Chapter 2

MODERNISM IN THE 1920s: A BRIEF SURVEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION:

The question as to when modernism actually began has been a debatable issue over a long period of time. Some people contend that it began as early 1857, the year of two foundational works of French Modernism i.e., Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* and Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. Others hold it that it began in 1901, the year Queen Victoria died taking with her the allegedly stultifying traditions of Victorian culture. Still others believe that modernism began as late as 1994 simply because World War I was the cataclysmic rupture that separated the civilized past from a future of chaos.

According to the prominent personalities like Virginia Woolf and Cather, modernism began in 1910 and 1922 respectively. But, in any case it is clear that modernism and the modern novel was in full swing by the year 1922 after the publication of *Ulysses*, a masterpiece book by Joyce that was regarded as the very encyclopedia of modernist forms.1

Modernism was startling in its innovation and dramatic in ties concision, as it spoke for a "Wasteland" view of existence. What hope or satisfaction could have been found in the Victorian concepts of order and religion had been devastated by industrialization and its resulting economic and social changes which led to failure in the social aspects. The novel has always been modern and concerned mainly with contemporary life, and as the name suggests, always after the new thing. But sometime around 1900 (or 1910, or 1922), to be modern meant something more, because suddenly modernity meant everything. It seemed to break the world in two, snapping all continuities with the past, putting human character and life itself into a
state of constant change. To keep up, the novel also had to snap and to split
to change, and so it became "the modern novel," breaking with the past,
making it new, to pursue modernity into the future.²

2.2 MEANING OF THE TERM MODERNITY:

The term modernity is a term which dates back to 5\textsuperscript{th} Century and it
refers to a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period that is often
marked by the move from feudalism or agrarianism toward capitalism,
secularism, industrialization, nation-state, rationalization, and its constituent
institutions and forms of surveillance.³ Modernity may be said to be a word
of the present, adrift from tradition and bound for the future, traumatized by
conflict and wracked by doubt; but it is above all a word of change. It is, as
the poet Charles Baudelaire put it, "the transient, the fleeting and the
contingent." It puts life into perpetual flux, moving it ever onward to new
inventions, new ideas, new ways of living, making any moment seem
potentially critical.

Science and technology every day create new ways to see, work, and
think; shifting global politics creates ever new cultures and new conflicts;
new generations gladly leave traditions behind. Stable forces are gone: god
has died long ago, it seems, and aristocracies have vanished - leaving in
place of their traditions only faith in change.

Henry Adams a late descendant of an important American aristocracy
summed up this transition when he wrote of himself, "when he came to ask
himself what he truly thought, he felt that he had no faith... that the idea of
one form, law order, or sequence had no more value for him than the idea of
none; that what he valued most was motion, and that what attracted his mind
was change". This shift from order and stability to change and movement:
this was mainly what modernity meant, and it was both alarming and
inspiring. Would this new pattern for existence enrich human culture, or destroy it? Would it bring constant progress, dynamic freedom, pure possibility-or shocks and trauma, disaster, conflict, and war? Once it destroyed traditional practices, ceremonies, and habits, and once it broke the sequence of culture, what would replace them? What would follow?"

War-complete with violence and brutality-seemed appropriate. That subject could be treated with irony, could be viewed seriously could be for experimental techniques, and writers as diverse as John Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Willa Cather, Sinclair Lewis and Edith Wharton wrote well about its waste.

The core meaning of being modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything that we have, everything we know and everything we are.

Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality, of religion and ideology; in this sense, modernity can be said to unite all mankind. But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish.

Modernity is not academically problematic; the real problem comes with the allied concepts of "modernism" and "modernization." Even though both terms are most often used to categorize responses to modernity, they conjure up wildly dissimilar sorts of images. Moreover, "modernism" makes us think of isolated early-twentieth-century artists like Stein, Proust, and Eliot who are thought to have pursued resolutely personal visions, while "modernization" makes us think of assembly lines, efficiency experts, and
the most calculating profit and loss statements imaginable; "something to do," as Jameson has put it, "with industrial progress, rationalization, reorganization of production and administration along more efficient lines, electricity, the assembly line, parliamentary democracy and cheap newspapers.

2.3 MODERN NOVELIST:

For "modernity" had been around for a long time; what was new was the way we now "within it, how "being modern" means keen and all-consuming awareness that life is change, that anything is possible, that destruction might be imminent, and that something new must be created through which to make sense of it all. To make sense of it all-to celebrate the joy of transformation to warn against the threat of destruction, to lament what has been lost modern novelists felt they had to try for something new. The modern novelist, most of the fiction written around 1900 or 1910 had become state and pointless, for many reasons. It seemed to take things at the slow and steady pace of a bygone way of life; it seemed to stay on the surface, never going into psychological depth; it seemed inefficient, larded over with verbiage that kept reality away; it told its stories from on high, from the point of view of some impossible, all-knowing, godlike observer; it pretended to tell a seamless story from start to finish; and it always put a positive last spin on things, in neat and tidy endings.

Modern novelists wanted to break with these stale traditions. They did not think that all novels of the past were pointless: "our quarrel is not with the classics," Virginia Woolf noted, but with the played-out novel of the recent past, since it had failed to keep up with real life. The general consensus among the younger novelists around 1910 was that fiction had to give up on its false coherence, its conventional complacency, its un-modern
outlook, if it were to regain meaning and relevance. They took the novel and sped up its pace, or made it ebb and flow like real life; they made its sentences as slippery as the movements of the human mind; they let plot go random, told their stories from changing points of view, and began or ended them abruptly.

To match modernity, however, was only part of the point, for the modern novelist also wanted to resist it or even redeem it? The quintessentially modern novel tends to have some redemptive hope within it, some wish to restore meaning or wholeness or beauty to the modern world. Spender called this tendency a "pattern of hope, "an" idea that modern art might transform the contemporary environment, and hence, by pacifying and ennobling its inhabitants, revolutionize the world." The hope was that new forms might become new public powers of seeing, new strong ways of feeling despite modernity's technological coldness, or new critical abilities, through which people might see through modernity's lies or the hope was that the novel's fine new forms might be a retreat or refuge from modernity-shelter from its destruction. Or perhaps that the novel's new linguistic vigor would give people the words to describe their modern predicaments, or ask for needed changes.

What many modern novelists have in common is a tendency to write as if lives depended upon it- as if truthful, meaningful life needed the novelist's imagination, as if true insight into the human mind depended upon the depths into which it can reach, and as if modern freedom could only fully emerge in the rushed and fragmented sentences through which fiction enacts it. 

What we see here in the beginnings of the modern novel, then, are not just life's new, modern realities. Although the modern realities of
psychology, of imperialism, of materialism did provoke James, Conrad, and Wharton to write their books, these writers tried to reimaging those things, and to change fiction, too, in the process. Here again is this balance, which we might now describe as something essential to the modern novel: a dialectical relationship, a fundamental back-and-forth, in which the realities of modernity make the novel more artful, and then the artful techniques developed give back new realities. What James, Conrad, and Wharton helped begin, other writers were eager to follow up. The future of the novel looked good: so James himself thought, in 1914, when he wrote an essay about "The new novel" of the moment, and yet James also left that he had reason to worry about the future of fiction.

The new fiction seemed to him marvelously rich in new, modern detail, in new realities, but something seemed to be missing. He praised the new fiction because "it gives us the 'new'...as an appetite for closer notation, a sharper specification of the signs of life, of consciousness, of the human scene"; but it also prompted him to ask: "Where is the interest itself?" In other words, there was an impressive "appetite for notation," a powerful way of "hugging the shore of the real," and this made the new fiction exciting and more real than fiction had ever been before.

Part of the newness of late nineteenth-century fiction stemmed from what appeared to be new subject matter. Real-and often common-characters were becoming important: the frustrated New England farm wife, the mining camp desperado, the strung-ginning businessman. Women, working men, Blacks, Native Americans, immigrants-nontraditional characters appeared in this fiction because they gave writers a means of working with new concerns.
In the eyes of a great many late-twentieth-century academic observers, modernization has been construed as modernism's evil twin: a "passive revolution" led by the forces of hegemonic order that sought to lull the unsuspecting citizenry into a pervasive, anesthetized, mass-cultural somnolence from which only true modernism (or a true avant-garde) could awaken them. As noted above, however, this view privileges a modernist aesthetic and leaves aside too many of the socially progressive if aesthetically conservative writers who dot the artistic landscape, particularly in early-twentieth-century America.

Faith, meaning, and other idealisms become less available; the realities and details of life become, at the other end, less manageable and less explicable. As these aspects of life draw further away, and draw further apart, it becomes ever more difficult to reconcile the extremes of human thought, feeling, and culture. World War I put modernity into crisis- or showed how terrible crisis modernity could be. New powers of technological destruction made themselves shockingly and horribly felt, and old traditions seemed powerless to stop them. Just a few years before, culture had seemed to reach new heights of civilization, inspiring advances in all areas of human endeavor, making peace and prosperity seem permanent. But World War I changed all that, proving that modernity's civilized side was well matched by potential for great chaos and evil. The war's violence was unprecedented, its causes absurd, and the result was profound disillusionment. 7

The new concepts of the World War and the new concept of the “Lost generation” ask who or what was "the lost generation"? In a way, it depended on who was talking about it. At various times and in various mouths and hands, those three bare words referred to: a literal group of coevals (women and men born at approximately the same time); a specific
cultural subset of that demographic grouping; a theory of how American arts, letters, and culture evolved in the years following World War I; and a complex of mythic tropes, characters, and settings that enshrined the memory of an early twentieth century that almost certainly never existed.

In practical usage, the term usually presumed several of these meanings but seldom embraced them all. Because of its multiple meanings and functions, it is difficult even to classify the phenomenon of The Lost Generation, since most of the words that immediately suggest themselves (e.g., "group," "movement," "idea," "theory," "concept," "myth") convey some of these aspects but neglect the others.

American writers also expressed the disillusionment following upon the war. The stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) capture the restless, pleasure-hungry, defiant mood of the 1920s. Fitzgerald's characteristic theme, expressed poignantly in The Great Gatsby, is the tendency of youth's golden dreams to dissolve in failure and disappointment. Fitzgerald also elucidates the collapse of some key American Ideals, set out in the Declaration of Independence, such as liberty, social unity, good governance and peace, features which were severely threatened by the pressures of modern early 20th century society. Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson also wrote novels with critical depictions of American life. John Dos Passos wrote about the war and also the U.S.A. trilogy which extended into the Depression.

In Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age, Modris Eksteins notes that even "the integrity of the 'real' world, the visible and ordered world, was undermined." Everything was called into question, not just the war itself but all ideals, and even reality itself. For the war made it all seem like a lie. "Civilization" was false, modernity was dangerous, and
truth seemed to demand some new way of seeing and understanding the world. This need was perhaps the primary cause of the modern novel's radical innovations. Fiction would have to change utterly, if the very integrity of the real world had been undermined.

All human relations have shifted- those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change religion, conduct, politics, and literature." Because the world had utterly changed, writing could not go on as before; due to the war and to new social relations, "even basic descriptive nouns...had lost all power to capture reality." Old plots could not include the new experiences modernity offered up, and old styles of description could not get at the feelings and landscapes modernity created. Hypocrisies needed to be exposed, technological developments had to be interpreted, and even the very basis of civilization had to be rethought. New questions, new subjects, new perceptions had to remake fiction, and new forms were needed to make the changes possible.  

Along with the death of innocence occasioned by what was then heartbreakingly referred to as the War to End All Wars, the gentility of American fiction passed out of fashion by the 1920s. Those elegant writers of elegant stories like Henry James and Edith Wharton were either dead or on their way to being out of fashion and in their place arrived a new generation of artists shocked out of complacency and the uncritical acceptance of the dominant views on tradition, value and morality. The decade that would come to be known as the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties witnessed a revolution in American literary style and subjects that began to question many of the most cherished and dearly held beliefs about what America as an idea and experiment really meant.
2.3.1 F. SCOTT FITZGERALD:

One of the opening salvos against the establishment view came from perhaps the iconic symbol of 1920s American fiction, F. Scott Fitzgerald, who published *This Side of Paradise* in 1920 and opened the floodgates. Fitzgerald's novel was considered must-have-read material and was adopted as an unofficial guide to living by many college students. The book's central message perfectly encapsulated the new spirit of revolution that gripped its younger audience: "All gods dead, all wars fought, and all faiths in man shaken." Fitzgerald cemented his place among the gods of the literary world (those gods were not dead) with *The Great Gatsby*, which painted a portrait of the upper crust and their concerted effort to draw and maintain a dividing line between their world and the world of everybody else. Jay Gatsby is a bootlegger who attempts to use his illicit wealth to enter into a world not comfortable with such gaucherie; a world in which the illicit routes to wealth were safely distanced by a generation or two. The 1920s were in large part about unbridling capitalism and Fitzgerald's novel, while of that time, seems oddly displaced from it.

Even more disturbing and critical of the emptiness and even more intent on challenging the traditional views of a starkly defined morality was Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. This novel, later remade into the masterful film titled “A Place in the Sun” paints an even more unflattering portrait of America's obsession with upward mobility and social status. The main character, torn between his relationship with a lower class girl whom he impregnates and the upper class beauty who represents everything that Americans are taught to struggle for results in murder as a metaphor for doing what it takes to get ahead. His only failure was doing murder well.
The fiction of the period ranged from Ernest Hemingway's reportorial (and overrated) tales of disillusioned expatriates in Europe to Sherwood Anderson's brilliant re-energized dissections of small town life and the claustrophobic effects upon the psychology of the inhabitants of those idealized hamlets. Another artist who followed Anderson's path was Sinclair Lewis (not to be confused, as often happens, with Upton Sinclair) who produced a series of satirical novels that examined in detail the iconic figures found in every town in American: business leaders, doctors and preachers. His novel about evangelical hypocrisy, *Elmer Gantry*, suffers today from seeming almost quaint in its indictment of preachers who don't practice the contents of their sermons.

There is a strain of bitter reflection on the realization that American history produced unqualified episodes of evil in much of the novels produced in this era. The leading light in this corner of the American literary scene of the 1920s was William Faulkner, especially his chronicles of several generations of members of families both poor and rich in his home State of Mississippi. The Civil War and its multiple inequities informs much of the tapestry of Faulkner's work and he often uses the inhumanity of that war to draw parallels with the inhumanity of World War I and how it impacted American society.

It wasn't just long form fiction that was used to explore the darker aspects of society in post-war America. The 1920s produced much of the most powerful and acclaimed poetry in history. Four men stand at the top of this pyramid of the new breed of verse: T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost and E.E. Cummings. Eliot virtually invented stream of consciousness poetry, strongly informed by allusions to myth and history. Ezra Pound was dedicated to the creating a poetic form from the ground up, endowing 20th
Century poetry with a voice uniquely its own. At the other end of the spectrum was Robert Frost, who rejected the dense, often impenetrable style perfected by Eliot to focus on deceptively simple verse that slowly revealed its amazing depth.

Cummings attacked the conventions of language itself, creatively experimenting with everything from non-traditional diction and the actual typesetting of the printed page itself. Poetry in the 1920s made the great leap toward questioning all of the established rules of the form, pushing boundaries with the same zeal as the writers of novels.

American literature cannot accurately be said to have come of age in the 1920s; not when it had produced everyone from Ralph Waldo Emerson to Henry Melville to Edgar Allan Poe in the previous century. But it was the 1920s and the literary reaction to a world that seemed to have gone topsy turvy if not actually insane that established American literature as a profound influence upon world literature. The names that have become legendary in the world of American literature are overwhelmingly weighted toward those writers who came of age in the 1920s, and the sheer breadth of style and subject matter of those writers is nothing less than breathtaking.9

The writers of the 1920s had depicted realistic pictures of the American society in all its aspects, the changes of the society, the loss of its virginity, the struggle and the conflict between the old and the new generations and the failure of the social transactions. Those writers had experienced the changes that taken place in the American society and portray them in their own writings; one of the most famous writers was F. Scott Fitzgerald.

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in September, 1896, in St. Paul, Minnesota, the son of an entrepreneur and salesman and his wife, a distant
cousin of Francis Scott Key, author of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, for whom he was named. He displayed an interest in writing early on and in 1911, he moved to New Jersey to attend the Newman College Preparatory School. Two years later he entered Princeton University, and in 1917 he received a commission as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army. Hoping to eventually see combat in World War I, Fitzgerald was assigned to Camp Sheridan in Montgomery, Alabama, where he met Zelda Sayre, the daughter of an Alabama Supreme Court Justice. He was smitten by Zelda's charm, but was forced to turn his attention fully toward earning a living as a writer. Fitzgerald sold his first short story in 1919, and in September of that year Scribner's accepted his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, for publication. It immediately became a financial and critical success, and Fitzgerald was suddenly a literary figure of national prominence. Having achieved success as a writer, Fitzgerald resumed his courtship of Zelda Sayre, and they married in 1920. Their only child, a daughter named Scottie, was born in 1921. That same year, the Fitzgerald's undertook the first of several extended trips to Europe. On one such trip in 1925, Fitzgerald met aspiring novelist Ernest Hemingway, whose career and work he championed until Hemingway's own fame and Fitzgerald's troubled personal life weakened their friendship.

Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, was published to mixed critical reviews in 1922. Three years later, he published *The Great Gatsby*, his most popular and admired work, though it received several disappointing reviews upon publication, which discouraged him deeply. Although Fitzgerald had begun drinking heavily at Princeton, he became severely alcoholic in the mid 1920s, and his drinking, combined with his
expensive tastes and Zelda's mental instability, began to seriously affect his health, finances, and productivity.

After *Gatsby* in 1925, for example, he did not publish another novel until *Tender Is the Night* in 1934. The bulk of his income came from advances sent by his legendary editor at Scribner's, Maxwell Perkins, and from the sale of his short stories to high-paying magazines such as the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Esquire*. Between 1919 and 1939 he sold 160 stories, primarily to pay his bills and thus buy him small windows of time to work on his novels. _Desperate for income to support his lifestyle and psychologically taxed by Zelda's treatment at mental sanitariums, Fitzgerald moved to Hollywood in 1937 to work as a screenwriter for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) studios. Although he saw only one of his screenplays produced as a finished film, he continued to work on film treatments, short stories, and his last major work, the unfinished novel *The Last Tycoon*, until he died of a heart attack in December of 1940. In a posthumous collection of confessional *Esquire* pieces, *The Crack-Up*, *Fitzgerald* succinctly offered his own harsh epitaph for his last years: "Then I was drunk for many years, and then I died."

Many autobiographical details shaped the content of "Babylon Revisited." Like Charlie Wale's daughter Honoria, Fitzgerald's only child, Scottie (who was also nicknamed "Pie"), was about nine years old at the time of the story's composition, and, like Charlie, Fitzgerald was confronted with the problem of Scottie's custody after Zelda's mental instability began to accelerate in 1930. Also like Charlie, Fitzgerald was also a prosperous Irish-American expatriate, and, as the evocative description of 1930 Paris in the story suggests, Fitzgerald was also intimately familiar with such Parisian
landmarks as the Hotel Ritz, Josephine Baker's nude revue, and the club scene and restaurants of Paris nightlife.

Most centrally, however, Fitzgerald, like Charlie, also wrestled painfully with his alcoholism, and his skillful evocation of the self-delusions and strategies Charlie adopts to convince himself of his rehabilitation were drawn directly from Fitzgerald's lifelong struggle with heavy drinking. Charlie's pre-1929 Paris escapades alluded to throughout "Babylon Revisited" squandered money, bitter marital disputes, and alcohol-fueled decline are sharply autobiographical. Fitzgerald biographer Matthew Bruccoli has also pointed out that the baleful Marion Peters, Charlie's sister-in-law, was "obviously" based on Fitzgerald's own sister-in-law, Zelda's older sister Rosalind Smith, who questioned Fitzgerald's ability to raise Scottie properly.10

Critics generally agree that *The Great Gatsby* (1925) is the crowning achievement of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). It evokes not only the ambiance of the Jazz Age search for the American dream but also the larger questions of fading traditional values in the face of increasing materialism and cynicism.

*The Great Gatsby* is a story within a story. The narrator, Nick Carraway, relates his version of Jay Gatsby’s life. Nick, seeking freedom from his constricted Midwestern existence, takes a job in New York City and rents a bungalow next to the lavish mansion of the mysterious Jay Gatsby. Nick visits his wealthy cousin, Daisy Buchanan, and her husband Tom, in their nearby home. Unsettled by their seemingly purposeless lives, Nick returns home and notices Gatsby staring longingly at the Buchanans’ property across the bay.
Soon after, Nick begins attending lavish parties at Gatsby’s mansion. He agrees to invite Daisy to lunch even though he now knows that Daisy and Gatsby were once in love. Gatsby eventually tells Nick of his truly humble Midwest origins and confesses that he made his fortune in bootlegging and other nefarious ventures.

The plot comes to a head when Tom accuses Gatsby of trying to steal his wife. Daisy leaves with Gatsby, and shortly thereafter Tom learns that his mistress, Myrtle, has been killed by a hit-and-run driver. Tom blames the death on Gatsby, although Daisy was the one behind the wheel. Myrtle’s husband, thinking Gatsby was responsible, shoots Gatsby and then himself. Only Gatsby’s father attends the funeral. Nick later learns that Tom had convinced Myrtle’s husband that she and Gatsby were lovers. Disillusioned with the Buchanans and their ilk, Nick decides to return to the Midwest.

Echoes of the American Dream pervade the novel, which contrasts the supposed innocence and moral sense of the “Western” characters with the sophistication and materialism of the “Eastern” characters. Gatsby remains an “innocent” in his single-minded pursuit of Daisy despite his association with underworld characters and ill-begotten money. His pursuit takes on a mythic quality, mirroring the dream that led Americans to conquer the frontier. Initially Nick, the Midwestern moral arbiter, disdains Gatsby’s values, but he eventually comes to see something heroic in Gatsby’s vision, which reflects America’s own loss of innocence in the face of the crass materialism of the 1920s.

Early reviews of Fitzgerald’s novel were mixed. Many were put off by Fitzgerald’s reputation as a writer of stories for popular magazines. It was not until the 1950s that the novel began to attract serious critical attention. Critics have praised Fitzgerald’s tightly woven narrative, and many have
focused on the position of the narrator and the subjective limitations of his observations. Although *Great Gatsby* was for many years called “a novel of the Jazz Age,” critics now agree that it has universal appeal. While scholars continue to explore the influences of biography and other writers on the text, it has come to be commonly read through the lenses of emerging branches of literary theory, such as deconstruction, feminist critique, and discourse analysis.¹¹

*This Side of Paradise* (1920) marked the novelistic debut of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), an American writer known for examining an entire generation's search for the elusive American dream of wealth and happiness. Written while Fitzgerald was serving in the army during World War I, the book launched his reputation and was the most successful of his novels during his lifetime.

*This Side of Paradise* is the story of a self-absorbed young man named Amory Blaine, who abandons his simple Midwestern roots to pursue his education. The first half of the book traces Amory's boarding school education and his experiences as part of an elite circle at Princeton University, where he serves on the staff of the college newspaper. His early successes and failures, both social and academic, are detailed, including his burgeoning love of poetry and journalism and his relationships with several women. This section of the book also recounts Amory's service in the army during World War I and his close relationship to his spiritual mentor, Monsignor Darcy.

The second half of the novel chronicles Amory's life after the war, including his love for the debutante Rosalind Connage. When Rosalind abandons Amory for a wealthy rival, Amory descends into depression and alcoholism. His inability to overcome his feelings for Rosalind eventually
contributes to the demise of his subsequent relationship with the intellectual Eleanor Ramilly. As the novel winds to a close, Amory is crushed by the news of Rosalind's marriage and Monsignor Darcy's death. The book ends with Amory’s philosophical reflections on philosophy, literature, and his own future.

Scholars have noted the many parallels between Fitzgerald and his character, and biographical criticism of the work has been a mainstay of scholarship of the novel. Critics have also been interested in the unusual hybrid form of the book, which includes a series of letters and a section written in a format borrowed from drama. Upon its publication, *This Side of Paradise* was an immediate popular and critical success, and the jaded, rebellious "flaming youth" of the new era embodied in the novel was soon widely imitated. Fitzgerald quickly became the spokesman for the Jazz Age and was plunged into the world of rich and careless sophisticates who were to people his later fiction.¹²

2.3.2 EDITH WHARTON:

Edith Wharton was a member of the New York leisure class that would become the subject of much of her fiction. Few American women obtained university educations in the decades when Wharton was coming of age; her schooling was conducted by private tutors employed by her parents. As a child, this future practitioner of the supernatural tale had a terrible fear of ghosts and ghost stories. In an essay entitled "Life and I" Wharton reminisced that "till I was twenty seven or eight, I could not sleep in the room with a book containing a ghost story, and I have frequently had to burn books of this kind, because it frightened me to know that they were downstairs in the library?" Still, the young woman discovered a talent for
literature, privately publishing a volume of poetry at the age of sixteen and placing her first short story in *Scribner's* magazine at twenty-eight.

In 1885 she married Edward Wharton, a wealthy Bostonian sportsman. The marriage ended in divorce in 1912, by which time Wharton was well established as a writer. Important friendships of Wharton's middle and later years included one with Bernard Berenson, connoisseur and art historian, and Henry James, master of the international novel of manners and author of short stories, including the supernatural classic *The Turn of the Screw*.

Wharton's fiction has often been compared to that of James, whom she met in 1904. Indeed, in her critical volume *The Writing of Fiction*, Wharton speaks of her craft as derived from James, who felt, she said, "every great novel must be based on a profound sense of moral values, and then constructed with a classical unity and economy of means." In Wharton's work that "sense of moral values" involves scrutiny of the ethical corruption of the American leisure class, and of the role of women in that class. In her greatest novels, *The House of Mirth* and *The Age of Innocence*, Wharton indicts the wealthy families of New York as hypocritical, exclusionary, and materialistic.

After her marriage ended, Wharton took up permanent residence in France. During World War I, she organized relief efforts in France and worked to help Belgian orphans, work for which she was decorated with the Legion of Honor by the French government. In 1921 Wharton became the first female winner of the Pulitzer Prize in literature for *The Age of Innocence*. She died in 1937 at St. Brice-sous-Forêt in France.¹³

*The Age of Innocence* (1920) is regarded by many critics to be the best novel by American author Edith Wharton (1862-1937). Set in New York
City in the 1870s, the novel examines the influence of societal values and cultural mores on representative members of the city's upper class during the nineteenth century. From her perspective as one born into the nineteenth-century social elite of "old New York," Wharton offers keen insights into the shift of power and wealth from established society families to the nouveau riche of the Industrial Revolution during this period. At the same time, the novel explores issues of hypocrisy and fidelity, centering on the conflict between personal desire and social obligation.

*The Age of Innocence* revolves around an illicit love affair between two members of New York society. Newland Archer is a socially prominent young lawyer engaged to be married to pretty, respectable May Welland. As the novel unfolds Archer falls in love with May's cousin, the countess Ellen Olenska, whose European sophistication and apparent self-assurance are at once both attractive and threatening to him. Indeed May and Ellen come to symbolize opposing possibilities in Archer's future. One side to which he and his fiancée belong, offers the predictable life of propriety, tradition, and social responsibility; on the other is the realm of intellectual and moral freedom and personal fulfillment he imagines he could enjoy with Ellen. Ultimately Ellen returns to Europe, while Archer, remaining in New York, resigns himself to life as a faithful husband, a loving father, and an upstanding citizen. Years later, following the death of his wife, Archer has one last opportunity to pursue his love of Ellen. At the novel's conclusion, however, he resolves not to pursue a reality that might not live up to a lifetime of dreams.

*The Age of Innocence* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1921. The novel has enjoyed both popular acclaim and critical recognition throughout the twentieth century. Criticism of *The Age of Innocence* often focuses on
the autobiographical aspects of the novel. Over the years some critics have drawn parallels between Wharton and Ellen Olenska. Other commentators, though generally agreeing that Wharton's depiction of the 1870s New York social scene was accurate in detail and manner, suggest that the novel was essentially her nostalgic attempt to ignore postwar realities.\textsuperscript{14}

2.3.3 EUGENE O’NEILL:

A prolific author whose work explores the struggle to attain selfhood in the face of an indifferent universe, Eugene O’Neill (1883-1953) is regarded as one of America’s most important dramatists. Critics view O’Neill as a pessimistic writer, particularly given the bleak vision of the world presented in his plays. Although he was a mediocre student, O’Neill was well read in his adolescent years, gaining an early knowledge and appreciation of the theater from his father, who was a professional actor. O’Neill’s home life was somewhat difficult, and, as his posthumously published play \textit{Long Day’s Journey into Night} (1956) reveals, he was deeply affected by his mother’s mental illness. His academic career was largely unsuccessful, and he was dismissed from Princeton University after failing his examinations. Later, after his marriage failed, O’Neill attempted suicide. Escaping from his troubled family situation, he lived for some time as a seaman and panhandler, experiences that helped furnish the plots of several plays. His life was inalterably changed when he suffered a bout of tuberculosis; while recovering in a sanatorium, he decided to become a dramatist.

After studying at Harvard, where he participated in George Pierce Baker’s drama workshop, O’Neill began to write his first series of plays. Many of them, including \textit{Thirst, and Other One Act Plays} (1914), are considered flawed by their adherence to nineteenth-century melodrama, but
several of them, such as *Bound East for Cardiff* (1916), were notable for their depiction of ordinary people down on their luck.

O’Neill found greater success with his longer plays of the 1920s, including *The Emperor Jones* (1920), which experimented with symbolism; *The Hairy Ape* (1922), an expressionistic play that details the struggles of a laborer who is ultimately destroyed by industrial progress; and *Desire under the Elms* (1924), which explores repressive sexual mores in a New England town.

During what critics have called his “cosmic” period, O’Neill produced a series of sprawling plays dealing with the dilemma of the individual struggling against the workings of fate. Many of these plays exceeded the usual length of traditional productions and experimented with the stream-of-consciousness monologue and other theatrical techniques. *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), for example, explores sexual passion and jealousy in an old New England family. O’Neill’s next offering, *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933), was perhaps atypical of this period for its nostalgic exploration of adolescence, but most critics found the play to be one of his least affected and therefore most successful works.

O’Neill was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1936, the first American to receive the honor, but his reputation declined after the mid-1930s. Hindered by family problems and by his own health problems and alcoholism, O’Neill abruptly abandoned society for several years after 1934. Despite his personal and familial troubles, he continued to work at his craft, producing a cycle of one-act plays, including *Hughie* (1958), which is considered a small masterpiece. Many of the plays O’Neill wrote during his retreat were overlooked until after his death in 1953. One of these, *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), is regarded as his great masterpiece for its
examination of the vulnerability of human illusions. Another play, the autobiographical *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, spurred a renewed interest in O’Neill’s later plays, particularly as it shed light on his family turmoil. While many critics have faulted O’Neill for his somewhat pretentious experimentation with language, literary devices, and structure, most critics consider his realistic plays to be among the best drama produced in the twentieth century.¹⁵

*The emperor Jones* by O’Neill although it generally not considered the best play by Eugene O’Neill, *The Emperor Jones* is perhaps his most controversial and cutting-edge. Why? This is because it did not marginalize African and African-American culture in a time when openly racist minstrel shows were still considered acceptable entertainment.

Originally performed in the early 1920s, the play details the rise and fall of Brutus Jones, an African American railway worker who becomes a thief, a killer, an escaped convict, and after journeying to the West Indies, the self-proclaimed ruler of an island. Although Jones' character is villainous and desperate, his corrupt value system has been derived by observing upper-class white Americans. As the island people rebel against Jones, he becomes a hunted man -- and undergoes a transformation towards savageness.

*The Emperor Jones* is at once a gripping drama about an oppressed American black, a modern tragedy about a hero with a flaw, an expressionist quest play probing to the racial roots of the protagonist; above all, it is more highly theatrical than its European analogues, gradually quickening the tom-tom from normal pulse-rhythm, stripping away colorful costume to the naked man beneath, subordinating dialogue to innovative lighting in order to illuminate an individual and his racial heritage.
2.3.4 THOMAS STERNS ELIOT:

T. S. Eliot is one of the giants of modern literature, highly distinguished as poet, literary critic, dramatist, and editor/publisher. In 1910-1911, while still a student, he wrote *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and other poems which are landmarks in the history of literature. In these college poems, written with virtually no influence from his contemporaries (William Butler Yeats was well-known, but not yet modern; Ezra Pound at this time was neither well-known nor modern), Eliot articulated distinctly modern themes in forms which were both a striking development of and a striking departure from those of nineteenth-century poetry. Within a few years, he had composed another landmark poem, *Gerontion* (1920), and within a decade, the century's most famous and influential poem, *The Waste Land* (1922). While the origins of *The Waste Land* are in a sense personal, the voices projected are universal.

Perhaps without having intended to do so, Eliot diagnosed the malaise of his generation and indeed of Western civilization in the twentieth century. In 1930 he published his next major poem, *Ash-Wednesday*, written after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. Conspicuously different in style and tone from his earlier work, these confessional lyrics chart his continued search for order in an age of chaos. The culmination of this search as well as of Eliot's poetic writing is his great meditation on the nature of time and of human history, *Four Quartets* (1936-1942). With *Four Quartets*, Eliot virtually concluded his career as a poet.¹⁶

Because of his wide-ranging contributions to poetry, criticism, prose, and drama, some critics consider Thomas Sterns Eliot one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century. *The Waste Land* can arguably be cited as his most influential work. When Eliot published this complex poem
in 1922—first in his own literary magazine *Criterion*, then a month later in wider circulation in the *Dial*—it set off a critical firestorm in the literary world.

The work is commonly regarded as one of the seminal works of modernist literature. Indeed, when many critics saw the poem for the first time, it seemed too modern. In the place of a traditional work, with unified themes and a coherent structure, Eliot produced a poem that seemed to incorporate many unrelated, little-known references to history, religion, mythology, and other disciplines. He even wrote parts of the poem in foreign languages, such as Hindu. In fact the poem was so complex that Eliot felt the need to include extensive notes identifying the sources to which he was alluding, a highly unusual move for a poet, and a move that caused some critics to assert that Eliot was trying to be deliberately obscure or was playing a joke on them.

Yet, while the poem is obscure, critics have identified several sources that inspired its creation and which have helped determine its meaning. Many see the poem as a reflection of Eliot's disillusionment with the moral decay of post–World War I Europe. In the work, this sense of disillusionment manifests itself symbolically through a type of Holy Grail legend. Eliot cited two books from which he drew to create the poem's symbolism:

- Jessie L. Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* (1920); and

The 1922 version of *The Waste Land* was also significantly influenced by Eliot's first wife Vivien and by his friend Ezra Pound, who helped Eliot edit the original 800-line draft down to the published 433 lines. While *The
Waste Land is widely available today, perhaps one of the most valuable editions for students is the Norton Critical Edition, which was published by W. W. Norton in 2000. In addition to the poem, this edition also includes annotated notes from editors and from Eliot, a publication history, a chronology, a selected bibliography, and a collection of reprinted reviews from the 1920s to the end of the twentieth century.

An attempt to examine, line by line, the specific meaning of every reference and allusion in The Waste Land would certainly go beyond the intended scope of this entry. Instead, it is more helpful to examine the overall meaning of each of the five sections of the poem, highlighting some of the specific references as examples. But first a discussion of the poem's title The Waste Land is necessary.

The title refers to a myth from From Ritual to Romance, in which Weston describes a kingdom where the genitals of the king, known as the Fisher King, have been wounded in some way. This injury, which affects the king's fertility, also mythically affects the kingdom itself. With its vital, regenerative power gone, the kingdom has dried up and turned into a waste land. In order for the land to be restored, a hero must complete several tasks, or trials. Weston notes that this ancient myth was the basis for various other quest stories from many cultures, including the Christian quest for the Holy Grail. Eliot says he drew heavily on this myth for his poem, and critics have noted that many of the poem's references refer to this idea.

From the time it was published until the twenty century, The Waste Land has inspired both passion and hatred. Jewel Spears Brooker sums it up best in her entry on Eliot for Dictionary of Literary Biography: "The Wasteland was taken by some critics as a tasteless joke, by others as a masterpiece expressing the disillusionment of a generation. As
far as Eliot was concerned, it was neither." As many critics have cited, Eliot viewed the poem as a catharsis, a way to release much of his frustration and stress that had ultimately led to his nervous breakdown. Yet, while this is what Eliot said, his decision to include extensive notes with the poem, which identified the source of many of the poem's obscure or confusing references, seemed to ascribe great meaning to the poem. The author notes also invited negative criticism.

Many critics, like Conrad Aiken, felt that Eliot's notes and indeed, many of the references in the poem itself were unnecessary. As Aiken notes in his now-famous 1922 review in *New Republic*: "Mr. Eliot's sense of the literary past has become so overmastering as almost to constitute the motive of the work." Aiken sees this approach as involving "a kind of idolatry of literature with which it is a little difficult to sympathize." As testament to the complexity and controversy of the poem, however, Aiken's overall review is positive. He notes that Eliot's focus on all of these references "has colored an important and brilliant piece of work." Yet, Aiken says that, when these "reservations have all been made, we accept *The Waste Land* as one of the most moving and original poems of our time.

In fact, the originality of the poem is a key to understanding the divided reactions that it received. The poem is largely credited with helping launch the modern literature movement, a fact that cannot be understated and about which many critics speak in grand terms. For example, Nancy Duvall Hargrove says in her entry on Eliot for *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, the poems "originality shook the foundations of the literary world." Likewise, in *America* James S. Torrens says, "A bombshell burst upon the world of modern poetry 75 years ago." And in his *New York Review of Books* review of the 1971 restored and expanded version
of *The Waste Land*, Richard Ellmann says of Eliot, "Lloyd's most famous bank clerk revalued the poetic currency" with the initial publication of his poem.

Yet the aspects of the poem that make it "modern" also have led to the greatest amount of confusion and conflict among critics. As Helen Vendler says in her *Time* article on Eliot, the poem's many references focus on the past, but it is "a past so disarranged, with the Buddha next to St. Augustine, and Ovid next to Wagner, that a reader felt thrust into a time machine of disorienting simultaneity." This focus on the past seemed to be intentional, as John Xiros Cooper discusses in his book *T. S. Eliot and the Politics of Voice: The Argument of 'The Waste Land*. 'Cooper says:

Unlike the older generation, who saw in events like the Great War the passing of a golden age, Eliot saw only that the golden age was itself a heap of absurd sociopolitical axioms and perverse misreading of the cultural past that had proved in the last instance to be made of the meanest alloy.\(^{17}\)

In other words, Eliot was rebelling against the tendency to glorify the past. He wanted to demonstrate that the past was gritty and real, especially the recent past events of World War I. By demythologizing the events of the past, Eliot forces his readers to focus on the grim realities of his postwar present.\(^{18}\)

**2.3.5 EARNEST HEMINGWAY:**

Earnest Hemingway was a novelist and short-story writer. The son of an Oak Park, Illinois, doctor, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, known for his devotion to hunting and fishing, and of Grace Hall Hemingway, whose interests were music and religion, Ernest Hemingway made an unusual combination of these outdoor and indoor interests in his life and career.
Educated at the local public schools, he was particularly active at Oak Park High, where he played football and began writing news columns, chiefly in imitation of Ring Lardner. He also wrote some light verse and several short stories, a few of which contain hints of the style he was later to make his hallmark.

Hemingway spent many summers on Walloon Lake in upper Michigan, where he was later to set several of his better-known short stories. He decided against college, and went to Kansas City after graduation from high school. There he found employment on the Kansas City Star, then one of the country's leading newspapers, and received valuable training for his eventual career. He was repeatedly rejected by the army, but finally was able to get into the war as an ambulance driver and was severely wounded at Fossalta di Piave, Italy, just before his nineteenth birthday. He was decorated by the Italians for heroism, and after hospitalization in Milan he served with the Italian infantry until the Armistice.19

Whether analyzing the juxtaposition of love and war, general and specific, or authenticity and delusion, critics of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* often recognize the inherent dualities of the novel. In his essay "The Symbolic Structure of *A Farewell to Arms*," Carlos Baker argues that Hemingway's structure for the novel is developed around a series of contrasting situations indicating a continuous dichotomy that Baker labels as home and not-home. Baker states, "Despite the insistent, denotative matter-of-factness at the surface of the presentation, the subsurface activity of *A Farewell to Arms* is organized connotatively around two poles". Baker further suggests that "throughout, Hemingway has worked totally by suggestion, implication, and quiet repetition, putting the reader into potential awareness".
It is argued that Baker's proposal for a symbolic home or not-home equation can be further extended and viewed as a sense of normalcy (home) versus the absurd (not-home). Further, as the plot of *A Farewell to Arms* unfolds, Hemingway produces a dichotomy where a sense of normalcy and structure is an illusion and the reality is absurd and chaotic. Through Frederic Henry's narration, Hemingway illustrates the indistinct separation of what we may consider the real as opposed to the illusory.

The question of what is "real" and what is "illusion" permeates the novel. Generally reserved for philosophical debate, these questions offer the novel a reflective drama in which the characters find their lives profoundly affected because without confronting these questions, they cannot escape the consequences of indifference or ignorance; instead, their lives become inauthentic. As Robert Lewis asserts, "In Hemingway's fiction, one may act and strive and cope, but one is not fully human, an authentic being, until one can see beyond appearance to essence". Catherine and Frederic are drawn to each other through an illusion of love, seduction, and comfort that offers Catherine solace after the death of her fiancé and Frederic a distraction from the war.

After Frederic's injury, his desire for Catherine and the comfort that she offers transforms from a needed distraction to something undeniably real. Frederic's growth in understanding and move toward authenticity complements the novel's progression. Whereas at the start of the novel, the adherence to a structured world--picturesque landscapes, bars, and whorehouses conflicts with the background of an escalating war, after returning from the hospital, Frederic becomes more aware of the vulgarity of war and the absence of the illusions.
The resonating theme of *A Farewell to Arms* echoes Hemingway's disdain for the abstract notions of faith and honor that contrast with the concrete facts of war. As Frederic comes to terms with the meaninglessness of abstract ideas, such as duty and conscience towards one's office, he must deal with the futility of life. Peter Griffin writes, "[Frederic] acknowledges the absurdity of war only to encounter, with the death of his wife and child, the absurdity of peace". The differences between reality and illusion become indistinguishable for Frederic when truth and fantasy result in absurdity.

From the opening description of the countryside, Frederic's narration of life at war reads more as a vacation recital than an account of battle: "In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels". Seemingly more important than the threats of combat are the drinking and discussions in the officers' club. Mirroring the insignificance of the encroaching war, Frederic's initial meetings with Catherine come across as a frivolous game. Both characters are aware of the surrounding seriousness of events, but, at the same time, Frederic and Catherine participate in a mutual fantasy. In tears, Catherine tells Frederic, "We're going to have a strange life". When Frederic receives his wounds, the war becomes increasingly real; likewise, while in the hospital, Catherine and Frederic see their relationship blossom into something more genuine. Frederic returns to the front, and all illusions have been stripped away.

The chaos and disorder become tangible. A sense of self-preservation replaces Frederic's stoicism. His adherence to the ideals of duty that brought him back to the front now seems irrational. The symbolism of removing the
officer's insignias accompanies Frederic's resolve: "I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through". Federica’s thoughts are of returning to the comfort of Catherine. When he returns to her, they remove themselves from the war completely to bask in a pseudo-extension of their ongoing fantasy and partake in a happier time.

The complications of labor and the subsequent death of Catherine left Frederic in the same type of dislocation that starts the narration: "This was the end of the trap. This was what people got for loving each other". Catherine's death fails to become a catalyst for a great change or revelation; instead, Frederic leaves alone. By following Frederic's cyclical journey through *A Farewell to Arms*, the reader is thrust in and out of fantasy and nightmare. Frederic's fortunes alternately rise and fall with the narrative structure, emphasizing the idea that home is an illusion, whereas not-home is the reality of pain and suffering.

Underlying the dichotomy of reality and illusion is the inescapable sense of the absurd. Peter Messent argues that for Hemingway the character exists helplessly in "an anxious and passive relationship" to the world. Messent further argues that "[Hemingway's] fictional subjects are peculiarly and strongly alienated from the everyday world [. . .] and seem to exist in a type of ideological vacuum because of their inability to find any meaningful and positive connection with the larger public arena". Frederic's sense of reality and illusion result in the same futile feeling of hopelessness and emptiness. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway shows that happiness is an illusion based solely on perspective, and that the illusion offers only a temporary shelter from the real.20
2.3.6 DOS PASSOS:

Novelist, poet, playwright and essayist. Grandson of a Portuguese immigrant, Dos Passos was born in Chicago and educated at Harvard. As a child and known as John Roderigo Madison, he lived a rootless life, traveling much in Europe. His mother, Lucy Addison Sprigg Madison, a widow, could not marry his father, John Roderigo Dos Passos, until his first wife died. The couple finally married in 1910, when their son was fourteen, and in 1912 the boy took his father's name. Any happiness young John had was short-lived because his mother died in 1915.

The secrecy surrounding his boyhood and the mixture of admiration and fear Dos Passos felt toward his powerful father--an important corporate lawyer and the author of standard books on trusts and the stock market and his dependence on his beautiful, often unhappy mother left their marks on the adolescent. A comparatively timid boy, Dos Passos found his excitement in the art of the time, and his greatest joy in his writing. His early poems, along with those of E.E. Cummings and others, appeared in 1917 in the collection Eight Harvard Poets. This was shortly after Dos Passos was graduated from Harvard during the 1920s.

Dos Passos lived by his writing publishing a collection of poems, travel essays and collections, and two of his three plays that proved important to the development of American theater: The Garbage Man: A Parade with Shouting (1926, produced as The Moon Is a Gong) and Airways, Inc. (1928). Fortune Heights followed in 1933. Strongly influenced by the work of John Howard Lawson and by Cummings' play Him, Dos Passos drew into his plays elements from the real world and created remarkable pastiches of popular culture. His most important work was to
begin shortly after his involvement in theater, however, when he used the dramatic montage technique in his fiction.21

One cannot legitimately discuss American anti-war novels without the inclusion of John Dos Passos’s *Three Soldiers* (1921). Set in WWI, the novel entered a market hungry for tales of the war, but one unprepared for this depiction of the war and the military machine in general.

When reading a war novel or viewing a war movie, one expects physical action. Readers anticipate scenes of battles and the resulting carnage, but what they get in *Three Soldiers* is a different type of action in that the novel focuses on the effect the military machine has on different types of people represented by the *Three Soldiers*, Andrews, Chrisfield, and Fuselli. These three are followed as the machine aims to stamp out individuality in order to make each man function as a unit with a single mind. Although the three are close in age, twenty-two, twenty, and nineteen, respectively, they are worlds apart in socioeconomic status, education, geographic origin, and ethnic background; therefore, it should come as no surprise that each reacts differently to the shaping up.

After absorbing page after page, one reader is always brave enough to ask: "When does something happen?" Translated this means when do the soldiers see action? Actually, much has happened. In reality a person is not drafted, given a gun, and sent to fight, for each individual must go through a process, a process that promotes conformity. In the novel John Andrews, pianist and composer in civilian life, is washing windows at a stateside army post.

Controversial when published because of its anti-war message, *Three Soldiers* provides the reader with an accurate description of life in the trenches. It excludes glorious battle scenes and acts of heroism in the throes
of war and focuses instead on the cost of war to humanity, not only in terms of lives lost or the life-altering injuries sustained, but also it portrays the crushing of individuality, the dissipation of morality, and the tedious daily activities that keep the military machine oiled.

The conditions Dos Passes describes are existent in any war, which gives the text universality and accounts for its influence on literature and film that succeeded its publication. The weapons and methods of warfare have changed between WWI and the present, but the novel still can help us to understand the life of military men and women serving in Iraq. Like the fictional characters in Three Soldiers, they endure dust, fear, and endless hours of waiting.\textsuperscript{22}

2.3.7 WILLIAM FAULKNER:

William Faulkner one of the great American novelists of the twentieth century, was also a screenwriter. The first of four brothers, he was born in New Albany, Mississippi, the son of Murry Cuthbert and Maud Butler Falkner. They were a prominent Mississippi family with interests in banking and the railroad. Faulkner's father became secretary and then business manager of the University of Mississippi in Oxford after a somewhat checkered vocational career that included working for the family railroad and running a livery stable.

William Faulkner spent most of his life in the town of Oxford, Mississippi, where he went to high school through the eleventh grade. In 1918 his childhood sweetheart, Estelle Oldham, became engaged to an established lawyer after Faulkner refused to elope with her. He tried to join the U.S. Army Signal Corps, but was rejected. He enlisted in the Canadian RAF, but World War I ended before he finished his training. At about this time he added the "u" to his family name.
In 1919 he published his first poem and entered the University of Mississippi as a special student; his withdrawal the next year marked the end of his formal education. After a brief stint working at the Fifth Avenue Doubleday Bookstore in New York City, Faulkner returned to Mississippi and went to work as a postmaster, a job that does not seem to have interfered with his writing. In 1924 at the expense of his friend Phil Stone, *The Marble Faun*, a poetry collection, was published by Four Seas Company. His first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, was published in 1926. Faulkner traveled for a while in Europe, and then lived for about a year in New Orleans. *Mosquitoes* (1927) was written in this time, and by 1927 he had finished his first major work, "Flags in the Dust," (the first revision of *Sartoris*, 1929).

While at work on *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) he married his former sweetheart shortly after her divorce in 1929. She had two children from her first marriage. In 1931 the Faulkner’s first child died a few days after birth. In 1933 their daughter, Jill, was born. From his marriage came an almost lifelong preoccupation with the need for money. The Faulkner’s home life was made more stressful by their mutual and excessive dependence on alcohol, and these two factors had a great deal to do with Faulkner's need and sometime desire to get away to Hollywood and make money.23

**2.4 SUMMARY:**

Based on a detailed study carried out on the contemporary American writers of 1920s, the researcher has attempted to examine various aspects of the American life and society affected by the World War I thus, depicting the realistic picture of the American society in 1920s, the hollowness and materialism of the individuals. It can be clearly noticed that the American society had examined a struggle between the old and the new generations.
and all those aspects led to the failure of the social transactions in the American society.

In the next Chapter, the researcher will undertake a detailed study of the most dominant American writer of the 1920s, Willa Cather who was also a Pulitzer Prize winner.

2.5 REFERENCES:

2 *Id.*, at 1.
4 Supra note 1 at 8.
5 *Id.*, at 10.
6 *Id.*, at 20.
7 *Id.*, at 22.
8 *Id.*, at 22 and 23.
11 Fitzgerald, Francis Scott Key; Fitzgerald, F. Scott Key; Fitzgerald, Francis Scott; *LitFinder Contemporary Collection*.
15 Supra note 13.

