compare and contrast the use of intellectualism and pride in " The Purloined Letter" and "The Cask of Amontillado".
21. **Study Questions:** Discuss insanity in "The Tell-Tale Heart". Why would the narrator insist that he is not mad? What evidence do we have that he is mad (other than the fact of his murderous deed)?
22. **Study questions:** "The American Scholar": "There goes in the world a notion that the scholar should be a recluse … . If it were only for a vocabulary."

Against what notion does Emerson express his ideas on the nature of the scholar's activity?

23. **Study Questions:** Thoreau believes that people should not participate in injustice but that they do not have to actively promote a more just world. What is the difference between these two concepts, and why does Thoreau make this moral distinction? (A)
24. **Study questions:** Is Thoreau's conception of civil disobedience compatible with democratic government? Why or why not? (A)
25. **Study questions:** What is Thoreau's opinion on wealth and consumption? Why does he say that the rich are less likely to practise civil disobedience? (A)
26. **Study Questions:** Many leaders (Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr.) have used Thoreau's ideas on civil disobedience on the guiding force of political movements. Is such a use of these ideas consistent with Thoreau's skepticism about politics? Which (if any) of Thoreau's ideas are valuable in the context of political activism? Which do not pertain?
27. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – The Puritan society
28. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Justify Hawthorne's including "The Custom House" preface as part of the novel.
29. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss how Hawthorne uses the setting in Chapter 1 to set the mood for the novel.
30. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – What is the function of the "Conclusion"? What is its effect on the unity and on the general artistic quality of the novel?
31. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – How does Hawthorne employ the forest as a symbol?

32. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – What is meant by the term "type character"? To what extent are Hawthorne's major characters "types"?
33. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the function of the following minor characters: Mistress Hibbins, Governor Bellingham, and Mr. Wilson.
34. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Show in what ways Pearl's behaviour seems unnatural or abnormal. What facts account for that abnormality? At what point in the book does she undergo a change, and why?
35. **Study Questions:** Discuss the unity of place and the unity of time in *The Scarlet Letter*.
36. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss Hawthorne's style, its strengths and its weaknesses.
37. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the significance of the three scaffold scenes.
38. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – To what degree does Hawthorne use colors in the book, and for what purpose? What are the colors he uses most often? Give examples of each.
39. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – What is a symbol? Discuss the range of Hawthorne's symbols, with specific examples.
40. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – In what different forms does the letter *A* appear?
41. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – How many important characters appear in the novel? Identify and briefly describe each.
42. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Is Hester a Puritan? Is she truly repentant for her sin?
43. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Trace the deterioration of Chillingworth. What are his two sins, and what are their effects?

44. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the increasing irony of Dimmesdale's position from the opening scaffold scene until the climax of the novel.
45. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss Pearl as a symbol and as a device to work on the consciences of both Hester and Dimmesdale.
46. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Which character occupies the central position in the climax of the book? How does this affect the other three characters?
47. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – We've talked about Coverdale's sense of himself as a "chorus" to the others. Are there ways in which he might be seen as the author of this drama rather than simply as it commentator? Consider such statements and self-assessments as those about his imaginings (103), his "speculative interest" (154), his longing for a "catastrophe" (157), his fictionalizing tendencies, and his confession. Chapter 17, "the Hotel", contains such revelations.
48. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – To what extent is Coverdale the ultimate artist? The ultimate voyeur? Can the two ever be distinguished from one another? What point of view on this dilemma does Hawthorne present?
49. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Contrast the two scenes at Eliot's Pulpit (Chapter 14, p117, and chapter 25, p 213). What truths are revealed (or concealed) in each?
50. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Zenobia is one of Hawthorne's most complex female characters. In what ways does she change during the course of the novel? Is she an admirable character? Why does she commit suicide, and in what ways does Hawthorne foreshadow her actions?

51. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – In what ways do some of the later performances (the masquerade, the Veiled Lady episode) reflect on the larger themes of the work?
52. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Comment on the position of women in this work. Priscilla and Zenobia are linked in many ways; what aspects of 19th c womanhood do they represent? Nina Baym, for example, suggests that "Zenobia is the natural and eternal woman, [and] Priscilla is the woman in history." Is this accurate? What other contrasts may be developed?
53. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – In a famous essay called "The Dark Lady of Salem", Philip Rahv has argued that Hawthorne was prejudiced against his "dark lady" characters but that Coverdale nonetheless does not love Priscilla. How would you support or challenge this assertion?
54. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Critic Kelley Griffith, Jr. has argued that *The Blithedale Romance* uses a deliberately frustrating structure, one based on dreams: "the second half … is extraordinary for its chaotic ordering of events and its refusal to fructify many of the crucial developments of the first half. The reason for this difference between the halves lies in Hawthorne's use of Coverdale's dreams. The first half we can accept for the most part as real; the second half we may see for the most part as dream – as a mirror of what Coverdale has seen and thought in the first half and of what he in fact learns after he leaves Blitehdale." Is Griffith's analysis of the structure correct? Discuss, using examples of Coverdale's dreams and the novel's images of sleep, loss of consciousness, waking, and revelation.
55. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Several critics have suggested alternative structures for the novel, among them the quest-romance, the fairy taleor Cinderella tale, and the ballad. Discuss Hawthorne's use of these.

56. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – What does the novel suggest about ideas such as romantic idealism and ideal communities, the relationship of the self to others, the possibility of a communal soul, and the possibility of an idealized pastoral world existing in contemporary society?
57. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* What is Westervelt's place in all this? If Westervelt literally means "western world", then how this character reflect on the people in the book and Hawthorne's view of society?
58. **Study Questions:** *The Blithedale Romance* – Coverdale's confession fails to satisfy many readers. Why does Hawthorne leave the story with so many loose ends and just this one tidy confession? What is to be gained by thus frustrating the reader? What does this suggest about Coverdale's view of art and the nature of what it can accomplish? Is Coverdale's view Hawthorne's here?
59. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the relationship between the scarlet letter and Hester's identity. Why does she repeatedly refuse to stop wearing the letter? What is the difference between the identity she creates for herself and the identity society assigns to her? (A)
60. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – In what ways could *The Scarlet Letter* be read as a commentary on the era of American history it describes? How does Hawthorne's portrayal of Europe enter into this commentary? Could the book also be seen as embodying some of the aspects it attributes to the nation in which it was written? (A)
61. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – This novel makes extensive use of symbols. Discuss the difference between the Puritans' use of symbols (the meteor, for example) and the way that the narrator makes use of symbols. Do both have religious implications? Do symbols foreshadow events or simply

comment on them after the fact? How do they help the characters understand their lives, and how do they help the reader understand Hawthorne's book? (A)

62. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the function of physical setting in *The Scarlet Letter*. What is the relationship between the book's events and the locations in which these events take place? Do things happen in the forest that could not happen in the town? What about time of day? Does night bring with it a set of rules that differs from those of the daytime?

63. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Is *The Scarlet Letter* a protofeminst novel? Had Hester not been a woman, would she have received the same punishment? When Hester undertakes to protect other women from gender-based persecution, can we interpret her actions as pointing to a larger political statement in the text as a whole?

64. **Study Questions:** The *Scarlet Letter* – Describe Chillingworth's "revenge". Why does he choose to torture Dimmesdale and Hester when he could simply reveal that he is Hester's husband? What does this imply about justice? About evil?

65. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Discuss the function of the past in the novel. The narrator tells a two-hundred-year-old story that is taken from a hundred-year-old manuscript. Why does Hawthorne use a framing story from this novel rather than simply telling the story? Why are the events set in such distant history?

66. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Children play a variety of roles in this novel. Pearl is both a blessing and a curse to Hester, and she seems at times to serve as Hester's conscience. The town children, on the other hand, are cruel and brutally honest about their opinion of Hester and Pearl. Why are children

presented as more perceptive and more honest than adults. How do children differ from adults in their potential for expressing these perceptions?

67. **Study Questions:** *The Scarlet Letter* – Native Americans make a few brief and mysterious appearances in this novel. What role do they play? In what ways might their presence contribute to the furthering of the book's central themes?
68. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss the concept of guilt that is developed throughout the novel.
69. **Study Questions**: *The House of the Seven Gables* – Flower imagery plays a large part in the meaning of the novel. Consider the references and allusions to flowers in the novel; then discuss whether or not there is a progression of meaning and/or symbolism to them.
70. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss the importance of Hawthorne's use of historical sources and allusions to present his central theme in the novel.
71. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Analyze Hawthorne's use of isolation in the novel by defining what the "real evil" of isolation is in the novel.
72. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Distinguish between sentiment and sentimentality. Discuss whether or not the novel is a sentimental novel.
73. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Explain how the dominant colors in the novel contribute to the effectiveness of its plot, characterization, and theme.
74. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss the use of mirrors and shadows in the novel.

75. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss the dichotomy between intellect and emotion, between "the head and the heart", as a thematic concern of the novel.
76. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Show how Hawthorne applies the concept of original sin in the novel.
77. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss Hawthorne's use of crowds and crowd imagery in the novel.
78. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Describe the use of the supernatural in the novel and explain its function or functions.
79. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Analyze Hawthorne's love and use of paradox in the novel.
80. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Define the atmosphere and the changes that occur in the atmosphere of the novel.
81. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Discuss the tone of the novel in relation to the point of view expressed in the novel.
82. **Study Questions:** In *The House of the Seven Gables*, the seven gables could be said to embody the seven deadly sins: for example, the *sloth* and *envy* of Hepzibah; the *lust*, *avarice*, and *anger* of Judge Jaffrey; the *gluttony* of Clifford; and the *pride* of all the Pyncheons. Define each of these seven deadly sins and discuss how each is manifested in one or more of the characters of the novel. If the house is considered as hell or Hades (a possibility, since the "golden bough" is alluded to), discuss the respective "punishment" of each character in relation to his or her sin.
83. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – It has been said that this novel is Hawthorne's fictional expression of a belief in the possibility of redemption from evil. Discuss this statement in relation to the novel.

84. **Study Questions:** *The House of the Seven Gables* – Although the novel itself does not dwell on superstition, the "village gossips" hint that the House of the Seven Gables was built over an "unquiet grave". Discuss the use of tradition, legend, and superstition in the tale.
85. **Study Questions:** Hawthorne projects one of the themes of *The House of the Seven Gables* in a series of antitheses: Poverty is contrasted with riches, the present with the past, aristocracy with democracy, youth with age, greed with unselfishness, the complex with the simple, appearance with reality, pride with humbleness, and the isolated with the unisolated. Discuss the contrasts in respect to what Holgrave terms "the united struggle of mankind", the necessity of participation by mankind *with* mankind.
86. **Study Questions:** In *The House of the Seven Gables*, Hawthorne brings together biological, social, and moral forces, and the house itself is the most complex symbol of these forces. Discuss the use of the house as a biological, social, and moral symbol.
87. **Study Questions:** How does Douglass show that slavery corrupts slave owners?
88. **Study Questions:** Describe some of Douglass's childhood experiences and comment on the insight these experiences give us about the nature of slavery in the American North.
89. **Study Questions:** Discuss Douglass's critique of the Christian hypocrisy" in the South.
90. **Study Questions:** Southerners often argued that the slaves were happy and contended because they often sang songs while they worked and in the evening. What did Douglass say about this?
91. **Study Questions:** How did Douglass escape from slavery and what were his feelings when he first arrived in the North?

92. **Study Questions:** Why was education for slaves considered by white slave owners to be such a threat to them?
93. **Study Questions:** Why was Douglass's autobiography so important to the abolitionist cause?
94. **Study Questions:** Discuss the significance of Douglass's description of Mr. Covey, the "slave breaker"?
95. **Study Questions:** How do slave owners limit slaves' opportunities for self-knowledge? Why do they keep slaves ignorant of their identities?
96. **Study Questions:** Compare the system of Negro slavery in the American South with the system of Roma (Gypsy) slavery in Romania during the 19th century.
97. **Study Questions:** Discuss the differences between the portrayals of men and women in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Does Tom fit with the rest of the men in the book? Why or why not? How does the portrayal of women reveal Stowe's feminism? (A)
98. **Study Questions:** Discuss Stowe's use of opposites and the technique of contrast in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. (A)
99. **Study Questions:** What roles do circumstance and chance play in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*? Does the text use either of them to help explain the existence of slavery? (A)
100. **Study Questions:** In what ways does Stowe present the incompatibility of slavery with the Christian ethic of love and tolerance? How do the novel's Christ figures underscore its basic Christian messages?
101. **Study Questions:** Compare and contrast Tom's three owners in the novel – Shelby, St.Clare, and Legree. How are they like? How are they different? Do they appear in the novel according to any particular sequence, and if so, how does this progression relate to the general themes of the book?

102. Study Questions: Discuss the role of Eva in the novel. In what ways does she contribute to the novel's larger messages?

103. Study Questions: How do Stowe's political objectives affect the style and formal aspects of the novel? In designing her characters to make a point, did she make them too simple? Do the noble politics of the novel justify its literary shortcomings?

104. Study Questions: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – a realistic novel?

IMPORTANT QUOTATIONS EXPLAINED

1. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*You ought to be ashamed, John! Poor, homeless, houseless creatures! It's a shameful, wicked, abominable law, and I'll break it, for one, the first time I get a chance; and I hope I shall have a chance, I do! Things have got to a pretty pass, if a woman can't give a warm supper and a bed to poor, starving creatures, just because they are slaves, and have been abused and oppressed all their lives, poor things!" "But, Mary, just listen to me. Your feelings are all quite right, dear ... but, then, dear, we mustn't suffer out feelings to run away with our judgment; you must consider it's not a matter of private feeling, - there are great public interests involved, - there is a state of public agitation rising, that we must put aside our private feelings*." "*Now, John, I don't know anything about politics, but I can read my Bible; and there I see that I must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and comfort the desolate; and that Bible I mean to follow*." (A)
2. **Important quotations explained** – "*There is a reason in an Indian, though nature has made him with a red skin! ... I am no scholar, and I care not who know it; but judging from what I have seen, at deer chases and squirrel hunts, of the sparks below, I should think a rifle in the hands of their grandfathers was not so dangerous as a hickory and a good flint-head might be, if drawn with Indian judgment, and sent by an Indian eye*" (A)
3. **Important quotations explained** – "*I am not a prejudiced man, nor one who vaunts himself on his natural privileges, though the worst enemy I have on earth, and he is an Iroquois, daren't deny that I am genuine white*". (A)
4. **Important quotations explained** – "*A Mingo is a Mingo, and God having made him so, neither the Mohawks not any other tribe can alter him*". (A)

5. **Important quotations explained** – "*The Hurons love their friends the Delawares … . Why should they not? They are colored by the same sun, and their just men will hunt in the same grounds after death. The redskins should be friends, and look with open eyes on the white men*". (A)

6. **Important quotations explained** – "*The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again. My day has been too long*". (A)

7. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*I have no faith in human perfectibility. I think that human exertion will have no appreciable effect upon humanity. Man is now only more active-not more happy-nor more wise, than he was 6000 years ago*."

8. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Beauty is whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears*".

9. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The Bostonians are really, as a race, far inferior in point of anything beyond mere intellect to nay other set upon the continent of North America. They are decidedly the most servile imitators of the English it is possible to conceive*".

10. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*That man is not truly brave who is afraid either to seem or to be, when it suits him, a coward*".

11. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Believe me, there exists no such dilemma as that in which a gentleman is placed when he is forced to reply to a blackguard*".

12. *Important Quotations Explained* – "*After reading all that has been written, and after thinking all that can be thought, on the topics of God and the soul, the man who has a right to say that he thinks at all, will find himself face to face with the conclusion that, on these topics, the most profound thought is that which can be the least easily distinguished from the most superficial sentiment*".

13. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*man's real life is happy, chiefly because he is ever expecting that it soon will be so*".
14. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*There are few cases in which mere popularity should be considered a proper test of merit; but the case of song-writing is, I think, one of the few*".
15. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Men's actions ate too strong for them. Show me a man who has acted, and who has not been the victim and slave of his action*."
16. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten*."
17. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*There is this to be said in favor of drinking, that it takes the drunkard first out of society, then out of the world*."
18. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Hitch your wagon to a star. Let us not fag in paltry works which serve our pot and bag alone*."
19. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The intellectual man requires a fine bait; the sots are easily amused. But everybody is dragged with his own frenzy, and the pageant marches at all hours, with music and banner and badge*."
20. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The angels are so enamoured of the language that is spoken in heaven, that they will not distort their lips with the hissing and unmusical dialects of men, but speak their own, whether there be any who understand it or not*."
21. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Tis very certain that each man carries in his eye the exact indication of his rank in the immense scale of men, and we are always learning to read it. A complete man should need no auxiliaries to his personal presence*."

22. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*I can reason down or deny everything, except this perpetual Belly: feed he must and will, and I cannot make him respectable*."

23. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The silence that accepts merit as the most natural thing in the world is the highest applause*."

24. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The aristocrat is the democrat ripe, and gone to seed*."

25. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*If I cannot brag of knowing something, then I brag of not knowing it; at any rate, brag*."

26. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Belief consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief, in denying them*."

27. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*We are born believing. A man bears beliefs as a tree bears apples*."

28. **Important Quotations Explained** –"*The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character*."

29. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*There is properly no history, or biography*."

30. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Great geniuses have the shortest biographies*."

Important Quotations Explained- "*A writer of story-books! What kind of a business in life, - what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation, - may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well*

have been a fiddler!" Such are the compliments bandied between my great-grandsires and myself, across the guldf of time! And yet, let them scorn me as they will, strong traits of their nature have intertwined themselves with mine." (A)

31. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Mother*," said little Pearl, "*the sunshine does not love you. It runs away and hides itself, because it is afraid of something on your bosom ... . It will not flee from me, for I wear nothing on my bosom yet!" "Nor ever will, my child, I hope," said Hester. "And why not, mother?" asked Pearl, stopping short ... . "Will it not come of its own accord, when I am a woman grown?"* (A)

31. Important Quotations Explained – "*But Hester Prynne, with a mind of native courage and activity, and for so long a period not merely estranged, but outlawed, from society, had habituated herself to such latitude of speculation as was altogether foreign to the clergyman. She had wandered, without rule or guidance, in a moral wilderness ... . The scarlet letter was her passport into regions where other women dared not tread. Shame, Despair, Solitude! These had been her teachers, - stern and wild ones, - and they had made her strong, but taught her much amiss*." (A)

32. Important Quotations Explained – "*Mother*," *said* [Pearl], "*was that the same minister that kissed me by the brook*?" "*Hold thy peace, dear little Pearl!" whispered her mother. "We must not always talk in the market-place of what happens to us in the forest*." (A)

33. Important Quotations Explained – "*But there was a more real life for Hester Prynne here, in New England, than in that unknown region where Pearl had found a home. Here had been her sin; here, her sorrow; and here was yet to be her penitence. She had returned, therefore, and resumed, - of her own free will, for not the sternest magistrate of that iron period would have imposed it, - resumed the*

symbol of which we have related so dark a tale. Never afterwards did it quit her bosom. But … the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world's scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, and yet with reverence, too." (A)

34. Important Quotations Explained - "*I looks like gwine to heaven*," said the woman; "*an't thar where white folks is gwine? S'pose they'd have me thar? I'd rather go to torment, and get away from Mas'r and Missis*." (A)

35. Important Quotations Explained - "*Mas'r, if you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save ye, I'd give ye my heart's blood; and, if taking every drop of blood I this poor old body would save your precious soul, I'd give 'em freely, as the Lord gave his for me. Oh, Mas'r! don't bring this great sin on your soul! It will hurt you more than't will me! Do the worst you can, my troubles'll be over soon; but, if ye don't repent, yours won't <u>never</u> end*!" (A)

36. Important Quotations Explained - "*Witness, eternal God! Oh, witness that, from this hour, I will do what <u>one man can</u> to drive out this curse of slavery from my land*!" (A)

37. Important Quotations Explained - "*It was on his grave, my friends, that I resolved, before God, that I would never own another slave, while it is possible to free him; that nobody, through me, should ever run the risk of being parted from home and friends, and dying on a lonely plantation, as he died. So, when you rejoice in your freedom, think that you owe it to that good old soul, and pay it back in kindness to his wife and children. Think of your freedom, every time you see UNCLE TOM'S CABIN; and let it be a memorial to put you all in mind to follow in his steps, and be as honest and faithful and Christian as he was*." (A)

38. Important Quotations Explained – "*Home is a place not only of strong affections, but of entire unreserve; it is life's undress rehearsal, its backroom, its*

dressing room, from which we go forth to more careful and guarded intercourse, leaving behind us much debris of cast-off and everyday clothing."

39. Important Quotations Explained – "*One would like to be grand and heroic, if one could; but if not, why try at all? One wants to be very something, very great, very heroic; or if not that, then at least very stylish and very fashionable. It is this everlasting mediocrity that bores me*".

39. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The obstinacy of cleverness and reason is nothing to the obstinacy of folly and inanity*".
40. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*What makes saintliness in my view, as distinguished from ordinary goodness, is a certain quality of magnanimity and greatness of soul that brings life within the circle of the heroic*."
41. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*These words dropped into my childish mind as if you should accidentally drop a ring into a deep well. I did not think of them much at the time, but there came a day in my life when the ring was fished up out of the well, good as new*."
42. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*The bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds left undone*."
43. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*A little reflection will enable any person to detect in himself that setness in trifles which is the result of the unwatched instinct of self-will and to establish over himself a jealous guardianship*."
44. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*Everyone confesses in the abstract that exertion which brings out all the powers of body and mind is the best thing for us all; but practically most people do all they can to get rid of it, and as a general rule nobody does much more than circumstances drive them to do*."
45. **Important Quotations Explained** – "*I am speaking now of the highest duty we owe our friends, the noblest, the most sacred – that of keeping their own nobleness,*

goodness, pure and incorrupt. If we let our friend become cold and selfish and exacting without a remonstrance, we are no true lover, no true friend."

46. Important Quotations Explained – "*The longest day must have its close – the gloomiest night will wear on to a morning. An eternal, inexorable lapse of moments is ever hurrying the day of the evil to an eternal night, and the night of the just to an eternal day*."

ANNEX

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE – (Flow-Charts)

♦**Moral Ambiguity and Bipolarity in Hawthorne's Fiction**

- ♦ Hawthorne and the Romance Tradition
- ♦ Theme and Structure in Hawthorne's Fiction
- ♦ Hawthorne's Characters as Shapers of his Artistic Vision
- ♦ Hawthorne's Narrative Strategies
- ♦ Hawthorne in Romania

♦**H's uniqueness: sense of FORM** (shape/meaning); unitary vision of life

1. Hawthorne and the Romance Tradition

•**H. and Romance**: •reputation (frivolous fiction)

•artistic distance of romance (dualities)

•suitable way of expressing his moral vision of life

2. Theme and structure; Characters; Narrative strategies discussed in the light of *control* he exerted over the <u>form</u> of his fiction, the <u>shape</u> he gave it. (SPHERE – OPEN CIRCLES/SPIRALS)

•Crowley: organic theory: bond of sympathy <u>artist/reader</u>

•Hawthorne: <u>Dual nature of existence</u>→<u>Bipolarity/Ambiguity</u>

REALITY — <u>Dual</u> nature of existence — IMAGINATION

•ungraspable — (<u>ambiguous</u>) — •graspable

•lack of identity — ↓ — •identity

•lack of meaning •Opposing forces •meaning

(16. Baym) GOOD+EVIL

•Interaction+Balance (through Sympathy)

FICTION

•FICTION=forever reconstruction (1.Frye) of something considered dead which comes back to life (it gets *meaning*) by means of imagination only to go back and be some time in the future recaptured again in this ever-going *discourse* created between SELF (work) and OTHER (reader)

•QUEST JOURNEY: •man: good+bad (Puritans); illusive truth (2.Derrida:perfection);

•SELF-awareness (one's sinful nature)

•awareness of the OTHER (through sympathy; brotherhood)

•SELF→SELF+OTHER→SELF

3. EYE+GAZE split (outer/inner eye);

•VISION (EYE) →PERCEPTION (GAZE) →VISION (EYE)

•VISION+PERCEPTION

(visual representation+metaphorical interpretation at the level of the *heart*)

•Hawthorne and the daguerreotype (photographic realism) technique (5. Ponty)

•Hawthorne's dualistic vision and Emerson (Self)

•Emerson •the Self •Self+Other

•individual contains all	•individual+brotherhood
•no faith in progress	•gradual change (no reform)
•pain unreal	•pain (isolation) real

•Hawthorne's indebtness to Leibnitz (monads)

•same substance: God	•same substance: good+evil
•monads-individualism	•monads-interaction
•sympathy	•sympathy

4. VISION (EYE)	**PERCEPTION (GAZE)**
•the *daguerreotype* (the portrait)	•*the image*
riginal ♦mirrors (impossibility of perfect reflection of the world)	
♦visual representation (transparent, rational, external)	♦the gaze –mirror-"the other" of self (ambiguous, affective, interior)
♦omniscient observer (Emerson)	♦subject (reader) + object (creation)
♦realistic+transcendental	♦realistic+transcendental
♦the whole object perceived uniformly, at the same time	♦defragmented object perceived gradually, differently depending on the time of perception
♦changing point of view	♦changing point of view
♦it appears as direct light, dark	♦it appears as black, indirect light
♦ background (bright color)	(light+shadow) (4. Verlaine)

♦ meaning, when finished

♦ meaning, from the very beginning

- Daguerreotype/Portrait – Image (5. Ponty)

1. Theme and Structure in Hawthorne's Fiction

- Hawthorne's themes: COMMUNITY – ISOLATION – COMMUNITY
- Hawthorne – key words:
  - sin and forgiveness (H. and the Puritans)
  - isolation
  - confession (before God / before people)
  - penance/remorse
- ISOLATION
  - voluntary (Hester→acceptance of society)
  - involuntary (Dimmesdale→rejection of society)
- lack of emotional security inherent in FELLOWSHIP
- Causes:
  - sin (Hester)
  - pride (Chillingworth)
  - negation of the OTHER (Coverdale)
  - individualistic (Hilda)
  - reform (Hollingsworth)
  - social outcast (Holgrave)
  - devotion to a faded aristocratic past (Hepzibah)
  - loss of house (Phoebe)
  - mysterious past (Zenobia)
  - expatriation (Hilda, Kenyon)

- COMMUNITY (return)
  - love (Priscilla, Hollingsworth)
  - marriage (Phoebe, Holgrave)
  - remorse (confession)
  - letter

6. DUALITIES

(both complementary to each other and antithetical)

Hawthorne's vision of life (Dual and Ambiguous):

•Actual	•Imaginary
•Outside (without)	•Inside (within)
•Empirical realm	•Imaginative realm
•Transparency	•Ambiguity
•Rational (head)	•Expressive/affective (heart)
•Light	•Shadow
•Objective space (uniform)	•Subjective space (unfolding in time)
•Real/physical time	•Dioramic (real+dream) time
•Vision/Representation (eye)	•Perception (heart)
• Outer eye (objective-one point)	• Inner eye/Gaze (subjective-many points)
•Static reception (visual)	•Dynamic perception (visual+affective)
The Self	•The Other

7. Themes:

• good	•evil
guilt (everlasting)	•non-guilt/innocence (trans.)
sin(of intellect/passion)	•sympathy
• sin	•salvation
isolation	•community
isolation (voluntary – acceptance of society)	•brotherhood

(involuntary – rejection of society)

isolation	•artificial relationships
permanence	•change
static determination	•dynamic
tradition (gradual change)	•reform
nature (lawlessness)	•civilization (bondage)

8. Hawthorne's characters:

•NON-IDENTITY →IDENTITY → NON-IDENTITY

- •'*A*' , *Anonymous, Author, Arthur*
- •SELF <=> SELF (failures; unchangeable; Sartre-double of the SELF)
  - •narcissists, e.g. Coverdale (SELF; SEE; EYE+GAZE)
  - •villains , e.g. Chillingworth (Intellect)
  - •artists, e.g. Clifford (Heart)
- •SELF <=> OTHER (Successful; changeable; fill the gap)
- •e.g. Hester, Dimmesdale, Pearl (manage to fill the gap: see/be seen)

- •ACTIVE – PASSIVE TYPES (within each realm)
  - •interaction: active √ passive e.g. Hester/Dimmesdale
  - •descending/ascending spiral curves

•SELF-REPRESSION → SELF-EXPRESSION → SELF-REPRESSION

9. Hawthorne's Narrative Strategies:

• OBJECT → INNER IMAGE → OBJECT

A. OBJECT→INNER IMAGE

•fragmented image (dream)

•cinematic devices: •*dream*:

•reality+imagination (uniform:7. Normand)

•pre-condition for involvement (darkness; dioramic time) (6. Ponty)

•threshold (author+reader; subject+object)

• *reverie* (contemplation) + *fire* (transformation)

(8. Bachelard)

•eye-gaze split:

•gaze=instrument to penetrate inner consciousness

•seeing/be seen (9. Lacan); overlapped ⇒ mesmerism (e.g. Coverdale)

•various/chaotic •aspects/perceivers: e.g. a fly (Judge Pyncheon)

•close-ups: e.g. Pearl's elfish smile (emblems)

•synecdochic (part for the whole) oscillations:

e.g. arms/hands/legs/feet (Miriam)

•frame (allegorical)+expressiveness (symbolical)

•object=subject HOW?

•'thing' (14.Heidegger); metonymy-'correspondence':

e.g. brook/forest

•metaphors (emblems): e.g. Hepzibah's scowl

•part for the whole: e.g. arms (for body)

•sins=physical diseases (11. Cowley)

•visible=invisible (3. Emerson)

•expressiveness first (meaning); e.g. The Judge's empty stare which points to the vacancy of his existence.

•Self-expression <=> Self-repression

•subjective time and space

B. INNER IMAGE → OBJECT (transformed/new beginning)

•objectified: •back to reality through language (discourse) (12. Lacan)

•ever going fluctuation internal/external (13. Bachelard)

•the letter: (15. Hawthorne)

10. Hawthorne in Romania

•Romanian translations, prefaces to Romanian versions, dictionary entries, articles and reviews from newspapers, editorials, journals and reference books

•1865-1900: translations of his short fiction; poor quality

•1905: three translations of short stories

•1967: Eugen Filotti: first translation of *The Scarlet Letter* (later: 1993, 1996)

•1969: Antoaneta Ralian: *The House of the Seven Gables*

•1974: Andrei Bantaş: 21 tales

•1976: Mihaela Bucur: *The Marble Faun*

•1986: Carmen Paţac: *The Blithedale Romance*

•Translators: Adriana Ralian (Petru Popescu), Mihaela Bucur (Dan Grigorescu)

•Prefaces: all except *The Blithedale Romance*

•Dictionaries: *Dicţionar cronologic - Literatura Americană* by Dan Grigorescu (1977)

- Critical articles: “Anatomia balenei albe - Poetica romanului american epopeic simbolic” (1982) by Marcel Pop-Corniş; “Nathaniel Hawthorne” (Eugen B. Marian: 1913), “Nathaniel Hawthorne” (*Adevărul literar şi artistic*: 1927), “Nathaniel Hawthorne: Litera stacojie” (Virgil Stanciu: 1967), “Valori ale simbolului la Hawthorne” (Ioana Camino: 1968), “Nathaniel Hawthorne: Casa cu şapte frontoane” (*Cronica*: 1970), “Nathaniel Hawthorne - Casa cu şapte frontoane sau formaţia romanului american” (Petru Popescu: 1970), “Hawthorne: Faunul de marmură” (Dan Grigorescu: 1976), “Un roman de atmosferă” (Nicolae Balotă: 1977), “Un american la Roma” (Nicolae Balotă: 1978), “The Scarlet Letter” (Livius Ciocârlie: 1979), “Message and Ambiguity in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Short Stories” (Maria Muşteanu: 1979), “Imagery in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Short Stories” (Maria Muşteanu: 1981), “Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Romances in the Service of Moral and Psychological Investigation” (Gheorghiţa Dumitriu: 1983), “Nathaniel Hawthorne” (Eugen B. Marian: 1983), şi “Disimularea ca ipoteză a alternanţei realitate-aparenţă în literatura americană” (Dolores Sîrbu-Ghiran: 1988).
- Virgil Stanciu’s review occasioned by the first printing of *The Scarlet Letter* in Romania (1967)
- Though his major novels and a number of his most memorable tales have been translated and prefaced, the relatively small number of articles in literary publications give the reader only disparate, marginal help in appreciating the richness of the text, its imagery and symbols, the psychological intricacy of his themes and characters, and the control the writer exerts in general on the shape of his creation. The necessity arises then for the identification and critical consideration of new aspects of his work, but, above all, a more systematic critical analysis based on contemporary literary theories, emphasizing the writer’s modern day appeal.

11. Conclusions:

- Continuous INTERPLAY of themes, characters and narrative strategies+BALANCE
- FICTION = TAPESTRY
- worthless fragments woven together
- needle (voice), e.g. Hester (Dimmesdale's sermon)
- threshold (the story)
- correspondence Subject (H.) and Object (work)
- expressiveness within the heart (10. Heidegger)

12. Quotations used in the flow-chart:

- (1)"*The end is the beginning transformed*" (Northrop Frye)
- (2)"*We come from nothing and return to nothing. From the darkness of the womb to the darkness of the tomb*." (Derrida: 1987)
- (3) "*A fact is the end or last issue of spirit. The visible is the terminus or the circumference of the invisible world*." (Emerson: 1836)
- (4)"*Pas la couleur, rien que la nuance*." (Verlaine)
- (5) Unlike the portrait or the photograph, which do have a meaning only when they are finished, the image, through its various aspects comprehended differently by various "perceivers" of perception has meaning from the very beginning; similarly, we can say that the thing is never fully and actually achieved. (Cf. Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*: 1962)
- (6) Dream = the starting point in any act of perception (Cf. Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*: 1962)

•(7) "*Dreams are particularly fond of reducing antitheses to uniformity, or representing them as one and the same thing*." (Freud: *The Interpretation of dreams*: 1937)

•(8) Fire = an exceptional and rare phenomenon, a constituent element of the Universe, an element of human thought, the prime element of reverie. Reverie causes transformation (Bachelard: *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*: 1968)

• (9)"*I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides*." (Lacan: "The Split between the Eye and the Gaze": 1978)

•(10) The only real truth is the one that comes from the "interior logic" of the heart, which draws subject and object near to one another. (Cf. Heidegger: *Poetry, Language, Thought*: 1975)

•(11) Anticipator of psychoanalysis in his constant desire to make moral "diseases", i.e. sins appear as corresponding physical diseases. (Cf. Cowley: "Hawthorne in the Looking Glass": 1948)

•(12) "*The real is that which always comes back to the same place*." (Pascalian truth, expressed by Lacan: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*: 1978)

•(13) "*Being is round*." (Bachelard: 1964)

• (14)"*Gathering or assembly ('correspondence'), by an ancient word of our language, is called 'thing'*." (Heidegger: 1975)

• (15)"*On a Field, Sable (black), the Letter A, Gules* (glowing red)." (Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*: 1850)

• (16)"*Because the actual is material, it lacks meaning and has no relation to human needs and desires. Actualities are given meaning and brought into relation with feelings by the act of imagination, which recreates the actual in conformity with human pressures. The actual itself, lacking the human dimension, is basically*

empty even though it may be dense and crowded with events: it is empty of meaning." (Baym: *The Shape of Hawthorne's Career*: 1976)

- (17) Hawthorne was one of the firsts to exploit the cinematic resources of the soul. (Cf. Normand: *Nathaniel Hawthorne*: 1970).

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