



American Literature



By: Libby
James
Kat





Libby



James



Kat

Our Group



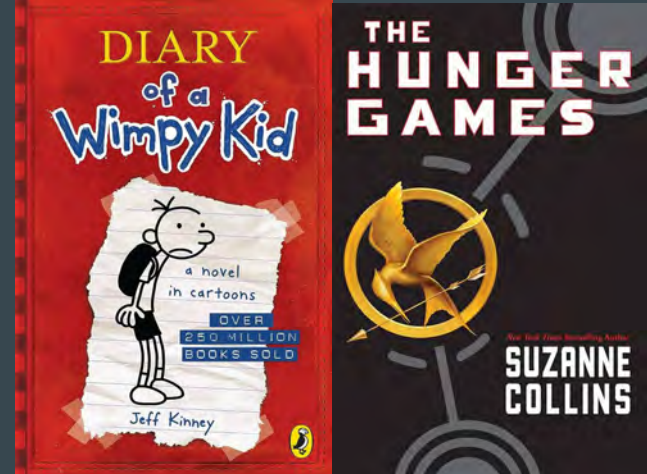
Common Themes in American Literature - Libby

There are many themes commonly used in American literature, so I will touch on what I believe are the most representative of our culture.

Satirical comedy is prominent in modern American literature. Examples include parodies of important figures, events, and media. Parodies can provide commentary and critical analysis while making light of certain subjects.

“The American Dream” and themes of opportunity are also prevalent. “The Great Gatsby” by Scott Fitzgerald makes use of this theme and is considered one of the most famous American novels.

Coming of age is another significant theme. Many popular books I and many others read growing up incorporated this theme. Examples being the Diary of a Wimpy Kid series and The Hunger Games series. Drastically different stories, but both make use of this theme.

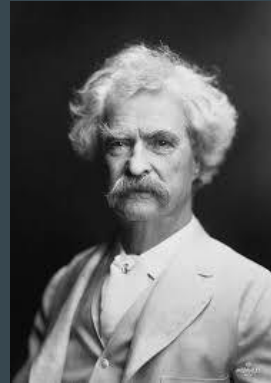


American History in Novels & Culture

As America took its major growth during the 19th and 20th centuries the stories that were told in the major novels gave us much that we are able to see how the ideas and culture of America were reflected in them. Historical Novelists such as Mark Twain writing the Adventures of both Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer as young boys finding ways to survive by their wits and living through the limited resources that they had.

This is also carried on by one of the premier novelists of the early 20th century in John Steinbeck who writes about the overcoming of struggles from cases where people are displaced

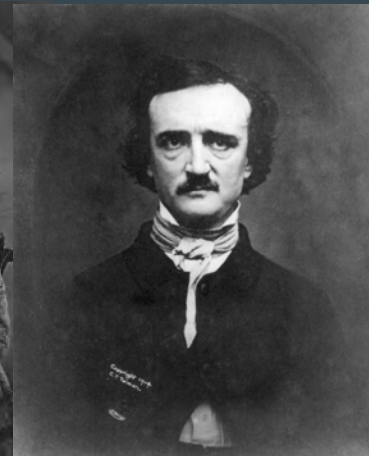
Most commonly having happened during the great depression and the dust bowl of the midwest that accompanied and followed it. His books such as *Of Mice and Men* and *Cannery Row* looked at survival with limited resources in middle america as the people were commonly asked to do much while being impoverished and finding their own ways to live while in a constant struggle.



Poetry-Kat

American poetry is very broad in the world of literature, dating back to colonial times with a nod to Native American oral traditions as well. Forming the American identity to creating new genres of literature and creating a sense of unity and hope within the nation poetry has had a large part in many historical moments. From Emily Dickinson who paved the way for female authors and poets writing over 1,000 poems that did not reach notary till after her death. To Edgar Allan Poe who some say invented the 'gothic horror' genre wrote many thrilling short stories and poems that held such musicality and duality that they transcended what people knew about 'romanticism' in poetry.

To Maya Angelou who wrote hundreds of poems about hope and survival that helped create unity during times of tension between the white and black communities. "All my work, my life, everything I do is about survival, not just bare, awful, plodding survival, but survival with grace and faith. While one may encounter many defeats, one must not be defeated," Angelou said.



How Literature Affects Culture in America Today

From Mark Twain and Nathaniel Hawthorne to Rick Riordan and John Green, American literature has continued to change and evolve into major storytelling networks such as Netflix and Disney. The profound cultural impact of fiction has caused many societal shifts from wars and civil rights. These diverse changes in literature as of late of aided the ever changing American identity to evolve the nation with each passing day. American literature goes far beyond the pages of a book and reverberates into pop culture that creates impressions on the nation that transcend time itself. Literature both preserves culture but helps it grow and evolve within the modern day making America what is to this very day.

What Stories Do We Need?

Nowadays stories in media feel very repetitive. They tend to retread the same topics and don't delve further than a surface level. We need stories that leave an impact and are thought provoking. Stories that resonate strongly with people can inspire them to create and achieve their personal goals. Stories are what build so many unique cultures and also give our lives purpose.



Sources:

Satire and its examples in literature:

<https://smartblogger.com/satire-examples/#:~:text=Satire%20offers%20political%20and%20social,see%20your%20point%20of%20view.>

Examples of themes in American literature:

<https://fully-booked.ca/editorials/top-5-american-literature-themes/>

Coming of age in American literature:

<https://litteracle.com/literary-themes-coming-of-age/>

Of Mice and Men

<https://giove.isti.cnr.it/demo/eread/Libri/sad/OfMiceAndMen.pdf>

Huckleberry Finn

<https://contentserver.adobe.com/store/books/HuckFinn.pdf>

Sources:

American Poetry:

<https://www.vaia.com/en-us/explanations/english-literature/american-poetry/#:~:text=In%20the%2018th%20and%2019th,the%20power%20of%20their%20pens.>

Emily Dickinson: <https://blog.gale.com/reflect-on-the-poets-who-helped-inspire-american-culture/>

Edgar Allan Poe: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edgar-Allan-Poe>

Maya Angelou:

<https://www.ohsu.edu/womens-health/women-who-inspire-us-maya-angelou#:~:text=A%20poet%2C%20singer%2C%20autobiographer%2C,in%20the%20face%20of%20discrimination.>

Pop Culture and Literature:

<https://www.superprof.com/blog/american-literature-influence/#:~:text=American%20literature%2C%20as%20a%20cultural,resonates%20a cross%20diverse%20societal%20landscapes.>

Culture and Literature: https://www.bartleby.com/essay/The-Effect-of-Cultural-and-Historical-Situations-FK4P6WYTI#google_vignette

<https://medium.com/illumination/the-power-of-literature-how-it-shapes-society-and-culture-28dc42f04222>