

Early American Literature



Puritan Characteristics/ Beliefs

- Government should enforce public morality by prohibiting vices such as gambling, drunkenness, ostentatious dress, swearing, Sabbath breaking. Legislated permissible trim on a woman's sleeve, proper dwelling for an unmarried man, punishment for a disrespectful son.
- Wives were to live in “reverent subjection” to their husbands
- Satan made his home in the wilderness (Indians were made wild by his rule)
- Bible = literal word of God

Literary History

- Serious-minded journals of self examination
- Sermons
- Personal narratives
- Religious poetry
- Histories
- Themes in writing were religious
- Believed writing was a record of God's plan
Ex. A snake enters a church and is crushed = triumph of God over Satan
- Recordings of moments of providence (good and bad)

Washington Irving:

Passport to American
Romanticism



The Beginning of American Romanticism

“In the four corners of the globe,
who reads an American book?”

Sydney Smith
Edinburgh

Review

1820

Just a few months before Smith's
question, an American
writer named Washington Irving
began publishing a series of essays and
tales called *The Sketch Book*.

First True “American” Writer

- *The Sketch Book* made Washington

Irving the first American writer to
achieve international fame

Sought to Entertain

- Washington Irving was the first American writer who sought to entertain his readers

Washington Irving

1783-1859

- born in New York City (near present-day Wall St.)
- youngest of 11 children
- parents were Scottish-English immigrants



Biographical Information

- his parents greatly admired General George Washington (hence his name)
- his father became a wealthy merchant
- he trained as a lawyer but practiced only briefly
- showed literary promise early in his life

Home of Washington Irving, New York



Writing Career Begins

- 1802-3 published a series of newspaper articles
- 1807-8 published the *Salmagundi* papers
- 1809 published 1st major work – *A History of New York*
- it was supposedly written by Deidrich Knickerbocker, an old, eccentric historian

- this work marked Irving's future course
- it was designed solely for entertainment
- it taught no serious moral lessons
- his fiancée died in 1809
- accounts for melancholic cast over rest of his life and work

Career Shifts to Europe in 1815

- sailed for England to take charge of family business in Liverpool
- when it bankrupted, he concentrated on literary career
- traveled throughout England, France, Spain, Germany, and Switzerland
- wrote history of Christopher Columbus

Literary Career Continues

- 1819 - 1820 published *The Sketch-Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*
- it included “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”



Old Rip

Irving's Literary Pseudonyms

- **Dietrich Knickerbocker**
- **Jonathan Oldstyle**
- **Geoffrey Crayon**

Irving Widely Recognized

- By the late 1820s, Irving had gained a reputation throughout Europe and America as a great writer and thinker

Returns to America in 1832

- returned from Europe to New York
- established his home Sunnyside in Tarrytown
- never married or had children
- for next 25 years he shared Sunnyside with his brother Ebenezer and Ebenezer's 5 daughters

Sunnyside, Home of Irving



Facts About Sunnyside

- located on Hudson River in Tarrytown, N.Y.
- purchased by Irving in 1835 for \$1,800
- originally a two-room Dutch farm house
- over 15 years, artist friend George Harvey helped Irving redesign & add to the original house

Close-Up of Sunnyside

Irving outfitted his home with the most advanced technology of the period, such as a refrigerator (ice box), a cast iron stove, and indoor plumbing.



More Facts About Sunnyside

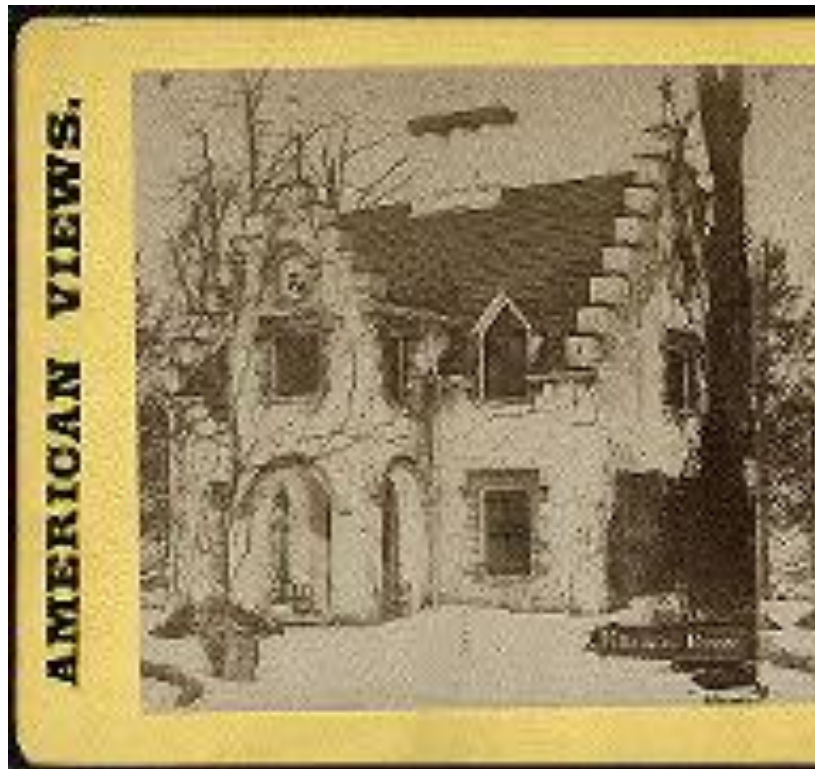
- Sunnyside was visited by many artists, politicians, writers, and other influential people
- Irving's home was publicized throughout the world in lithographs, magazines, and tourists maps
- images of Sunnyside could even be found on cigar boxes, sheet music, and ceramic pitchers.



Irving
on
the Porch
at
Sunnyside

Washington Irving, Sunnyside, Irvington, N.

Additional Views of Sunnyside



Washington Irving's church, Tarrytown, N.Y



First Genuine American Stories

- “Rip Van Winkle”
“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”
- contained distinctive American settings and characters
- incorporated German folktales and legends

“Rip Van Winkle”

- Irving's best-known story
- based on a German folktale
- set in the Dutch culture of Pre-Revolutionary War in New York State

Rip Van Winkle

- Rip, the eternal boy-man
- never grows up to accept adult responsibilities
- is a compelling character type in American fiction



Joe Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle

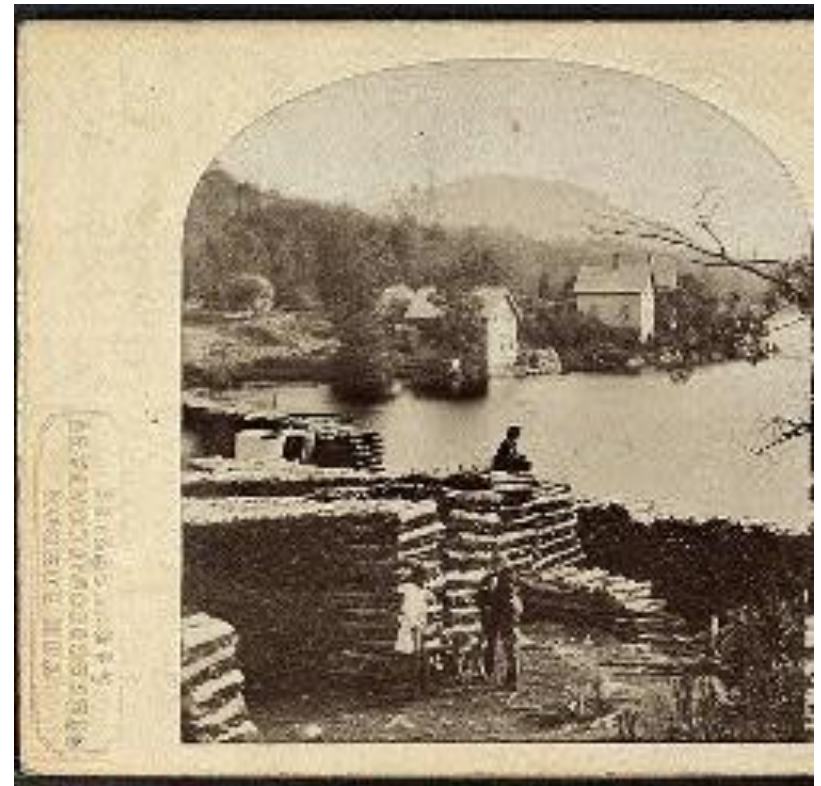
Setting

- Rip is a farmer who wanders into the Catskill Mountains near the Hudson River



Scenes from Catskill Mountains and Hudson River

More Scenes from the Catskills



Irving's Grave

On November 28, 1859, on the eve of the Civil War, Washington Irving died at Sunnyside surrounded by his family.



Old Dutch Church in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y.



He was
buried in
the Sleepy
Hollow
Cemetery at
the Old
Dutch
Church

“Genius he had, the nature and the faculty of an imaginative writer; what he needed was not power but opportunity; and at every new chance of life he answered to the time and place and succeeded.”

—On Irving

George E. Woodberry

The Scarlet Letter

Nathaniel Hawthorne – the man behind the novel

- 1804-1864
- Sometimes known as an Anti-transcendentalist – didn't believe in man's power to go beyond
- He believed that evil was a dominant force in the world and his fiction expressed a gloomy version of human affairs

Cont.

- Inherited Guilt – born in Salem, Massachusetts and was descended from a prominent Puritan family.
- Ancestor played key role (hanging judge) in Salem witchcraft trials
- Another ancestor was known for the persecution of Quakers ☹️
- Most of his works deal with inherited guilt

Hangin' with the Transcendentalists

- Lived in a Utopian society (Brook Farm) for a while
- Got married and moved to Concord
- Hung out with Emerson and Thoreau (leaders in spiritual philosophies) but didn't gel with their beliefs

Out of There

- Appointed surveyor at Salem Custom House (which accounts for the first part of *The Scarlet Letter*)
- This is where he wrote (and gained great success with) *The Scarlet Letter*. Typical of Hawthorne's work, this novel deals with guilt and sin among early Puritans.

The Historical Context of the Novel

- Hawthorne chose Boston in the 1640s as the setting for the text – only about a 1000 English Puritans lived there then
- Puritans (established during reign of Queen Elizabeth – thus the reference to her) sought to purify the church and wipe out all traces of Catholicism (thus the negative Catholic comments)
- Boston was ruled by a theocracy and the government was not intended to provide religious freedom to all
- Those who didn't fit in (i.e. Quakers) were dealt with harshly.

Predestination – a Puritan Doctrine

- Puritans believed that all things are controlled beforehand by the Hand of God.
- All humans deserved damnation because of original sin however God elected to save some anyway.
- One could not influence that destiny by good works or alter the divine plan.
- Nonetheless, Puritans fought to remain righteous, suppressing the desires of the flesh (which is why what Art and Hester do is sooooo bad).
- Puritans believed they could recognize internal corruption in others.
- Harsh discipline wasn't necessary to punish, since God would do that. It was to show others what would happen if they did the same thing. This is why Hester is pointed out all of the time.

There were some paradoxes...

- Although Puritans embraced a strict life, it wasn't always somber and simple.
- They encouraged tradesmen and craftsmen to live among them
- They prized simplicity yet loved fine clothing.
- Their furniture makers developed great artistry and their leaders (like the governor Hester goes to visit) lived in fine houses.

The Main Themes of *The Scarlet Letter*

Sin and its effect on the individual

- Hawthorne explores this by tracing the consequences of different kinds of sin on 3 different characters: Hester, Art, and Rog.
- The consequence of sin is alienation, and as their sins differ, so do the kinds of alienation that result from them.

Cont.

- Hester's isolation is physical – the townspeople shun her. There is a magic circle of ignominy caused by her scarlet letter. However, the scarlet letter is the means to her redemption. Hawthorne believes that no reconciliation with God, society, or self can happen without confessing one's sin and coming to terms with it. "Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst can be inferred."
- Hester's pregnancy makes her sin known and she works out her redemption slowly and painfully in public view. The A changes from Adultery to Able.

Cont.

- Art suffers agonizing guilt and self-loathing
- The admiration of his parishioners wounds him because of his sense of unworthiness and alienation from God.
- His redemption is possible only when he publicly confesses his sins on the scaffold (and not at night when no one was there to hear).

Cont.

- Rog's sin lies in his single-minded pursuit of vengeance – in violating “in cold blood, the sanctity of the human heart.”
- His obsession transforms him into a fiend.
- His isolation is represented by the dread his dark and stooping posture inspire in the children of the town (remember Pearl sees him as a Devil).
- His secret sin, which finally destroys him, is unpardonable because he himself is unable to forgive.

The Basic Plot

- Involves triangle of husband, wife, and lover
- Ignores the seduction, the wife's conflict (prior to sinning), and so on.
- Focuses on the effects of sin
- It starts on the scene of Hester's public humiliation – the first step of her painful redemption.

The Structure of the Novel

- Characters interact in relatively few fully developed scenes, much as they were appearing on stage – a very innovated method for 1850.
- There are a series of dramatic scenes with some expository chapters interspersed – mainly focusing on the main character, Hester.

The Main Scenes

- The Market Place – where Hester suffers her public humiliation (chapters 1-3)
- Hester Prison Chamber – where Rog confronts her while tending Pearl (chapter 4)
- Governor Bellingham's house – where Hester pleads to keep Pearl (chapters 7 & 8)
- The house where Art and Rog live – Art resists confessing to Rog, but Rog finds “proof” of his suspicions (chapter 10)
- The Scaffold – where Art stands with Hester and Pearl late at night (chapter 12)
- The Seashore – where Hester informs Rog she will not keep his secret any longer (chapters 14 and 15)
- The Forest – where Hester and Pearl await Art and the two are momentarily united (chapters 16 through 19)
- The Market Place – where the culminating scene of Art's greatest sermon and his confession go down (chapter 23)

The Three Main Scenes

- All take place on the scaffold
- They underscore the unity of the novel
- They bring together the four major characters and show their changing circumstances throughout the novel.

The Characters

Hester-

- By far the most realized.
- The most sympathetic – readers respond to her strength, dignity, and passion.
- Accepts her punishment and is absolved
- Although Hester never repents her love for Art, Hawthorne hints that she does in his concluding chapter
- She is a tragic heroine – with her tragedy resulting not so much from a tragic flaw but from the evils of her society

Cont.

Art-

- A character so weak that only Hester's love and his extreme suffering lend him reality.
- Some consider him the protagonist because he is the tempted one, the one who is persecuted, and the one whose confession climaxes the novel

Cont.

Rog –

- Somewhat of a stock character (which may take away from his believability)
- He does change in the novel (though we never really see the scholar who was “thoughtful of others, craving little for himself”)
- His change into the fiend that wants revenge is part of what causes Hester to feel guilt

Cont.

Pearl –

- The only character who suffers as a result of a sin she didn't have anything to do with
- Symbolic in nature – is a living representation of Hester's sin and is definitely part of her punishment as well as her salvation
- Is finally humanized in the final chapter when she shows grief at the death of

Irony

Situational Irony – the fact that Rog, the wronged husband, whom might normally gain the sympathy of the reader, ends up being a fiend. He is a physician, whose mission should be to cure, and he affixes himself to Art, who he eventually plans to make suffer for the rest of his days. It is also ironic that Art, who is agonized by guilt and self-hatred, ends up raising great heights at

Cont.

Dramatic Irony- occurs most often when Hester and Art meet in public and must communicate in ways that the onlookers will not understand (ex. When Art asks Hester to reveal the father of her child)

Verbal Irony – Example would be when Hawthorne accounts for the popularity of Hester's needlework among the Puritans as follows: "Vanity, by putting on...the garments that had been wrought by sinful hands."

Symbolism

- Some symbols keep the same significance throughout – the scaffold, which represents public notice, and weeds and unsightly vegetation which stand for moral evil.
- Others, like the forest, which represents both nature and the threatening powers of the Black Man, are ambivalent.
- The central symbol, the Scarlet Letter, does change in meaning, as Hester works her way towards absolution.

Literary Focus of Chapters

- Chapter One – The Prison Door
 - * sets the scene for action to come
 - * prepares reader for theme – w/ discussion of prison and rosebush
 - * introduces contrasting symbols of weeds and flowers – sin and forgiveness
 - * reveals theme of human forgiveness

Cont.

- Chapter Two – The Market Place
 - * introduces stern morality of Puritan society
 - * we see Hawthorne's disapproval of the stern women in the crowd
 - * introduces main character – immediately showing his sympathy for her by making her full of beauty, grace, and pride
 - * scaffold is introduced as a symbol of the public view of things as contrasted with what is hidden in people's (Art's) heart

Cont.

- Chapter 3 – The Recognition
 - * the reader strongly suspects that the deformed stranger is Hester's husband whom she had been thinking about in the previous chapter
 - * suspense is built

Cont.

- Chapter 4 – The Interview
 - * develops Rog's character
 - * Hester shows that she fears his nature when she asks, "Art thou like the Black Man that haunts the forest around us?"
- Chapter 5 – Hester at her Needle
 - * entirely descriptive chapter which examines Hester's penance for her sin

Cont.

- Chapter 6 – Pearl
 - * Also has little plot & no dialogue
 - * Describes Hester's penance in relationship to her daughter
 - * Although, a reminder of her sin like the letter, Pearl is “a lovely child, whose place was on that same dishonored bosom, to connect her parent forever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven.”

- Chapter 7 – The Governor's Hall^{Cont.}
 - * heavy in symbolism
 - * Hester's A is magnified in the governor's armor
 - * Pearl demands a rose from the bush which reminds us of the rosebush outside of the prison

Cont.

- Chapter 8 – The Elf-child and the Minister
 - * Four main characters come together
 - * Hints are given that Art is Pearl's father
 - * Physical appearances mirror psychological or spiritual states. Art is weak; Pearl is impish, and Rog is freaky ugly and more misshapen.

Cont.

- Chapter 9 – The Leech
 - * Develops more fully what was hinted at in the previous chapter
- Chapter 10 – The Leech and His Patient
 - * Reminds us that Rog has always been kind and upright which contrasts with what he has become
 - * Emphasizes how revenge has contributed to Rog's decline
 - * Pearl is shown to have insight – seeing Rog as the Black Man
 - * At the end of the chapter Rog makes some kind of discovery

Cont.

- Chapter 11 – The Interior of a Heart
 - * Rog becomes certain of Art's guilt and his cruel purpose is intensified
 - * Ironical that Art's attempt at public confession only intensifies his parishioners' love for him
- Chapter 12 – The Minister's Vigil
 - * 2nd of 3 scaffold scenes, bringing all 4 characters together
 - * duality of light in the sky – what is the real meaning?
 - * Art's subconscious – he does not go willingly to the scaffold, sleepwalks there; barely resists his impulses – wants to shriek out

Cont.

Chapter 13 – Another View of Hester

- States the changes that have occurred in Hester over time and the way the community sees her

Chapter 14 – Hester and the Physician

- Evokes reader's sympathy for Rog, who with the potential of being a good man, has turned into a fiend.
- At the end of the chapter he shows his admiration and sympathy for Hester

Cont.

- Chapter 15 – Hester and Pearl
 - * Hawthorne explores Hester's inner world.
 - * Here she looks a little negative because of her expressed hatred for Rog and her lie to Pearl.
- Chapter 16 – A Forest Walk
 - * Symbolic chapter – rays of sunshine that disappear for Hester, Pearl resembling the brook – even if unlike the brook she is sparkling – this is because, as Pearl says, “I wear nothing on my bosom yet!”

Cont.

- Chapter 17 – The Pastor and His Parishioner
 - * 1st chapter of a love story
 - * 1st time Art and Hester are alone together
 - * Shows the depth of Hester's feelings for Art
- Chapter 18 – A Flood of Sunshine
 - * Setting of the forest plays important role, representing an oasis of freedom
 - * Allows Hester to let down hair and throw off her letter
 - * Hester, Art, and Pearl plan to follow natural laws instead of laws of mankind
 - * Weird relationship between Pearl and Art – his fear and her reluctance

Cont.

- Chapter 19 – The Child at the Brookside
 - * Pearl's behavior is focus – her being upset with the changes in Hester and her wiping away Art's kiss
- Chapter 20 – The Minister in a Maze
 - * Shows the effects of Art's subconscious
 - * He seems to want to reveal his sinful nature to the world

Cont

- Chapter 21 – The New England Holiday
 - * Hawthorne interrupts the plot to talk about Puritan society
 - * Gives historical background of Election day
- Chapter 22 – The Procession
 - * This chapter revolves around Art – the other three main characters are waiting to see how he handles his conflict

Cont.

- Chapter 23 – The Revelation
 - * 3rd and final scaffold scene
 - * novel's climax
 - * significant that Pearl kisses Art for the first time before he dies
- Chapter 24 – Conclusion
 - * the denouement of the novel
 - * Gives fates of remaining characters
 - * Philosophizes on the lessons to be learned



Dark Romanticis

Characteristics

- Focus on the tragic rather than the optimistic.
- Characters are:
 - prone to sin
 - mental aberration
 - self-destruction
 - Do not inherently possess divinity and wisdom
 - (A Transcendental Thought)

The Dark Romantics

Who are they?

- **Most notable dark romantic authors (1800s):**
 - Edgar Allen Poe
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne
 - Herman Melville
 - Emily Dickinson
 - H.P. Lovecraft (1920s-30s)

Poe

- seminal dark romantic author
- Common subjects
 - Fragile psychology of man—insanity
 - Evil Acts via insanity rather than pure evil
 - Buried alive
 - Duplicity
 - Heightened senses
 - The supernatural
- Invented the short story and detective story.
- Famous works: “The Tell Tale Heart,” “The Fall Of The House Of Usher,” “Pit and the Pendulum,” “Cask of Amontillado”; poem “The Raven”

Hawthorne

- Has closest ties to the American Transcendental movement
- works often cautionary tales:
 - extreme individualism
 - guilt and sin.



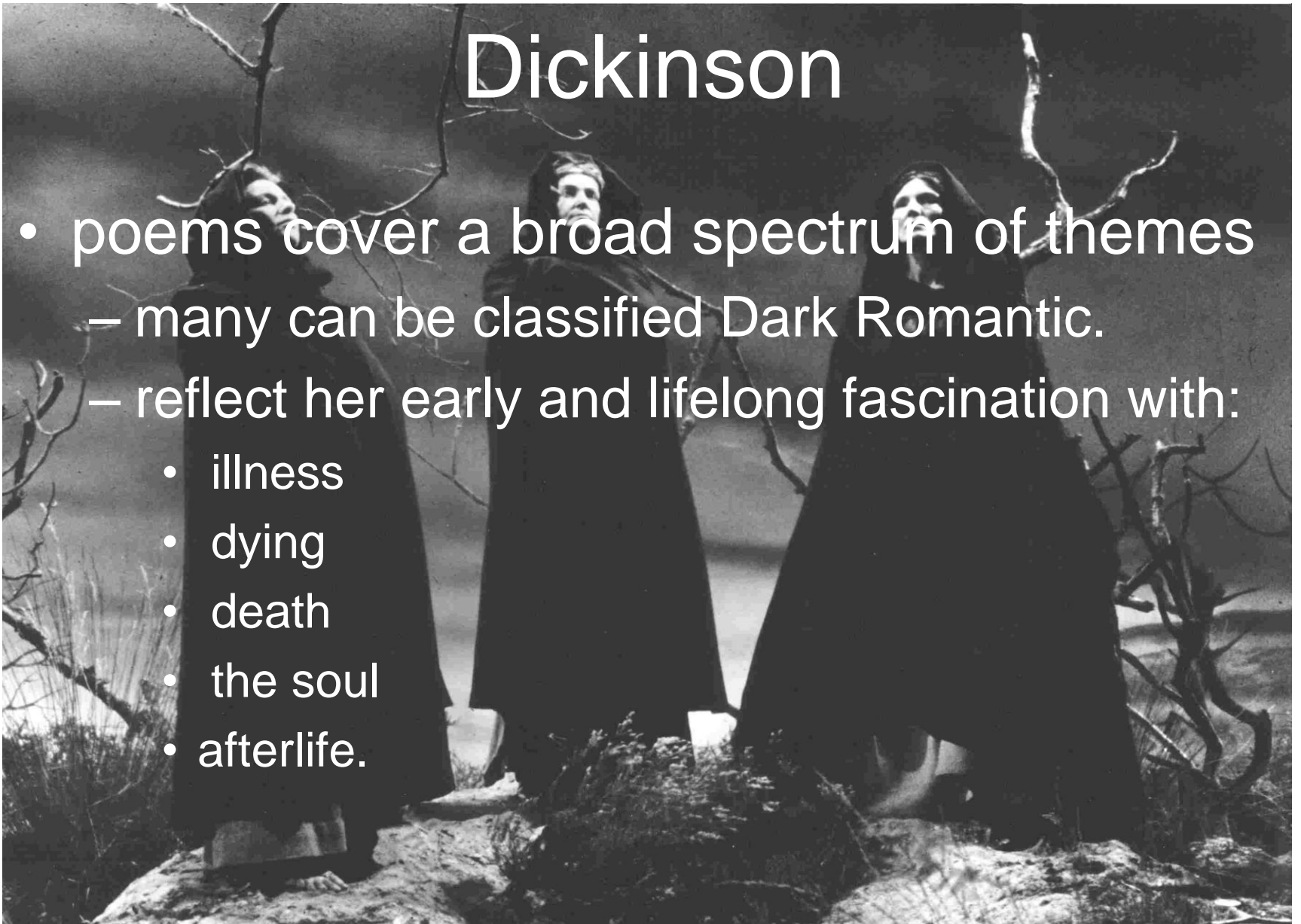
The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric image. At the top, a large, bright full moon is visible against a starry night sky. In the foreground, a werewolf is depicted in a crouching position, its body covered in dark fur and its eyes glowing with a yellowish light. The overall mood is mysterious and dark, fitting the themes of Herman Melville's works.

Melville

- Best known during his lifetime for his travel books, a twentieth-century revival in the study of Herman Melville's works has left "Moby-Dick" and "Bartleby the Scrivener" among his most highly regarded.
- Themes: man's blind ambition, cruelty, and defiance of God, madness, mystery, and the triumph of evil over good

Dickinson

- poems cover a broad spectrum of themes
 - many can be classified Dark Romantic.
 - reflect her early and lifelong fascination with:
 - illness
 - dying
 - death
 - the soul
 - afterlife.



Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)



LIFE
Born (Dec 1830)
and died (May 1886)
in Amherst, Mass.

Strongly attached to
her family (brother
Austin and sister
Lavinia, Vinnie)



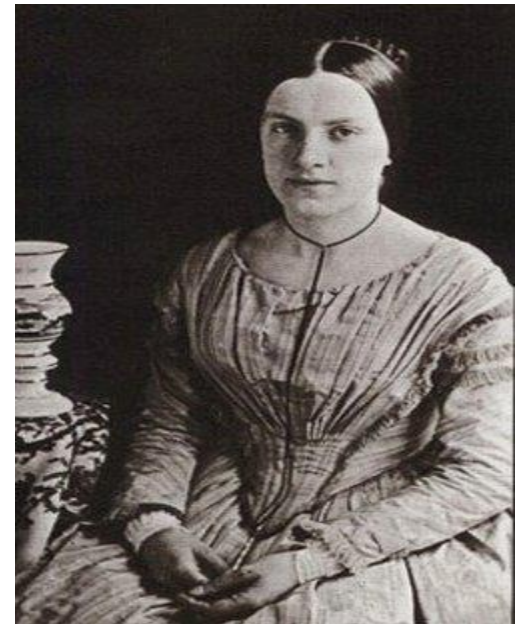
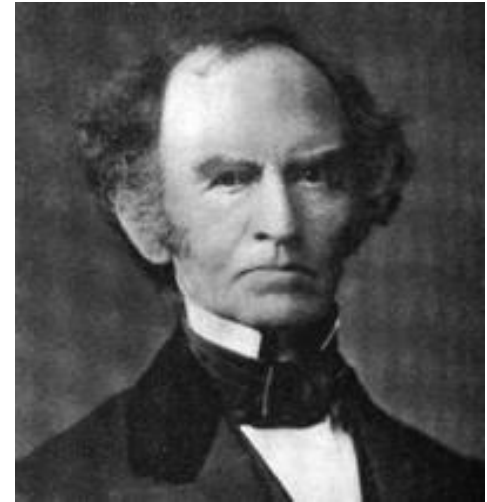
LIFE

Complex relationship
with his father:

“his heart was pure
and terrible and I
think no other like it
exists”

... and her mother:

“My Mother does not
care for thought...”



- My Mother does not care for thought - and Father, too busy with his Briefs – to notice what we do – He buys me many Books – but begs me not to read them – because he fears they joggle the Mind
(E. Dickinson, letter to T. Wentworth Higginson, 1862)

LIFE

The "deepening menace" of death, especially the death her cousin Sophia traumatized her in 1844

Religious revival in 1845:

"I never enjoyed such perfect peace and happiness as the short time in which I felt I had found my savior" (letter to a friend)

"Some keep the Sabbath going to Church / I keep it, staying at Home"



LIFE

Solitary lifestyle
(she “selected
her own society
and then shut the
door”)

In 1858, she
began to write
clean copies of
her work



And she would produce....

- Forty bundles comprising nearly eight hundred poems – but no one knew of these until after her death

Formal education

- Attended Amherst Academy for seven years and then, for only ten months, Mount Holyoke Female Seminary
- Reasons for leaving are not known:
- either she was in poor health, she rebelled against the evangelical fervour present at the school, or she was simply homesick

The Life of a Writer

In the summer of 1858 she started revising her poems, making clean copies and writing in earnest

By 1860 she had withdrawn from social life

The first half of 1860s: her most productive writing period.



DECLINE AND DEATH

- “Home is so far from Home”.
- Otis Phillips Lord, a late-life romance?
- Autin’s affair with Mabel Loomis Todd
- Death of Emily’s mother and nephew Gilbert
- "a great darkness coming"...

- Helen Hunt Jackson convinced Emily to publish “Success is counted sweetest” anonymously in *A Masque of Poets*
- This was the last poem published in her lifetime

Emily died at the
age of 55 of Bright's
Disease

Her coffin was
carried through
daffodils, and
Higginson read "No
Coward Soul is
Mine" by Emily
Bronte, Emily's
favorite poem

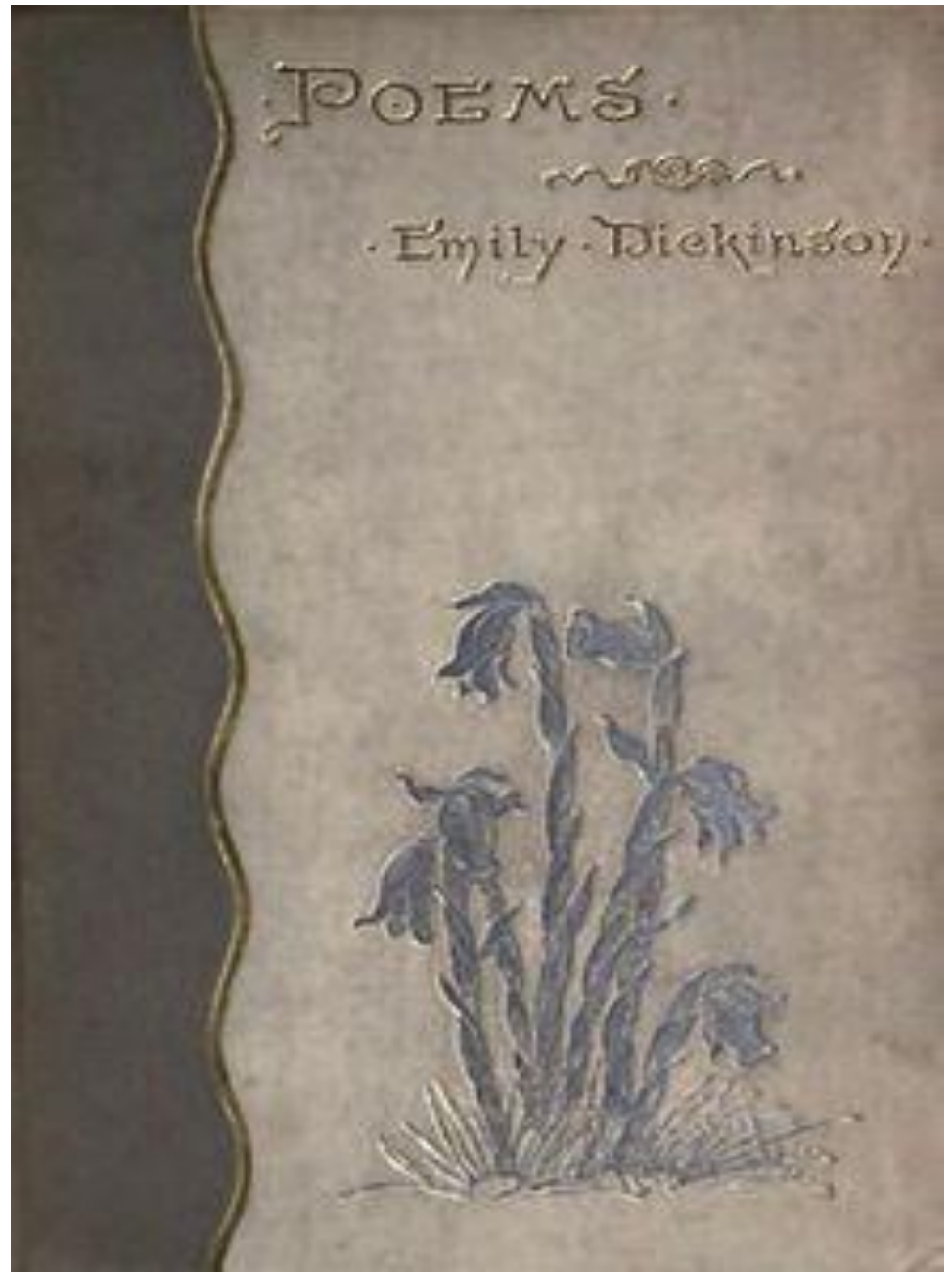
She was buried at
West Cemetery on
Triangle Street in



- According to Gilbert and Gubar, Dickinson's radical seclusion was a necessary strategy to free her from 'feminine' obligations which might otherwise have hindered her art. (*The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*)

- Her decision to dress in white has been read as an unconscious way to fictionalize herself into the roles of the little maid, ‘the angel in the house’ or the eccentric artist.
- “Like the blank page, the white dress suggests paradoxically both a way to inscribe herself as an invisible woman and as a self-assertive poet.” (Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*)

Fisto edition,
***Poems of
Emily
Dickinson,***
appeared in
1890, edited by
Mabel Loomis
Todd and T. W.
Higginson



- 1894 ***Letters of Emily Dickinson***
Edited by Mabel Loomis Todd
- 1924 ***The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*** by Martha Dickinson
1955 ***The Poems of Emily Dickinson***, by
Thomas Johnson

In 1894....

- Two volumes of Emily's letters, highly edited, appeared
- Susan Dickinson (Austin's wife) published some poems in literary magazines, such as *Scribner's Magazine* and *The Independent*
- Martha Dickenson Bianchi (Emily's niece) published a series of collections between 1914 and 1929
- Other volumes followed throughout the 1930s

In the 1960s....

- *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* was published by Thomas H. Johnson
- It contained all 1,775 of her poems—all unedited
- Various books of her poems and letters have been published since

Dickinson's poetry is known for

- Random capitalization
- Unconventional broken rhyming meter
- Use of Dashes
- No titles
- Unconventional punctuation
- Use of metaphor

Wild nights - Wild nights -
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile - the winds -
To a heart in port -
Come with the Compass -
Come with the Chart -!

Ringing in Eden -
Ah! the Sea!
Night - ' but - Moon -
Tonight -
In thee:

Dickinson is considered....

- Considered one of the most original poets of the 19th century
- Placed alongside such poets as Walt Whitman and Robert Frost
- Taught in grade school, high school and college
- A powerful and persistent figure of American culture
- Heralded as the greatest woman poet in the English language

American Modernism

1900-1945

Between World Wars

- Many historians have described the period between the two World Wars as a “traumatic coming of age.”
- In a post-Industrial Revolution era, America had moved from an agrarian nation to an urban nation.
- The lives of these Americans were radically different from those of their parents.

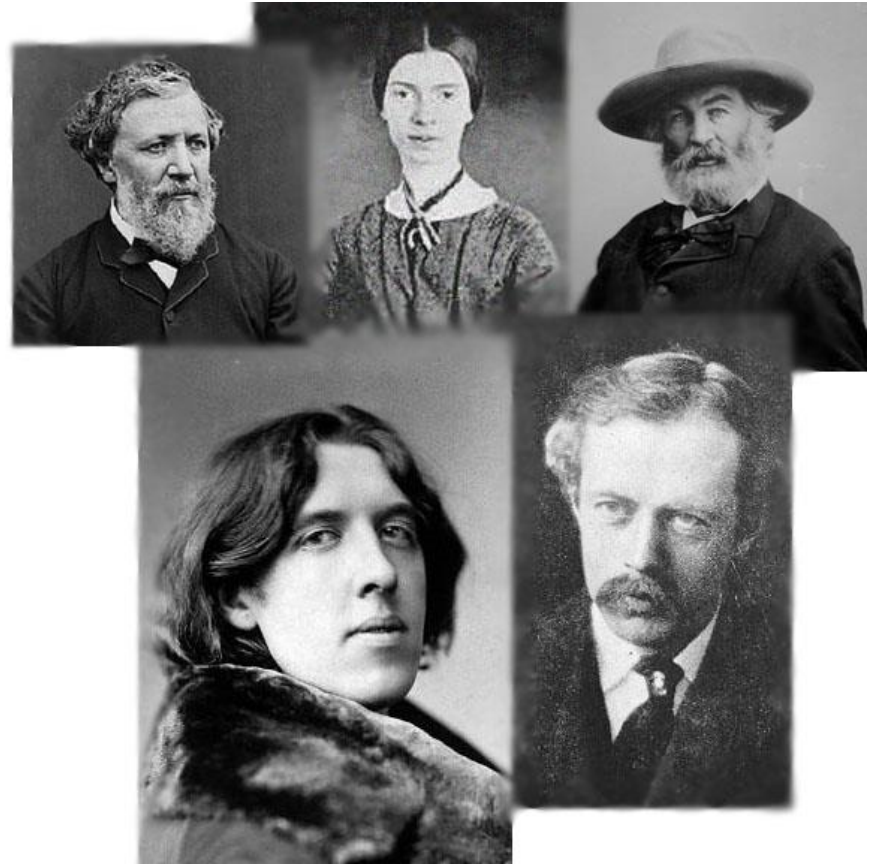


Modernism

- Embraced nontraditional syntax and forms.
- Challenged tradition
- Writers wanted to move beyond Realism to introduce such concepts as disjointed timelines.
- An overarching theme of Modernism was “emancipation”

Roots of Modernism

- Influenced by Walt Whitman's free verse
- Prose poetry of British writer Oscar Wilde
- British writer Robert Browning's subversion of the poetic self
- Emily Dickinson's compression
- English Symbolist writers, especially Arthur Symons



Modernist Writers

- Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, E. E. Cummings, Robert Frost
- Harlem Renaissance writers such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, Richard Wright



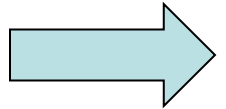
Imagism

- School of Imagism: Ezra Pound, H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams
 - Direct treatment of the “thing,” whether subjective or objective.
 - To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
 - As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.



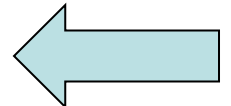
Charateristics

- Open form
- Juxtaposition
- Free verse
- Discontinuous narrative
- Intertextuality
- Classical allusions
- Borrowing from cultures and other languages



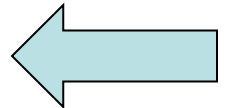
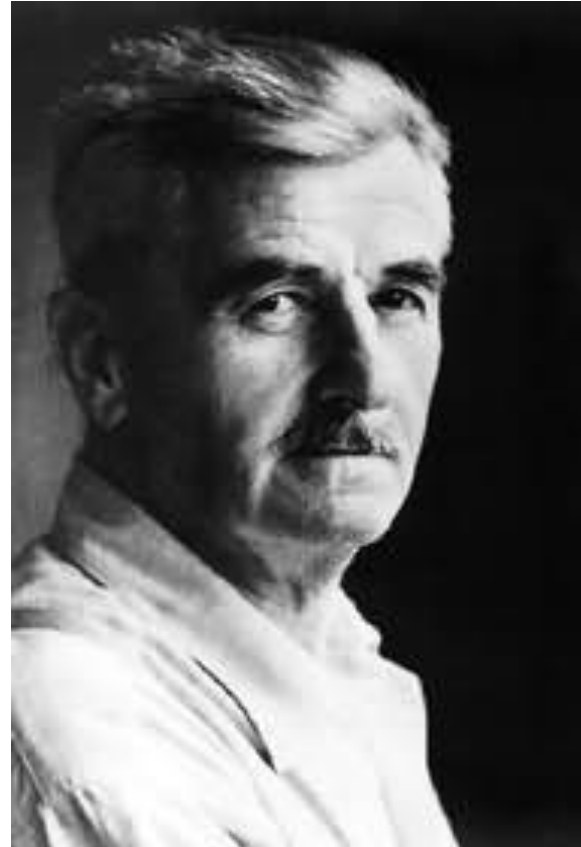
Juxtaposition

- Two images that are otherwise not commonly brought together appear side by side or structurally close together, thereby forcing the reader to stop and reconsider the meaning of the text through the contrasting images, ideas, motifs, etc.
- For example, “He was slouched alertly” is a juxtaposition.



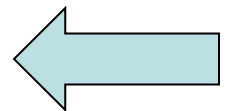
Discontinuous Narrative

- Narrative moves back and forth through time.
- Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* or *As I Lay Dying*



Intertextuality

- Intertextuality is a relationship between two or more texts that quote from one another, allude to one another, or otherwise connect.

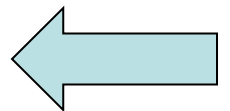


Themes

- Breakdown of social norms and cultural sureties
- Alienation of the individual
- Valorization of the despairing individual in the force of an unmanageable future
- Product of the metropolis, of cities and urbanscapes

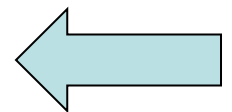
Social Norms/Cultural Sureties

- Women were given the right to vote in 1920.
- Hemlines raised; Margaret Sanger introduces the idea of birth control.
- Karl Marx's ideas flourish; the Bolshevik Revolution overthrows Russia's czarist government and establishes the Soviet Union.
- Writers begin to explore these new ideas.



Theme of Alienation

- Sense of alienation in literature:
 - The character belongs to a “lost generation” (Gertrude Stein)
 - The character suffers from a “dissociation of sensibility”—separation of thought from feeling (T. S. Eliot)
 - The character has “a Dream deferred” (Langston Hughes).



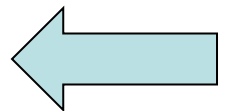
Valorization of the Individual

- Characters are heroic in the face of a future they can't control.
- Demonstrates the uncertainty felt by individuals living in this era.
- Examples include Jay Gatsby in *The Great Gatsby*, Lt. Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*



Urbanscapes

- Life in the city differs from life on the farm; writers began to explore city life.
- Conflicts begin to center on society.



Robert Frost

(1875 – 1963)

Based on:

“The Academic American Encyclopedia, copyright 1995
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Robert Frost

- Robert Lee Frost, b. San Francisco, Mar. 26, 1874, d. Boston, Jan. 29, 1963, was one of America's leading 20th-century poets and a four-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize.
- An essentially pastoral poet often associated with rural New England, Frost wrote poems whose philosophical dimensions transcend any region.



- In his work, Frost found the greatest meaning in the natural world.
- Shunning the modern world of the city, Frost relied upon the natural surroundings of his various farms to provide him with inspiration and symbols.
- But he always refused to be classified as a nature poet, insisting his poems contained so much more.
- However, the appeal of Robert Frost to so many people during his lifetime and afterwards, was the connection he allowed them to an almost forgotten world of nature in a modern world of cities and industry.



Style

- Accessible language
- Concrete experience
- Direct expression

Robert Frost

- Frost's poetic and political conservatism caused him to lose favor with some literary critics, but his reputation as a major poet is secure. He unquestionably succeeded in realizing his life's ambition: to write "a few poems it will be hard to get rid of."
- Reviewed by R.H. Winnick





O. HENRY

The master of short stories

Early Life

- O. Henry was born William Sydney Porter, son of a doctor and an artistic mother, on **September 11, 1862** in North Carolina.
- At age fifteen O. Henry's formal schooling ended, and he took an apprenticeship at his uncle's pharmacy.



The Writing Begins

- Shortly after his marriage in 1887, O. Henry began perfecting his short stories which he previously had written simply to entertain friends.
- To pay the bills, he took on a job as a banker and worked as a reporter and occasional cartoonist for a Houston newspaper.

Short Stories

- Eventually, O. Henry wrote around 300 short stories (sixty-five in 1904 alone!), during his 10 year literary career.
- Nearly all stories included his signature surprise ending, or “snapper” as he called it.



“Snappers”

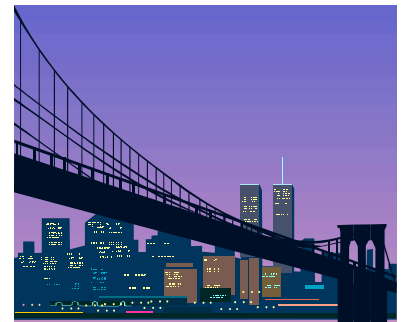
- O. Henry’s own life was full of twists and turns, making his interest in the surprise, twisty endings understandable.
- For instance, while serving time in prison O. Henry- in the right place at the right time- saved a warden who had overdosed on arsenic. As a reward, O. Henry was allowed to roam freely about the jail, telling stories, and gathering stories from fellow prisoners.

Philosophy on Writing

- “I’ ll give you the whole secret of short-story writing...Rule 1: Write short stories that please yourself. There is no Rule 2.” – O. Henry
- “You can’ t write a story that’ s got any life in it by sitting at a writing table and thinking. You’ ve got to get out into the streets, into the crowds, talk with people, and feel the rush and throb of real life- that’ s the stimulant for a story writer.” – O. Henry, 1902.

Story Ideas

- O. Henry's region of choice was New York, though he also wrote stories set in the West, the deep South, and New Orleans.
- He also convincingly wrote stories about a variety of people: crooks, chiefs, policemen, cowboys, aristocrats, con-men, poverty-stricken, and millionaires.



Important Historical Influences

- Civil War prior to O. Henry's birth
- A year after O. Henry's birth, Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation (1863).
- Lincoln assassinated in 1865.
- Rise of small-press publishing around 1904- making it possible for more people to have access to a variety of literature- coincided with O. Henry's rise to fame.

O.Henry's Style

- **Famous for**
 - Snapper or Twist endings
 - Writing about ordinary people
 - Making readers “root for the underdog”

Henry's first collection, *Cabbages And Kings* appeared in 1904. The second, *The Four Million*, was published two years later and included his well-known stories "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Furnished Room". *The Trimmed Lamp* (1907) included "The Last Leaf".

Henry's best known work is perhaps the much anthologized "The Ransom of Red Chief", included in the collection *Whirligigs* (1910). *The Heart Of The West* (1907) presented tales of the Texas range.

O. Henry published 10 collections and over 600 short stories during his lifetime.

- "The Gift of the Magi" is one of O. Henry's most famous stories. Included in *The Four Million*, his first collection of short stories, in 1906, it has been anthologized many times since then.
- The story contains many of the elements for which O. Henry is widely known, including poor, working-class characters, a humorous tone, realistic detail, and a surprise ending.
- A major reason given for its enduring appeal is its affirmation of unselfish love. Such love, the story and its title suggest, is like the gifts given by the wise men, called Magi, who brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the newborn Jesus.

