American literature has stressed the diversity and uniqueness of the American character and experience. The Puritans attempted to demonstrate that God ordained their emigration and had intended that their communities stand as examples of holiness and right for the rest of the world. In revolutionary times, this idea of specialness came to include unique American types, such as the Yankee, and a belief that the country was destined to produce a new literature. As it matured, American literature followed the major movements of Western literature in the 19th century—Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism. American writers, however, concentrated on the American scene and sought to affirm a distinct national identity.

The colonial period extends from the Virginia and Massachusetts settlements of the 17th century through the Great Awakening, a religious revival in the 1740s, and its aftermath. Although dominated by Puritan Calvinistic doctrine, early American literature was not confined to religious subjects. The religious writings as well as the more secular chronicles are the history of exceptional individuals who rose above the physically difficult and spiritually demanding environment of the New World. These early writers set the tone and rhetoric and foreshadowed the major concerns of later American writing. The memorable works of the colonial period depicted the conditions of life in the New World.

The American Revolutionary period extends from the first agitations by patriots in the early 1760s through the adoption of the constitution in 1787. It was, however, Thomas Paine’s pamphlet,
Common Sense, advocating American independence, that had greatest revolutionary impact in the colonies and that received the most attention abroad. The revolution itself fostered an outpouring of patriotic verse, much of it consisting of satirical attacks on the loyalists. American literature during this period continued to be expressed largely in histories, journals, personal diaries, letters, and political writing conceived in the revolutionary spirit.

The years from the adoption of the constitution (1787) to the period of Jacksonian nationalism (1826-36), mark the emergence of a self-consciously national literature. The poet John Barlow, who was, like John Trumbull, one of the Connecticut Wits, greeted the new United States with his epic The Columbiad (1807), a reworking of his earlier The Version of Columbus (1787). Other writings strove to develop an American literature but did not concentrate on strictly American subjects, using instead, the universal themes of romance, virtue, vice, and seduction that pervaded popular novels in England and on the continent. William Hill Brown’s The Power of Sympathy (1789), an imitation of Goethe’s Sorrows of Young Werther, is regarded by some as the first American novel. The first professional novelist was Charles Brockden Brown, whose gothic and philosophical romances, beginning with Wieland (1798), anticipated Edgar Allan Poe. Early in the 19th century, Washington Irving gained European recognition as America’s first genuine man of letters. A History of New York (1809) is a whimsical satire of pedantic historians and literary classics. William Cullen Bryant emerged in the 1820s as a poet of international stature. His Thanatopsis (1817) influenced by the English Graveyard Poets, linked American literature to the emerging English Romanticism. Still, despite European influences, American writers attempted to create a distinctive literature
during a time of rising literary nationalism. Noah Webster contributed an American Dictionary of the English Language (1828), in which the nationalist theme was echoed by William Ellery Channing, Edward Everett, and most memorably by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard. The American Scholar (1837), which Oliver Wendell Holmes called ‘Our Intellectual Declaration of Independence.’ James Fenimore Cooper was the first important American novelist to succeed with subjects and settings that are largely American. Cooper achieved international prominence with his second novel, The Spy (1821), a tale of the revolution.

American Renaissance, also known as the American Romantic Movement, began with the maturing of American literature in the 1830s and 1840s and ended with its flowering in the 1850s. During the 1830s, Ralph Waldo Emerson established himself as the spokesman for Transcendentalism, first set forth in his essay, Nature (1836). Each individual, Emerson said, finds his or her own way to transcendence through self-knowledge, self-reliance, and the contemplation of nature. Henry David Thoreau came closest to putting ideas into practice. After two intermittent years at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts, he wrote Walden or Life in the Woods (1854). In this book, Thoreau observes nature from the viewpoint of a naturalist philosopher reflecting on the quiet desperation of humanity and the transcended solace of the natural world.

It was Herman Melville, who rejected Emerson’s philosophy. His first novel, Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life (1846), based on his own adventures after deserting his ship while on a whaling voyage, challenged the spiritual substance of Christianity. Melville continued to write of the sea and adventure, but now with increasing
philosophical complexity and a mixture of allegory and symbolism. The culmination of his growth came in *Moby Dick* (1851). This philosophical adventure satisfied the age’s aspiration for a great epic of nature and America, yet its greatness was not recognized at the time. At his death in 1891, he was virtually unknown. He left behind poetry on civil war themes, notably *Battle Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1866), and the short, unfinished novel *Billy Budd*. These and other late manuscripts, neglected for years, were rediscovered in the 1920s by critics and scholars, whose reassessments established Melville as a superior American writer whose works were overflowed with a tinge of naturalism.

Post civil-war literature is roughly the period from the rise of realism to the advent of naturalism up to World War First. The civil-war itself affected literature less than did the industrial expansion that came in its aftermath. Mark Twain drew extensively from his personal experiences made explicit in his works like *On His Own Travel for the Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *Tom Sawyer* (1872), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). *Huckleberry Finn* is considered, by many critics, to be the first modern American novel. It is, more than likely, the best known and is undoubtedly one of the great American literary achievements. The choice of the penname Mark Twain by Samuel Clemens followed a practice common among the American humorist who wrote during the 19th century. The history of American fiction is a steady progress towards realism. The hazy and mysterious atmosphere in the novels of Hawthorne and Melville was replaced by the stark social realism of Mark Twain which, again, gave in to the new social realism of 1890s. In the 1890s novels emphasizing a harsher view of reality began to appear marking the
beginning of the American naturalism. Stephen Crane’s *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1895) was immediately recognized as classic. Frank Norris more nearly exhibited the features of naturalism than did Crane, especially in *Mc Teague* (1899), *The Octopus* (1901), and the *Pit* (1903). Norris’ works often concerned with the Darwinian struggle for survival, focus upon human greed, depravity, and suffering. Theodore Dreiser created the most striking naturalistic works, beginning with *Sister Carrie* (1900), and culminating in an *American Tragedy* (1925). Dreiser’s works reflect compassion and an understanding of human motivations. They analyze with dramatic insight, the dilemma of the individual in contemporary society. Social protest and utopianism went hand in hand with naturalism. Two American expatriates in London, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, became leading poets of the century. Eliot’s *The Wasteland* (1922), represents the extreme of complexity and profundity in modern literature.

The naturalistic novel of this decade resulted straightway into the modernist novel of the early decades of the twentieth century. The origin of modernism in America lies in the last decade of the 19th century. The factors, which contributed to modernity in literature, or to the ‘modernist sensibility’ in America, of which Ernest Hemingway is the finest example, began to appear immediately after the civil-war.

The last two decades of the 19th century in Europe as well as in America were decades of large intellectual changes. The American society, in particular, moved in the direction of technolization, urbanization, and secularization, which, ultimately resulted in modernization. The process is so closely linked with the American society that modernization and Americanization are often considered as synonymous. It was an ideological change American society had to alter
the earlier policies and ideologies so that new America was born. As a critic suggested, America was born in the country and moved into the city.\(^1\)

The old agrarian society was transformed into the industrial one. It was a move from homestead to small town and to the city. In demography (statistics of birth, death, disease etc.), it has to deal with population explosion vastly exploded by immigration and focused in cities like Chicago, New York etc. Culturally, it was the break down of Boston as a center of cultural and intellectual activities. The Americans also witnessed and accepted the new world-view more secular and scientific than the previous one which was Puritan and based on Christianity. All this was reflected in literature of time. The general world prevalent at this time in America is summed up in literature by the term ‘naturalism’ which explains the nature of relationship between man and nature and the social factors, which surround the life of an individual. Naturalism is the late 19\(^{th}\) century modernism. It also led way up to the truly native literature in America. The cultural, ‘self-reliance’, which was so fondly discussed and desired by the nineteenth century thinkers like Emerson, and emerged in the works of poets like Whitman, was prominently felt in America during the 1920s. This decade is remarkable not only because it provided all time classics, but also because it was the most critical phase in American history, as indeed, in the history of entire West. Unforeseen problems in a variety of manners were now available in arts and literature of the decade. It is not always profitable to study a decade as a period of time isolated from history, because time is a continuous process and its effects on history is to be traced all along at large. 1920s is an exception. The world changed at a rapid space towards the end of 19\(^{th}\) century and results were felt intensely by the generation of
thinkers and artists whose works appeared in 1920s. The seeds of change were sown as early as in the mid-nineteenth century when the process of Industrial Revolution had set in. The labour pain began towards the end when Matthew Arnold confessed being caught in the two worlds: “one dead, other powerless to be born.”

The baby was finally born as the new century dawned upon the world, and in 1920s it came of age. Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Sir James Frazer, and in America, William James, are among those who had fathered the baby. The final stroke came from the First World War, which hastened the process of change, at faster speed. G.S. Frazer’s description of the effects of the war on England can not be very different from its effects from the American society:

The Great War unsettled society in many ways. It has a great liberating effect; it hastened the emancipation of woman; it promoted a temporary merging of social classes. Young men from humble background received commissions; young officers like Graves and Sassoon gained a questioning attitude towards their inherited code. But above all, the First World War shattered Great Britain’s rational self-confidence and produced doubts, uncertainty, and confusion. Instead of the thoughtless hopefulness of the Edwardian decade there was ‘a new realism’-a tendency to think of man as a strictly limited creature. Man was no longer a giant figure striding to perfection, though he might achieve certain decency through harsh self-discipline.

American literature of the 1920s was characterized by disillusionment to the war and adopted the despairing tone of *The Wasteland* (1922), one of the best poems of the 20th century by an American born English poet and critic T.S. Eliot. The young poet
Cummings used his wartime experience as the basis for a novel, The Enormous Room (1922), as did John Dos Passos and William Faulkner. Ernest Hemingway however captured the experience of war and the sense of loss most lucidly in his first novel The Sun Also Rises (1926), which probes the experience of a group of disillusioned expatriates in Paris, and in A Farewell to Arms (1929). Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961), an American writer, is considered one of the most influential authors of the first half of the 20th century. Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, he based much of it, on his adventurous life.

The great American naturalist Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane and Ernest Hemingway, came of age in a time of tremendous cultural upheaval. The Civil-War and the World War First taught a great many lessons about the use of man in the millions, the mass production of goods and the co-ordination of force on a here-to-fore unprecedented scale. America’s cities boomed with floods of immigrants. Great fortunes were made in one or two decades, industrial production expanded radically, and labours unrest threatened large scale violence. They pioneered the literacy movement known as ‘naturalism.’ They commented on the spiritual emptiness of individuals in a materialistic industrial society.

The Naturalists’ outlook on life was dominated by determinism- the position that human life is absolutely determined by environmental forces. Whereas the realists Howells, James and others presented drama of meaningful choice and free will. The naturalists sketched a stark fictional landscape where force rules and the autonomous will is just a nice idea we fall back on. After the epoch making publication of Charles Darwin’s Origin of Species in 1859, people were gradually forced to think of human existence in radically
different terms. Darwin’s work was extended by such popularizers as Herbert Spencer whose doctrine of social Darwinism made the phrase ‘survival of the fittest’ familiar to all.

No study of Hemingway will be considered sufficient without analysing the impact of the two global wars and of the Spanish Civil-War on his life and works. Whether in life or literature, Hemingway was aware of the undercurrent of war horror, the terrible cold disillusionment and the seeds of disintegration and destruction that were developing under the sparkling surface of the civilization of the first half of the twentieth century. In fact, his entire outlook on life was conditioned by war. In this context Marcuss Cunliffe rightly says:

In war, badly wounded, Hemingway had felt its presence so close that nothing else afterwards could ever seem as real. He must push nearer and nearer to whatever truth its proximate held.  

The traumatic shock of the First World War and the aftermath, which marked the beginning of the twentieth century, placed upon serious creative artists a new responsibility, namely to interpret to the world the catastrophe which had overtaken it, to strip the veil of glamour from war and reveal it as mechanized carnage. The concept of nada developed into his mind. Everything in this world is controlled by the factors of character, fate, destiny, heredity and environment. On the Italian front in 1918, Hemingway had passed through an ordeal by mortar-burst which changed his outlook on life. He was so obsessed with the wound, both physical and mental, that he dealt with war to show how individuals and society at large had been affected by it. His authentic work has been a single subject: the flirtation with death, the approach to the void. His power lies in his instinctual acknowledgement of the tragedy of meaninglessness and the necessity to overcome despair. His
‘code’ heroes struggle in endless isolation against heavy odds. They begin to face life when they face death. They can be destroyed but not defeated. Jack, Wilson and Santiago live by the principles, honor, courage, endurance and conduct. As in The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway, in placing emphasis on the quality of an action expended to achieve a goal rather than on the act of achieving the goal itself, expresses the measure of the man through his performance and most necessarily through his accomplishment. It is in this context that we embark upon our study of Hemingway by presenting at the outset a critical survey of his age, and disclosing the cultural and historical circumstances which shaped the outlook of Hemingway.

The period extending from 1898 to 1945 seems to have a fairly distinctive character. It has been aptly described as ‘The Age of Violence’ because there was a blossoming of the seeds of violence and dehumanization. It witnessed the rise of the dynamic middle class which surpassed the aristocracy by its energy, enterprise and self-reliance. It was an age of tremendous technological and scientific advancement increasing the pace of industrialization which affected all walks of life. It was an age of money-making tempered by charity and active social speculation, directed along the lines of laissez-faire liberalism. Rapid advancement of science and industrialization helped in mass production, development of business activities, and growth in capital. Egbert S. Oliver aptly remarks:

The frontier period of American life was considered ended. Business and capital extended and consolidated both power and control. Big business became the order of the day.\(^6\)

The two decades from 1890 to 1910 are noted for humanitarian social programmes. The leading thinkers and writers of the
period were inspired by a passion for social justice. They subjected the existing conditions of life and the ideal and institutions of society to severe critical scrutiny and eagerly discussed plans and schemes for drastic reform. Never had a society examined itself with such conscientious thoroughness, and displayed with enthusiasm for alleviating misery, redressing wrongs and grievances, and improving the lot of the poor and the downtrodden. In England, writers like Sir Walter Besant, Samuel A. Barnett, and Mrs. Sidney Webb, George Gissing, Louisa Twining. Lord Shaftesbury, Edith F. Hogg and Maria Trench paid special attention to the problems of the have-nots, the labor class, and the unemployed. In America, Jacob Riis in his book, How the other Half Lives (1890), roused the public conscience. Philanthropists came forward with a view to redressing the pitiable conditions of labour. “The concern for the condition of labour”, says Egbert S. Oliver, “led to the organization of the American Federation of Labor (1886), and the revolutionary Industrial Workers of the World (1905), widely known as I.W.W., and the passage of laws controlling the hours and conditions under which industry could use labour.”

Corruption was prevalent in government and business and the protest against dishonesty, greed and corruption in politics and business came to be known as the Muckraking movement, receiving its name from a speech delivered in Chicago, in 1506, by President Theodore Roosevelt. Muckrakers were a group of writers who roused public opinion against malpractices in government and business and also against social evils like slums, juvenile, delinquency and prostitution. The notable examples of the works of the muckrakers are History of the Standard Oil Company (1903), The Shame of the Cities (1904), The Treason of the Senate (1906) and Frenzied Finance (1906).
The war affected all phases of individual and social life. On the one hand, it brought expansion, increased employment, ensured higher wages and greater mechanization, on the other it caused disillusionment and destruction of phoney values and the high-flown rhetoric used by politicians in the war-time. The major literary consequence of the First World War was that it disillusioned a number of writers such as Ezra Pound, John Dos Passos, and E.E. Cummings and Hemingway about the emotional rhetoric of the war-time used by politicians like David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, and President Wilson of the United States. The speeches of the politicians and statesmen of the period was characterized by frequent use of abstractions, strident idealism and emotional appeals, and was largely divorced from the reality of the battlefield. The writers who had participated in the war or had seen its irrationality, inhumanity and misery at close quarters made them suspect of the romantic rhetoric of war. They realized that the official rhetoric used to glorify the war as a heroic adventure and mobilize public opinion in favour of the war was hollow. Fredrick J. Hoffman has pointed out the literary consequences of war:

The worst victims among our language habits were the abstraction and the capitalized noun. The time-worn psychological value lying behind words were either cancelled out or distorted, at least revised. Broad and profane ironies marked the response to slogans….

Certain words were avoided, because they had too often used by men who turned out to be either stupid or brutal in speeches, directives, and the prose defenses or ‘ideals’.\textsuperscript{8}

Hemingway’s injury at Fossetta, a kind of symbolic death as he had told Guy Hickok, was the most decisive factor in his distrust of the romantic rhetoric of war as well as his earlier adolescent view of the world which derived from his Mid-western upbringing and culture. He
decided to give up the elevated style for his creative work because he felt that it created a gap between what was said and what was experienced. The result of this rejection was his attempt to evolve a new kind of style to present truth as he saw it. Mark Twain’s use of the Mid-western vernacular demonstrated to Hemingway the effectiveness of his own vernacular as a narrative medium for the truthful transmission of experience. Hemingway used the Mid-western vernacular in expressing the painful experiences of his heroes—Nick Adams, Jake Barnes, and Frederick Henry. He chewed the clichés of the official rhetoric in favour of the principle of economy which restrained the use of adjectives and metaphysical terminology. Regarding this famous ‘Hemingway style’ Leslie Fielder writes:

In the mouths of his early non-heroes, flight from war, incapable of love, victims of history and helpless beholders of infamy, the famous Hemingway style seems suitable, really functional. Such anti-heroes demand anti-rhetoric, since for them there are no viable, new, noble phrases to replace the outworn old ones.9

Disillusionment and cynicism spread to almost every part of the social body, inducing both irresolution and irrationality. The actual process of disillusionment began with physical misery that made the first impact. The ‘romance of war’ was completely devalued. It had never been more than an idea fostered by history books and literature. War ceased to be a great adventure and it was no longer thought the sportsman-like thing to conceal its miseries. The outlook of men had been altered by what they had seen and done and nothing in the peace offered them consolation. The people rejected church religion—Christianity as it was interpreted by the bishops and priests. Osbert
Sitwell showed all the bishops going mad with joy when a Parliamentary speaker maintained:

Gentlemen we well never end this war
Till all the young men with martial mien
Have entered capitals; never make peace
Till they are cripples, on one leg, or dead! ¹⁰

Arthur Graeme West commented in his diary in May 1916:

If there is God at all responsible for governing the earth, I hate and abominate Him- I do not think there is one. We only fall into the habit of calling down curses on a god whom we believe not to exist, because the constant references to his beneficence are so maddening that anger stings us to a retort that is really illogical.¹¹

Because of war people lost faith in basic values of life, church religion and even questioned the existence and benevolence of God. For all its crusading energy the age was negative rather than affirmative, incontrovertible in repudiation but weak in affirmation. It was a period marked by nihilism and despair which is noticeable in a number of literary writings produced during this period. T.S. Eliot wrote, The Wasteland and The Hollow Men. Archibald MacLeish also wrote a sonnet about the spectators at the human circus when quite unexpectedly the top blew off leaving the people staring up at “Nothing, nothing, nothing- nothing at all.”¹²

Wearied by idealism and disillusioned by the war and the aftermath, the Americans turned with unashamed enthusiasm to the business of getting rich and enjoying themselves. The American economic system, after a brief depression in 1921, entered a period of
unexampled prosperity and for the next eight years production steadily increased, standard of living rose, and it seemed easy to make a lot of money.

Socially, perhaps the most notable phenomenon of this period was urbanization. America became urbanized in its psychology as well as in its economy. The most significant factors conditioning social development during this period were the growth of cities and the acceleration of technological changes. The automobile, the moving picture and the radio helped in the spread of urban ideas and ways of life over the countryside. The immediate impact of the technological advancement was an increase in national income, which was evident in the growth of cities and improvement in the general standard of living.

As the two distinguished American historians put it:

Cities were bigger, buildings taller, roads longer, fortunes greater, automobile faster, colleges larger, night clubs gayer, crimes more numerous, corporations more powerful, speculation more frenzied than ever before in history, and the soaring statistics gave to most Americans a sense of satisfaction if not of security.\textsuperscript{13}

The post-war decade experienced the social situation, which T.S. Eliot so effectively described as The Wasteland in Europe. In America, a group of young writers and artists was similarly judged by the matriarchal Gertrude Stein when she called them ‘Lost Generation.’ She thought that Hemingway and his contemporaries- F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos- were ‘all a lost generation.’ She, thus, gave a name to a group of writers that grew up and began their labours during the 1920s, and who later on dominated American fiction. R.B. West, Jr., says that the ‘Lost Generation’ title applied to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway and Dos Passos manifested an attitude of rebellion that had
existed in the best American writing from the beginning. In so far as their rebellion reflected disillusion with the past, these authors made common cause with those earlier writers who portrayed the decay of western traditions in the art and society of Europe. They viewed contemporary society as a kind of wasteland. It was in agreement with Hawthorne, who saw the years since the French Revolution as ‘the crisis of Christendom’, a period of drabness and sterility, inevitable but depressing in its utilitarian waste of value and in its hypocritical greed.14

The ‘Lost Generation’ experienced the traumatic experience of the war, the loss of religious faith, the rapid urbanization which shattered the old institution of family and marriage, the incoming world of science which blew up the old myths and superstition and economic depression- all these produced social situation which was no better than wasteland. The young sensitive minds found it intolerable to exist and, indeed, many of them decided not to. They killed themselves in order to escape the anguish they felt and the traumas they experienced. Those who survived often found themselves on the brink of madness. Hemingway offers an effective picture of his time in two collections of stories- In Our Time (1926) and Men without Women (1926). Nick Adams, the Hemingway hero in the making, grows up in an atmosphere, which is violent and hostile. He ends up as a spiritually broken adult finding it difficult to face the outer realities. Eugene O’Neil, another major modernist writer of the time, brings about the spiritual disillusionment in plays like The Iceman Cometh, Morning becomes Electra etc. T.S. Eliot’s now famous poem The Wasteland is a true documentation of the social strain and degeneration, which pervaded during the 1920s in both Europe and America.
Hemingway and his contemporaries in the twenties were called the ‘Lost Generation’ because their youthful expectations of life had been betrayed and because traditional values could no longer serve them as a guide. They discovered that there was almost nothing for them to pin their faith on the outworn pre-war traditions, conventions, moral attitudes and political assumptions. They broke away from the pre-war traditions and sought to discover their moorings in the changing pattern of life. In the sense that they were disillusioned with the traditions and had to discover new values, the post-war generation was lost.

The writers of the ‘Lost Generation’ like Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Dos Passos had passed beyond rebellion into acquiescence, and beyond that to a kind of nihilism. Theirs was the generation of ‘the hollow men, the stuffed men’ and their spiritual home was ‘the wasteland.’ Some, like Robinson Jeffers, rejected all human values and found delight in an amoral universe whereas others, like Hemingway, took refuge in violence, in the bull-fight, or the prize-ring, or hunting big-game in Africa, or in war. A few cherished the dignity of fortitude. All of them believed that the writer must dig at the roots of the sickness in society as he felt it- the death of the old God and the failure of science and materialism to give any satisfactory new one for the surviving religious instinct to find a new meaning in life.

Great art is born out of sufferings and the modernist art, great as it has been universally acknowledged, is no exception. Most of the modernist writers of the 1920s, as hinted at earlier, were on the brink of madness- but that madness, which Shakespeare placed, closed to genius. Poets, lovers and lunatics were what constituted the, ‘Lost Generation’ the feeling of being ‘lost’ was the result of those socio-cultural factors which converted the entire West into the Wasteland.
America had derived influences from Europe either through direct interaction or through the medium of intellectual awakening like debates, seminars, correspondence etc. The First World War created an independent chapter in the history of British poetry. In America, it produced prominent authors who wrote exclusively on war and its destructiveness. Ernest Hemingway is a fine example. Besides Hemingway, William Faulkner and John Dos Passos have written on war with deep concern and anguish. The wastefulness and destruction associated with war was a part of the wasteland that America was during 1920s. *The Wasteland*, however, proved to be a fertile soil for the literary spring. The decade’s literary brilliance is displayed through these texts which were published during this single decade like *The Wasteland* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *The Bridge* (1929), *Tulips and Chimney* (1923), *The American Tragedy* (1925), *Harmonium* (1923) etc. These titles are enough to suggest that America during the 1920s was a socio-cultural Wasteland, but a literary spring.

Life magazine, in its issue of January, 1950, described the twenties as a ‘party’ which everyone enjoyed- but a party that a nation cannot afford to have again, Frederick Hoffman continues the metaphor further, and calls it a party, which resulted in a serious hangover. According to him, Americans still talk about a party but are repentant and resolved not to have it again. The 1920s were called, ‘an age of wonderful nonsense,’ the time of ‘lost generation,’ the ‘jazz age,’ the ‘age of Freud, Zeigfield and Coolidge.’ This was the time of social hopelessness of irresponsible young men and women who gave the nation the liveliest, freshest and the most stimulating writing in its literary experiences.
The First World War had been extremely expensive and destructive. It created unwanted economic difficulties for the European countries. For a brief period, between 1924 and 1928, matters seemed to improve, but then occurred, a most dreadful depression and widespread unemployment, heralded first by the Wall Street Crash of October, 1929, and then again by the financial and political crisis in England in 1931. The Great Depression, a period lasting much of the 1930s adversely affected life in America and on the continent. Everywhere production slowed down, trade shrank and unemployment increased. By 1932, United States had fifteen million unemployed and Germany six million. Business houses closed down. Factories and Banks collapsed, and all construction work came to a stop. Describing the effect of this panic and depression, C.J.H. Hayes aptly remarks:

Stocks and bonds depreciated in value. Factories and mills shut down. Industrial workers lost their jobs and their wages had to be cared for by private charity or public doles. By 1932, the number of unemployed and destitute workers in western and Central Europe, the United States, and Japan- the most highly industrialized portions of the earth- was estimated at 30 million.\textsuperscript{15}

The United States was adversely affected by the long depression. The nation suffered unemployment, reduced incomes, lower prices for agricultural yield, and business failures. To improve matters at home, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt came out with his New Deal theory and it would not be unfair to say that “the thirties established the fact that the New Deal was a new era in which a new society faced a new day.”\textsuperscript{16} The social and economic reforms of President Roosevelt, popularly known as the New Deal (1933-1939), aimed at relief and recovery from financial depression and unemployment, the social
security for the working population, and guarantees for the smaller farmer. The New Deal had a far reaching impact on the society, because of the reforms introduced in the field of the banking, waterpower, farm labour, social security and political legislation.

The Spanish Civil War broke out on 18th July, 1936. Hemingway was signed by the North American Newspaper Alliance to report the Spanish Civil War. John Wheeler, President of N.A.N.A. “wanted Hemingway to tell in his ‘colourful style’, the meaning of recent events, to give the feeling of the war, and to interpret the Spanish people and countryside in war for American readers.” Hemingway covered the Spanish Civil War in his reports and despatches. Among his famous despatches to N.A.N.A. are ‘The First Glimpses of War’ ‘Shelling of Madrid’, ‘A New Kind of War’, ‘A Brush with Death’, ‘The Fall of Teruel’, and ‘Bombing of Tortosa’, and ‘Tortosa Calmly Awaits Assault.’ Hemingway’s despatches appeared in major newspapers. Eighteen of his despatches were republished in four issues of the New Republic between May 1937 and June 1938. His despatches again formed a complete issue of Fact magazine in July, 1938. So Hemingway won his spurs on ‘publicity front’ as an ace war correspondent and journalist whose despatches gave a vivid and dramatic account of the Spanish Civil War, particularly its fierce battles and other episodes. His thrilling narratives were accorded front-page publicity by vintage papers and journals and were read with avid interest by the Americans.

In January 1941, Hemingway and his wife, Martha Gellhorn, entered China at Hong-Kong. They spent a month in Hong-Kong, flew over the Japanese lines, and reached Chung-King by way of several provincial cities. Hemingway interviewed Chiang-Kai-Shek; Madam Chiang acted as interpreter. They saw many battles and training areas,
visited the headquarters of the 17th War Zone, followed the Burmese Road, and critically surveyed the terrain from the viewpoint of combat operations and logistics. They spent weeks talking and listening to persons of various nationalities and gathered vital information about the Soviet-intervention in Sino-Japanese affairs and the possibility of America’s involvement in it. When Hemingway returned to New York, Ralph Ingersoll interviewed him in the latter’s suite at the Barclay. The interview was published just before Hemingway’s articles began to appear in PM. The overall impression of Hemingway about the situation in the Far East is summed in these words:

If Britain should fall it would be the signal for Japan aggressively to pursue her conquests in new directions. And this may well mean war with the USA. If England grows stronger and America is able to keep the fleet in the Pacific, war between the United States and Japan may never occur. And further, Hemingway tells us, we may thus beat Japan without ever firing a gun.18

Hemingway, after the Second World War, flew back to New York, and then to Cuba. Between 1945 and the year of publication of *Across the River and into the Trees* (1950), he did no serious writing except writing occasional single articles and isolated prefaces, ‘His pattern during the period’, says Robert O. Stephen, “was to begin with postmortems on the war, work into another sportsman cycle, and emerge as a more self-conscious spokesman for arts.”19 He called for international justice and understanding by the Allies in his foreword to Ben Rae Burn’s book on the post-war problems, *Treasury for the Free World* (1945). With the publication of *The Great Blue River* in Holiday magazine and Cuban fishing in *Game Fish of the World*, both in 1949, he maintained his reputation as a sportsman.
In the spring of 1948, A.F. Hotchner, articles editor of cosmopolitan magazine, met Hemingway and asked him to write an article on ‘The Future of Literature’ for cosmopolitan. Instead, Hemingway agreed to write a short story. He started work on the short story which eventually grew into a novel Across the River and into the Trees. Reviewers pounced upon this novel and made mincemeat of it. Almost all the reviewers with one accord called it a novel below expectations of a novelist who wrote The Sun also Rises and A Farewell to Arms. They called Hemingway a spent-up force. Hemingway took the unfavorable reviews to his heart, and in two years retrieved his position as an artist by writing his masterpiece The Old Man and the Sea (1952), which dealt with a Cuban fisherman’s struggle with a great Marlin. It was Hemingway’s counter-attack against those reviewers who hauled him over the coals for writing Across the River and into the Trees. He regained his lost position and won the Noble Prize for literature in 1954 “for his powerful, style-forming mastery of the art of modern narration, as evinced in The Old Man and the Sea.”

In 1952, Fulgencio Batista, another tin-pot fascist across the Atlantic, adopted fascist tactics and methods and grabbed power in Cuba, which he retained till 1958. During this period Hemingway travelled extensively in Spain, France, Italy and Africa. He had fascination for Africa. In 1953, he set out for Mombosa. But a streak of dramatic irony entered his African ‘safari’. Begun in a cheery optimism, it ended as an adventure of misfortune which bedeviled his life to the end. In the course of his African ‘safari’ once he acted as an honorary game ranger of a district. One of his duties as a game ranger was to protect crops from elephants and wild animals. He did the job efficiently and enjoyed wild hunting. But soon the dark clouds broke on him. He met with two air
crashes in the course of two days. He was badly hurt and even thought to be dead by the civilized world. His obituaries, which he enjoyed reading very much, were published in all the leading newspapers of the world. One newspaper went to the extent of saying that in air-crash, Hemingway simply fulfilled his well-known wish for death.

Hemingway had a fascination for Spain a land of matadors and bull-fight impresarios. He had already written about the bull-fights and the delights of matadors in his book Death in the Afternoon (1932). During the last decade of his life he visited Spain three times and saw bull-fights and met famous matadors of Spain. In the summer of 1954, he was present in Madrid and went to see the festival of San Isidro, Spain’s most enchanting bull-fight spectacle. He saw several thrilling bull-fights and was impressed with a brave and courageous matador named Chicuelo II. He was all praise for Ortega’s skill in killing a bull. Hemingway said, “He goes in cleanly over the horns, holding back nothing. But he has been gored so often he is nothing but steel and nylon inside.”

He also saw Luis Miguel and Antonio Ordonez, the two famous, though rivals, matadors of Spain in action in the bull-fighting ring. In 1956, Hemingway reached Zaragoza, an industrial city in northern Spain. There he saw Antonio, Litri and Ostos fighting bulls in the ring. He noted the rivalry of Miguel and Antonio for being the great matadors of Spain. He gave vent to his observations on Miguel and Antonio rivalry in a bull-fight article, The Dangerous Summer (1960). He was of the view that in near future “Antonio with impale Miguel on the horns of his pride and destroy him. It is tragic but like all tragedy, pre-ordained.”

The year 1958 brings us again to the Cuban scene. Cuban politics was again in the melting pot. Fulgencio Batista was overthrown by Fidel Castro, a through-bred leftist who turned to Communism. He
followed an anti-American policy and drove the Americans out of Cuba. In view of Castro’s virulent anti-American speeches and postures, Hemingway was quick to perceive that Cuba would be too hot for him and he had better quit soon. He would have to move away leaving behind his favorite the finca and all his valuable treasures that he had gathered there. He said to Hotchner, “I know, I must leave it all and go. But how can you measure that loss? Everything I have here. My pictures, my books, my good work place and good memories.”

The process of transplanting himself from Cuba to Idaho was painfully difficult. Though he could take some of his treasures out of Cuba, much remained there and it was an unbearable loss to him. When he found it difficult to keep up the active life he loved, and he could write no more, he shot himself at Ketchum, Idaho in the morning of 2nd July, 1961. In this connection, Hugh Kenner writes, “Hemingway’s suicide came out of depression. One component of the depression, it seems plain, was the fear that he could no longer write; and he owed it to his sense of fitness, and aesthetic sense, not to burn damp faggots.”

In times of stress, Hemingway did, in fact, contemplate suicide and he did, indeed, take his own life finally in 1961. When the going got bad much against his ‘tough guy’ image, he committed suicide. Thus passed away one of the most versatile, vivacious and vigorous lives from the world. Edmund Wilson best expressed the general sense of shock and diminishment after his death: “It is as if a whole corner of my generation had suddenly and horribly collapsed.”

From what has been detailed in the preceding pages it is manifest that ‘the presence of death’ was Hemingway’s real environment. The impact of naturalism taught him to take the challenge of death and violence with artistic vigour. He exalted the downright honesty, the
pristine courage and fortitude in his fictional characters but in his own life Hemingway could never get rid of the effect of that romantic shock which he suffered in 1918. Though Hemingway wished to maintain his ‘tough guy’ image, he was haunted by the memory of his father’s suicide so much that in Islands in the Stream, there is a lot of discussion of committing suicide by eating phosphorus, and by drinking dye, and by setting yourself on fire. He felt weighed down under the burden of life and often complained of his bad eyes, impaired kidney, and depression, though he stimulated an appearance of cheerfulness. He said to Hotchner, “Although I move about as cheerfully as possible, it is like living in a Kafka nightmare. I got cheerful like always, but am not. I’m bone-tired and very beat up emotionally.”

The remaining years of Hemingway’s life were spent in agony and mental torture. He suffered from nervousness, irascibility, paranoia, and hemochromatosis, a rare disease that affects vital organs. He was twice admitted to Mayo clinic, Rochester, Minnesota for his psychological troubles, his delusions and obsessions. The treatments did not help. He felt that he would never be able to keep the promise of writing stories and books he once promised himself. In his biography Carlos baker tells how once, during a blocked period near the end of his life, the tears streamed down Hemingway’s face because he could not write and believed he would never be able to write again.

In his good old days he was a well-known boxer, a big-game hunter, a deep-sea fisherman and an excellent wing shot. He was an outdoor man, a man who drank life to the lees. Life meant a lot of adventure and fun to him; the things he cherished most were now denied to him. He said to Hotchner, “What does a man care about? Staying healthy. Working good. Eating, and drinking with his friends. Enjoying
himself in bed. I haven’t any of them. Do you understand, god damn it? None of them.”

Ernest Hemingway has been a centre of critical attention in the twentieth century. He has been widely explored by the research scholars. However, he needs much more microscopic evaluation in respect of his adherence to the tenets of naturalism, which played a vital role in the twentieth century American fiction. In fact, his entire outlook on life was conditioned by the philosophical background of naturalism. In this connection John McCormick aptly says:

> Behind the apparent naturalism, however, is a conception of human experience that has nothing whatsoever to do with naturalism. Hemingway’s most memorable characters seem to be men ‘to whom things happen’, but they are also men who ‘cause things to happen’. They are not without memories; they have keener susceptibility. They are haunted by the painful memories of the ‘First World War’.  

The disparagement of the Hemingway hero is justified, only if Hemingway’s works are interpreted only in the naturalistic tradition, but Hemingway was more than a naturalist. Hemingway captured the imagination of a generation of readers and writers in America more completely than has any other literary figure of the twentieth century. Hemingway is the bronze god of the whole contemporary literary experience in America.

Afore-mentioned discussion brings us to the conclusion that Hemingway stands out among his contemporaries as a writer of immaculate style and substance. The following chapters are an attempt to demonstrate his concern as a novelist of naturalism and their relevance to our own times.
REFERENCES


6. Ibid. p. 2.

7. Ibid. p. 4.


22. Ibid. p. 282.
23. Ibid. p. 268.

