

UNIT 55

THE LOST GENERATION: S. FITZGERALD, J. STEINBECK AND E. HEMINGWAY. THE NARRATIVE OF W. FAULKNER

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0. INTRODUCTION

This unit aims to provide a useful introduction to four relevant figures of the so-called American *Lost Generation*, that is, S. Fitzgerald, J. Steinbeck and E. Hemingway, as well as the narrative of W. Faulkner. Their literary contributions were produced between the 1920s and the 1960s, that is, during the so-called inter-war years (1918-1939), and post-war years, therefore, they are associated to the literary streams of late realism, modernism and post-modernism.

Characterized by being full of youthful idealism, the Lost Generation sought the meaning of life, drank excessively, had love affairs and created some of the finest American literature to date. There were many literary artists involved in this group (John Dos Passos, Sherwood Anderson, Kay Boyle, Hart Crane, Ford Maddox Ford, Zelda Fitzgerald). Actually, F. Scott Fitzgerald, J. Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and even W. Faulkner denounced the effects of the World War I and, therefore, are linked to the 1920s, whereas the latter, Faulkner, is associated to the Great Depression in the 1930s. Yet, all of them wrote about social conditions after the World War I.

As we shall see, they are major references in which socio-economic, cultural and political allegiances are placed very much to the fore. Actually, **F. Scott Fitzgerald is remembered as the portrayer of the spirit of the Jazz age; Steinbeck as the portrayer of the spirit of rural California; Ernest Hemingway as the leader in the adaptation of the naturalistic technique in the novel; and Faulkner because he experimented brilliantly with Freudian elements in his fictional world:** narrative chronology, different points of view and voices (including those of outcasts, children, and illiterates), and a rich and demanding baroque style built of extremely long sentences full of complicated subordinate parts.

The arguments put forward here are foregrounded on some of the most influential authors in the field, namely Rogers, *The Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature* (1987); Ward & Trent, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature* (2000); and Ford, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*, (1988).

1. A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR THE LOST GENERATION: BEFORE AND AFTER THE TWO WORLD WARS

In the 20th century, the United States emerged as a world power, and since World War II it has been one of the preeminent powers. Yet, we shall concentrate here on the turn of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, for this was the period which saw the rise of the authors at stake.

Nineteenth-century America is marked by a set of major events determined by the Civil War (1861-1865), also called the main American social revolution, since it was a watershed in the rise of modern industrial society in the U.S. In this sense, the aftermath of the Civil War (1865-1901) is reflected by the strong spirit of reform as well as by the socio-economic and cultural changes.

Many historians have characterized the period between the two world wars as the United States' traumatic "coming of age". In particular, those American writers who established their lives in Europe showed their disillusionment about postwar society. In fact, these Americans returned to their homeland but could never regain their innocence. This is the case of the members of the *Lost Generation*, who were shocked and, therefore, showed

their reaction against the war. John Dos Passos expressed it in *Three Soldiers* (1921), and Hemingway in *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), a tragic story of love, betrayal and reconciliation against the violent backdrop of World War I. What is more, in both works we can appreciate the disillusionment of the lost generation expatriates.

During **the Roaring Twenties** (1920s) the U.S. enjoyed a period of unbalanced prosperity since prices for agricultural commodities and wages fell at the end of the war, while new industries (movies, automobiles...) flourished. Also, the standard of living in rural areas fell increasingly behind that of urban and suburban areas which saw dramatic improvements in housing. In cultural terms, Jazz music became widely popular and dancing was a popular recreation. In fact, this period is also known as the **Jazz Age**, since many nightclubs featured jazz music. Moreover, American women felt liberated since many had left farms for American cities during World War I, and had become resolutely modern ('bobbed' haircut, '**flapper**'¹ dresses, right to vote, public roles in society).

During the **1930s** all social classes were affected by the Stock Market Crash (1929). Actually, millions of workers lost their jobs, a large number of farmers had to abandon their farms, banks failed during the depression and foreign trade decreased very quickly. All in all, the nation's economy was paralyzed and poverty swept through on a scale never experienced under Hoover's presidency (1929). Yet, Roosevelt was elected President due to his program for recovery and reform called the New Deal. This proved successful and the results were soon to be felt since banks reopened. (See unit 52)

2. A LITERARY BACKGROUND: THE LOST GENERATION

The expression *Lost Generation* was coined by the American writer **Gertrude Stein** (1874-1946) who, speaking to Ernest Hemingway, said, "you are all a lost generation". She was also an American writer, poet, feminist, playwright and catalyst in the development of modern art and literature and, therefore, spent most of her life in France. By the 1920s she had a large circle of friends because her judgements in literature and art were highly influential. Among this group, we find the expatriate American writers.

The three best known literary artists are F. Scott Fitzgerald, J. Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos. Other scholars usually included in the list W. Faulkner, Sherwood Anderson, Kay Boyle, Hart Crane, Ford Maddox Ford and Zelda Fitzgerald.

The term 'Lost Generation' has much to do with the **social mood** in which this group of writers grew up: an era of widespread substance abuse (alcohol consumption, popular drugs like cannabis, heroin and cocaine); an era of rising immigration during the decades 1900-1919; also, an era of prosperity mixed with a crisis of confidence; an era of crime and violence, high suicide rates; failures in the marketplace; and a new generation dedicated to the fear of poverty and the worship of success. In short, an era of disillusioned and weary intellectuals, poets, artists, and novelists that rejected the values of post-World War I America. All in all, this group of intellectuals showed their disgust at war.

Lost generation writers have gained a prominent place in the 20th century American civilization for three main reasons. First, they led the way in expression of the themes of spiritual alienation, self-exile, and cultural criticism. Thus, their mark on intellectual history is distinct. Secondly, these writers attempted to express their critical response in new ways.

¹ In fact, Fitzgerald called these women 'flappers'.

Their literary innovations challenged traditional assumptions about writing and expression, and, thereby, paved the way for subsequent generations of avant garde writers. Lastly, myth surrounds the Lost Generation and perpetuates its popularity as a countercultural entity.

In literary terms, the Lost Generation were said to be disillusioned by the senseless slaughter of the First World War, cynical, disdainful of the Victorian notions of morality and propriety of their elders

3. THE LOST GENERATION: S. FITZGERALD, J. STEINBECK, E. HEMINGWAY AND W. FAULKNER

Although American prose between the wars experimented with viewpoint and form, Americans wrote more realistically than Europeans did. Novelist Ernest Hemingway wrote of war, hunting, and other masculine pursuits in a stripped, plain style; William Faulkner set his powerful southern novels spanning generations and cultures firmly in Mississippi heat and dust; and Sinclair Lewis delineated bourgeois lives with ironic clarity. Finally, the importance of facing reality became a dominant theme in the 1920s and 1930s: writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald portrayed the tragedy awaiting those who lived in flimsy dreams.

3.1. S. Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

3.1.1. Life

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born into a fairly Catholic and well-to-do family in Minnesota in 1896. His father's name indicated his ancestry with an allegiance to the Old South and its values, whereas his mother was the daughter of an Irish immigrant. In 1917, Fitzgerald attended Princeton University but never graduated. It was here that he mingled with the moneyed classes and, thus, became obsessed with money for the rest of his life.

In 1917, he was drafted into the army, but he never saw active service abroad. Convinced that he would die in the war, he rapidly wrote a novel, ***The Romantic Egotist***.

Then he rewrote his novel as ***This Side of Paradise*** (1920), a story about the career aspirations and love disappointments of Amory Blaine. In the same year, he married the beautiful Zelda Sayre and together they embarked on a rich life of endless parties since Fitzgerald endeavored to earn a solid literary reputation.

Yet, he also devoted his time to write short stories to popular magazines for prices that kept increasing as his fame did, for instance, two volumes of short stories called ***Flappers and Philosophers*** (1920), which marked Fitzgerald's entry into short story.

When Zelda Fitzgerald became pregnant, they took their first trip to Europe in 1921 and then settled in St. Paul. Dividing their time between America and fashionable resorts in Europe, the Fitzgeralds became as famous for their lifestyle as for the novels he wrote.

He followed his first success with ***The Beautiful and the Damned*** (1922), a satirical look at the dark side of the glittering Jazz Age, and it was also at this time that Fitzgerald wrote many of his short stories which helped to pay for his extravagant lifestyle, such as ***Six Tales of the Jazz Age and Other Stories*** (1922), which marked him as a glamorous chronicler of the flaming youth of the 1920s, and ***The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*** (1922). In the fall of 1922, they moved to Long Island, in order to be near Broadway since the Fitzgerald's tried up with his plays, ***The Vegetable and From President to Postman***.

The Fitzgerald's went to France in 1924 and spent the winter of 1924-1925 in Rome where he revised ***The Great Gatsby***, but it was in April 1925 that he published his third novel, which Fitzgerald considered his masterpiece. By that time, his marriage was damaged

by Zelda's involvement with a French naval aviator. Moreover, Fitzgerald met Ernest Hemingway in Paris, then unknown outside the expatriate literary circle, and both formed a friendship based on Fitzgerald's admiration for Hemingway's genius. The Fitzgeralds remained in France until the end of 1926, alternating between Paris and the Riviera, where they also established a close friendship with affluent and cultured American expatriates.

3.1.2. Main works, themes and style

Fitzgerald is best known for his novels and short stories which chronicle the excesses of America's Jazz Age during the 1920s as well as for his reputation as a drinker. Though it showed him as an irresponsible writer, he was a reviser whose fiction went through layers of drafts. Fitzgerald had a clear, lyrical, colorful, witty style which evoked the emotions associated with time and place. The chief theme of Fitzgerald's work is aspiration and the idealism when defining American character. Another major theme was mutability or loss, since he Fitzgerald became identified with social concerns and, in particular, with the Jazz Age, as he stated "It was an age of miracles, it was an age of art, it was an age of excess, and it was an age of satire," from *Echoes of the Jazz Age* (1922). Actually, these major themes are reflected in all his works. For instance, *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) plumbs the **depths of human feeling** with a perspicacity that is quintessential Fitzgerald and, therefore, marked Fitzgerald's entry into the realm of the short story. Next work, *This Side of Paradise* (1920) reflects his own experiences as a Princeton undergraduate through the figure of Amory Blaine, a Princeton student with career aspirations, love disappointments and a fixed **obsession with social and economic status**, which leads her to the **trading of sexual favors**.

The Beautiful and the Damned (1922) shows the excitement and thrills of New York nightlife in the 20s through the satirical figure of Anthony Patch and his vibrant, beautiful wife. In this work, we are shown the **dark side of the glittering Jazz Age** through the squandering of money, wasting talents, and descending into moral, as well as financial and bankruptcy. Next work, *Six Tales of the Jazz Age and Other Stories* (1922) showed the glamorous years of the 1920s as well as *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* (1922).

Yet, there is no doubt that his third work, *The Great Gatsby* (1925), was Fitzgerald's masterpiece. This novel marked a striking advance in Fitzgerald's technique, using a complex structure and a controlled narrative point of view. Fitzgerald's achievement received critical praise. This novel combines symbolism with psychological realism since his description has a symbolic glow as if things (house, parties, music).

This work, however, has been defined as a symbolist tragedy in which the symbol of the American belief that money can buy love and happiness becomes tragic. The figure of James Gatz, the mid-western boy who improves himself into Jay Gatsby, is a brilliant hedonist whose tragic flaw is an outdated idealism since he tries to convert a material world full of hard people into the ideal world of fantasy. This novel dramatizes the time in which it was written, reflecting social prohibition, gangsters, flappery, a questionable business ethics and commercial criteria for success. In short, the failure of American success and the contrast between the West and East development.

Regarding his style, critics soon realized his sophistication, use of social milieu, honest treatment of emotional experience and his portrayal of the younger generation. In his social analysis, he played with his poetic style on applying the subtle complexity of the language, the calculated use of color, references and connotations and the striking configurations of verbal patterns and repetitions which lead the reader to reread sentences.

3.2. J. Steinbeck (1902-1968)

3.2.1. Life

John Ernst Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, in 1902. Of German and Irish ancestry, her mother fostered Steinbeck's love of reading and the written word. Steinbeck worked during summers as a hired hand on nearby ranches, nourishing his impression of the California countryside and its people. Besides, he went to university, but never graduated since he always planned to be a writer. His first book was written while working as a watchman, *Cup of Gold* (1929), but attracted little attention, the same as his subsequent novels, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *To a God Unknown*.

In 1930 Steinbeck married his first wife, Carol Henning and lived in Pacific Grove where much of the material for his next novels was gathered (*Tortilla Flat* and *Cannery Row*). By that time, Steinbeck met Edward Ricketts, a marine biologist whose views on the interdependence of all life deeply influenced Steinbeck's thinking and, in fact, in the novel *To a God Unknown* (1933) Steinbeck mingled Ricketts' ideas with concepts and themes, which had been made familiar by the mythologist Joseph Campbell. Yet, Steinbeck did not want to explain his story too much and he knew beforehand that the book would not find readers. After publishing some novels and short stories, Steinbeck first became widely known with *Tortilla Flat* (1935), a series of humorous stories about Monterey *paisanos*. Actually, *Tortilla Flat* (1935) marked the turning point in Steinbeck's literary career and was regarded as the best novel by a California author.

3.2.2. Main works, themes and style

This American novelist, story writer, playwright, and essayist is best remembered for his **realistic** as well as imaginative writings, distinguished by a sympathetic humor and a keen social perception. He is a naturalist writer who looks at the economic problems of rural labor in the California countryside and its people. Steinbeck's novels can all be classified as **social novels** dealing with rural California conditions and a set of characters who are driven by forces they cannot control (fear, hunger, sex, disasters, capitalism). What is more, he is best known for being a **regionalist**.

Thus, his early novels reflect the rural California in different ways, for instance, *To a God Unknown* (1933) depicts a farmer, Joseph Wayne, who receives a blessing from his pioneer father, John Wayne, and goes to build himself a new farm in a distant valley. Joseph's deep beliefs of death and life lead him to sacrifice himself on a stone, becoming "earth and rain" so as to bring an end to a drought. Next, *Tortilla Flat* (1935) is a humorous tale of pleasure-loving Mexican-Americans which brought him wider recognition. Later, Steinbeck moved on from his earthy humor to more serious fiction, often aggressive in its social criticism, as in his next work, *In Dubious Battle* (1936), he dealt with the strikes of the migratory fruit pickers on California apple plantations.

In 1937, *The Red Pony* is set up on the Tiflin ranch in the Salinas Valley, California and is regarded as one of Steinbeck's finest works. The story follows Jody's initiation into adult life, in which the pony of the title functions as a symbol of his innocence and maturation. Next, *Of Mice and Men* (1937) shows a story of shattered dreams, in which George Milton and Lennie Small, two itinerant ranchhands, get into trouble after finding work on a farm, and lose their hopes and dreams of better future.

Since Steinbeck was a war correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* in Great Britain and the Mediterranean area, he centers around the World War II in some of his works, such as ***Once There Was a War*** (1958), ***The Moon is Down*** (1942), about resistance movement in a small town occupied by the Nazis; ***The Pearl*** (1947), which reads about a symbolic tale of a Mexican Indian pearl diver called Kino, who finds a valuable pearl that changes his life, but not in the way he did expect. Kino sees the pearl as his opportunity to better life, but Kino's family suffers series of disasters and finally he throws the pearl back into ocean. Thereafter his tragedy is legendary in the town.

A Russian Journal (1948) describes the country without prejudices, but he could not move freely. Also, among his later works ***East of Eden*** (1952) stands out, in which he showed again the rural California in the years around the turn of the century; ***The Winter of Our Discontent*** (1961), and ***Travels with Charley*** (1962), a travelogue in which Steinbeck wrote about his impressions during a three-month tour in a truck that led him through forty American states. Hence, he was fascinated with the foreign elements in the American population (Mexican farm workers, assorted artists, bohemians), and like most regionalists he believed the elemental life of the country infinitely superior to that of the city.

Regarding his style, his synthetic folklore can be summed up in three words: poetic, naturalist, and of great quality. His characters are idealized and simplified so as to show them as weak-minded, but essentially noble rural heroes, and also, as traditional rural people presented in a romantic manner. There is also a tragic element in his works, where great cruelty and passion are present in his characters.

3.3. E. Hemingway (1899-1961)

3.3.1. Life

Author Ernest Hemingway was born on July 21, 1899, in the village of Oak Park, Illinois. Both here and in Michigan, he would explore, camp, fish and hunt with his physician father, Dr. Clarence "Ed" Hemingway. In Chicago, he would attend concerts and operas and visit art museums with his mother, a musician and artist. Both parents and their nearby families fostered the Victorian priorities of the time: religion, family, work and discipline. They followed the Victorians' elaborate sentimental style in living and writing. At Oak Park and River Forest High School, Ernest reported and wrote articles, poems and stories for the school's publications based on his direct experiences.

The year Ernest graduated he began reporting for the *Kansas City Star*. Here he learned to get to the heart of a story with direct, simple sentences. After entering World War I the following year, he was wounded near the Italian/Austrian front. Hospitalized, he fell in love with his nurse, who later called off their relationship. These dramatic personal events against the backdrop of a brutal war became the basis of Hemingway's first widely successful novel, ***A Farewell to Arms***, published in the following decade.

In Europe in the 1920's, Ernest learned from avant-garde writers like **Gertrude Stein** and **Ezra Pound** their literary sparseness and compression. Hemingway used these methods in short stories and novels that captured the attention of critics and the public.

After growing success with his groundbreaking style, Hemingway wrote out of his own direct experience about bullfighting, big game hunting and deep sea fishing on three continents. In the 1930's, he turned to writing for causes, including democracy, as he knew

it in the Spanish Civil War and World War II. In each conflict he sought support for the side he favored. But, he insisted on impartially telling how it was in both wars, which he knew firsthand from begin there.

In the years following World War II, many critics said Hemingway's best writing was past. But, he surprised them all by publishing the novella, *The Old Man and the Sea*, about a poor Cuban fisherman's struggle to land a great fish. This work led to his Pulitzer Prize in 1952. Two years later, he received the **Nobel Prize for his "powerful, style- making mastery of the art of modern narration."**

Hemingway's years following these awards saw few works as successful as his novella or earlier writing. The effects of Ernest's lifelong depressions, illnesses and accidents were catching up with him. It was especially devastating now that he could no longer write as he once did. In July, 1961, he ended his life in Ketchum, Idaho.

3.3.2. Main works, themes and style

Hemingway's main themes are a reflection of his own life in his works. For instance, *In Our Time* (1925) is one of his earliest books which reflects the postwar year and includes classics such as *Soldier's Home*, *My Old Man*, *Out of Season*, or *Indian Camp*, among others. *The Torrents of Spring* (1926) was a satire which poked fun at Sherwood Anderson, who was a star writer at the time. Also, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) is a story of frustrated love against the backdrop of Paris and Spain in the 1920's, where Hemingway captures the sites, sounds and smells of the Bohemian Paris during the great expatriate days and the manic weeklong feria at Pamplona with the running of bulls.

In *Men Without Women* (1927), Hemingway shows some stories of bullfighting, war and love relationships between men and women. On the other hand, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) is a tragic story of love, betrayal and reconciliation against the violent backdrop of World War I. With this book, Hemingway produces a novel out of his own experience in a Milan hospital when he was wounded in the war. Later on, *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) is an examination of the Spanish bullfight ushered in what many thought was a decade of experimental writing. Hemingway was an enthusiast of the bullfight and of Spain and thought that war and bullfight was the place to view death firsthand.

In *The Fifth Column and Four Stories of the Spanish Civil War* (1930) is a full-length play which grew out of his experiences in and around a besieged Madrid, in which he evokes the tumultuous years of the Spanish Civil War. Also, *Green Hills of Africa* (1933) shows his trip to Africa with his second wife Pauline and his big-game hunting there. Moreover, *To Have and Have Not* (1937) is about the story of a man who runs contraband between Cuba and Key West in the 1930s. It is a realistic adventure tale and a moving, subtle portrait of an unlikely love affair.

Another work, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) is a novel about the impending death of an American in the Spanish War. Also, the posthumous novel, *A Moveable Feast* (1964) is a vibrant portrait of Paris in the 1920s in an evocative, self-mocking and frank style. It is regarded as an extraordinary chronicle of the sights, sounds and tastes of Paris in a bygone era where life and people are portrayed from his expatriate world. Moreover, the classic novel, *Islands in the Stream*, (posthumously published in 1970) traces his life from his years as a painter in Bimini in the 1930s through his antisubmarine activities off the coast of Cuba during World War II. In *The Garden of Eden* (posthumously published in 1986) we are shown the story of a young American writer and his glamorous life on the Cote d'Azur during the

1920s when, on taking a dangerous and erotic game, they fell in love with the same woman. Finally, his journal *True At First Sight* (posthumously published in 1999) reads about Hemingway's life in a Kenyan Safari camp in the winter of 1953-1954.

Hence, on refusing the aid of literary artifices, Hemingway's style is characterized by the use of violent action mingled with the expression of sincerity. He shows an amazing richness from his own experiences below the surface of narrative. The greatness of his writing is said to be in the memories of physical pleasure, true dialogues, and a mix of tragic and love. In short, his most outstanding works are written in Hemingway's special style, uncluttered and told in simple phrases which show us about death, war, love, hunting and passion in a way only Hemingway could.

4. W. FAULKNER (1897-1962)

4.1. Life and works

William Faulkner was a prolific writer who became very famous during his lifetime, but who shied away from the spotlight as much as possible. He is remembered as both a gentlemanly southern eccentric and an arrogant, snobbish alcoholic.

In early 1925, Faulkner and a friend travelled to New Orleans with the intention of getting Faulkner a berth on a ship to Europe, where he planned to refine his writing skills. But, instead Faulkner ended up staying in New Orleans for a few months and writing. There he met the novelist Sherwood Anderson, whose book *Winesburg, Ohio* was a pillar of American Modernism. His friendship with Anderson inspired him to start writing novels, and in a short time, he finished his first novel, *Soldier's Pay*, which was published in 1926 and was critically accepted although it sold few copies. Faulkner eventually did travel to Europe, but quickly returned to Oxford to write. Faulkner wrote four more novels between 1926 and 1931: *Mosquitoes* (1927), *Sartoris* (1929), *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), and *As I Lay Dying* (1930), but none of them sold well, and he earned little money in this period. Finally, in 1931, *Sanctuary* was published and became financially successful. Suddenly Faulkner's work began selling, and even magazines that had rejected his stories in the past clamored to publish them. Even Hollywood sought after him to write.

Faulkner's first big purchase was a large mansion in Oxford, where he lived and wrote, gaining a reputation as a reclusive curmudgeon. Between this time and the 1940s, Faulkner wrote seven more novels, including his famous *Absalom, Absalom!* and *Light in August*. In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. In the latter part of the 1950s, he spent some time away from Oxford, including spending a year as a writer-in-residence at the University of Virginia. He returned to Oxford in June of 1962 and died of a heart attack on the morning of July 6 of that year.

4.2. Main works, themes and style

The narrative of Faulkner is characterized by his themes and style. First of all, the main themes of his novels are closely associated with his own experiences and family background since he grew up in the South, for instance, the evils in modern society, racism, and a deep concern with his native South due to the decay of the old South and the emergence of ruthless and brash newcomers. Faulkner was defined as a southern regionalist writer during the Great Depression in the 1930s.

In an attempt to create a saga of his own, Faulkner has invented a host of characters typical of the imaginary Yoknapatawpha County and its inhabitants, which shows the historical growth and subsequent decadence of the South. His characters show a combination of violence and passivity in the human story of the historical drama with a code of courage and honor duty. Their theme and technique shows a distortion of time through the use of the **inner monologue**, as in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), in which we can see the downfall of the Compson family through the minds of several characters; in *Sanctuary* (1931), which reads about the degeneration of Temple Drake, a young girl from a distinguished southern family.

Also, in *Requiem For A Nun* (1951), Faulkner centered on the courtroom trial of a Negro woman who had once been a party to Temple Drake' debauchery; in *Light in August* (1932), where prejudice is shown to be most destructive when it is internalized, as in Joe Christmas, who believes, though there is no proof of it, that one of his parents was a Negro. The theme of racial prejudice is brought up again in *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), in which a young man is rejected by his father and brother because of his mixed blood. Finally, Faulkner's most outspoken moral evaluation of the relationship and the problems between Negroes and whites is to be found in *Intruder In the Dust* (1948).

As we can see, his characters represent various levels of the theme the South and racism. This fact, in combination with a special technique of narration, the stream of consciousness, gives us a psychological profile of the characters from different points of view (Kaleidoscopically shift). His narrative is defined as complex and varied since his stories have a focus shift effect, making the scene be unfolded and passed around several characters in space; a system of screens and obstacles, and delayed disclosure; a great number and variety of events reported; and also, the use of unsyntactical, nefarious (extremely wicked) sentences so as to puzzle the reader.

5. CONCLUSION

But why these writers and no other contemporary American authors? Being the most relevant ones, they share common features such as winning the Nobel Prize for literature (Steinbeck, Hemingway, Faulkner), using new realism techniques (stream of consciousness) and themes (postwar years, psychological profile of characters, tragic nature of man), and, finally, they have undergone the experience of being expatriates in Europe.

These four writers, representative of the lost generation, introduced new techniques in American fiction which included a simpler writing style with more emphasis on the form than on the story, special use of time in which past, present and future were mixed together as in a dream (Hemingway, Faulkner). As such, after the WWI a new mood of anger entered the work of young writers, the so-called decade of the Lost Generation (1920s). During this period many of these intellectuals moved to foreign countries and stayed there since they were deeply disappointed with American society.

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