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Н.И.Леонова, Г.И.Никитина



English Literature  
1890-1960

Английская литература  
1890-1960

УЧЕБНОЕ ПОСОБИЕ

Для гуманитарных факультетов вузов  
и школ с углубленным изучением  
английского языка

ФЛИНТА • НАУКА

**Н.И. Леонова, Г.И. Никитина**

**Английская литература  
1890-1960**

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В пособие включены литературоведческие тексты об английской литературе и фабульные отрывки из произведений известных авторов. Цель данной книги – развить навыки реферирования, чтения специальных оригинальных текстов и активизировать устную речь.

Для студентов и магистров гуманитарных и др. специальностей, а также для лиц, самостоятельно изучающих английский язык и английскую литературу.

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## **ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ**

Книга ставит целью развить навыки реферирования, чтения специальных оригинальных текстов и развития устной речи по предложенной тематике. Тематика пособия имеет литературоведческую направленность. В пособие включены тексты об английской литературе из книг и статей известных ученых: А. Ворда, Дж. Ривса, И. Моргана, С. Купера и др. Помимо литературоведческих текстов в пособии приводятся фабульные отрывки из книг, знакомящие учащихся со стилем того или иного автора. При этом язык оригинала сохраняется. Тексты на русском языке предназначены для активизации лексики и суммарного пересказа.

Пособие не содержит грамматических объяснений и предназначено для лиц, ранее изучавших английский язык: студентов и магистров гуманитарных специальностей. Оно может быть также использовано при изучении английского языка студентами других специальностей, так как дисциплина «иностранный язык» входит в федеральный компонент образовательно-профессиональных программ.

Компактность и умеренная сложность языкового материала пособия делают его доступным и универсальным в использовании для различных типов учебных заведений. Пособие может быть рекомендовано в качестве самостоятельного учебного материала и дополнения к любому

традиционному учебнику английского языка. Курс позволяет изучать английский язык и английскую литературу одновременно.

Учебное пособие подготовлено на кафедре английского языка гуманитарных факультетов Московского педагогического государственного университета имени В.И. Ленина.

Авторы

## PART I

### Unit I

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

#### British Novelists, 1890-1929 Traditionalists

The forty years between 1890–1929 were *the most fertile and diverse period* of the British novel. During these years marked by the Great War and changes in the social, political, and economic structures of Britain, the novel *became a much broader reflector of* the aims, confusions, concerns, ideas, and attitudes of all classes of the British people, effectively *mirroring* forces of change in the culture. It was at that time that the novel in Britain established itself as *the dominant literary genre*. More than any other literary form, it most completely absorbed and *pointed to* the fundamental changes in consciousness that were taking place.

There were two strong but not mutually exclusive impulses among novelists – first, to write largely out of the tradition that immediately preceded them at the same time that they *confronted the changing shape of the world*; and second, to attempt *to break sharply from the traditions* and values that they inherited and reflected in form, technique, and *subject matter* an altered vision of the world and the self. Such divisions are, however, obvious only on the surface. For example, the works of Joseph Conrad *contrasted with* those of James Joyce demonstrate division, but there are important *similarities* in their fiction as well. Among minor writers these *distinctions* blur.

Conrad, the most imposing figure of that period, *retained* frame of the traditional realist novel, but his work reflects his preoccupation with the moral self. *The shift from* individual to social principles in the moral world lies at the centre of his work, hence the sea, the jungle, the remote in general provide the contexts in which he studies his characters.

Closer to the tradition of the nineteenth century realist novel in Britain were Arnold Bennett and John Galsworthy, whose novels reveal the changing social conditions in England. Both looked with irony at the unquestioned goals of progress, the iniquities and even injustices in society, but their work seldom transcends the period because of their failures to impose social consciousness needed to provide moral force.

Ford Madox Ford and E.M. Forster *have achieved* greater *status* than Bennett and Galsworthy, because rather than embodying a distant or lofty moral objectivity, they brought to their novels a controlled *subjectivity* which gave them immediacy as well as a moral perspective.

(From "Foreword to Dictionary of Literary Biography " by Thomas F. Staley)

II. Translate the following words and word combinations into Russian and use them in sentences of your own:

the most fertile and diverse period, to become a reflector of, to mirror, the dominant literary genre, to point to, to confront the changing shape of the world, to break from traditions, the subject matter, to contrast with, similarities, distinctions, to retain, a shift from...to, to achieve status, subjectivity.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What was the most fertile and diverse period of the British novel?
2. What did the novel reflect?
3. When did the novel establish itself as the dominant literary genre?
4. How did the writers of that period react to the altered vision of the world?
5. Why is J. Conrad considered to be the most imposing figure?

6. What authors achieved great status during that period?
7. Have you read "The Forsyte Saga" by John Galsworthy? What is the idea of the novel?

IV. Translate the following text into Russian using a dictionary. Speak on Galsworthy's realism.

Galsworthy's realism does not only lie in his capacity for making his hero part and parcel of his surroundings and convincing the reader of his typicality: he is a fine artist in reproducing the individual workings of his characters' minds. Soames, the man of property, is also a man of deep and lasting feelings. Such is his devotion to his daughter Fleur who was "always at the back of his thoughts" and "started out like a filigree figure from a clock when the hour strikes." Incidentally, this dainty simile, so utterly unlike the matter-of-factness that characterizes the usual reproduction of Soames's prosaic mind, is expressive of the poetic colouring that Galsworthy introduces to render the strength of the affection Soames has for Fleur.

As a general rule, the novelist, though following in the tracks of classical realists, breaks away from the literary polish, the fine descriptive style that was kept up to the very end of the 19th century. At the same time as Shaw, Wells and Bennett, Galsworthy starts a new tradition of bringing the language of literature (in the author's speech, no less than in that of the personages) close to the language of real life. He does away with the elaborate syntax of 19th century prose and cultivates somewhat abrupt sentences, true to the rhythm and the intonation of the spoken language and full of low colloquialisms and even slang.

V. Read the text about life and work of J. Conrad and make up a summary.

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924) is now widely accepted as one of the modernist masters of serious narrative fiction. Historically placed, he is a major figure in the transition from Victorian fiction to the more perplexed forms and values of the twentieth century literature. Now, unlike in his lifetime, he is one of the most read British novelists of his period. However, his twenty volumes of novels and stories vary greatly in quality and interest. Since he was primarily a commercial storyteller aiming at the popular market, only a limited part of his work will bear much serious response and intellectual consideration. The works such as "Heart of Darkness," "Nostromo," "The Secret Sharer" and "The Secret Agent" are generally acknowledged to be outstanding.

He started by writing exotic romances, a highly commercial popular form of late nineteenth century literature – many of his sources appear to be French. His three linked novels placed in Malay – "Almayer's Folly" (1895), "An Outcast of the Islands" (1896), and "The Rescue" (1920) – fancifully expand upon some episodes and characters drawn from his maritime experiences.

Conrad's later writing became more disciplined and polished in manner, it had a tone of ominousness, mysteriousness and ironic reflectiveness which distinguishes some of Conrad's fiction from simpler commercial exoticism.

Clearly the best of the early stories is the satiric "An Outpost of Progress" (1897). Here Conrad makes his first fictional use of the brief period he spent in the Belgian Congo nearly a decade earlier. Perhaps because of his great anger at what he saw there, this story shows little moral ambivalence.

Committed to prolific writing, Conrad was extending the range of his subject matter. His third published novel "The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'" launched his reputation as a noted writer about the sea. While it is better written, more stylistically disciplined than the Malayan novels, it is hardly the "masterpiece" that some later critics have called it.

In the period of his best writing, from "Heart of Darkness" through "The Secret Agent," he achieved a distinctive moral resonance and rhetorical intensity. He achieved some victories over Victorian pathology.

*(From "Dictionary of Literary Biography" by Kingsley Widmer)*

VI. Render the text in English using the following key words and word combinations:

to reveal, to depict, to expose, a theorist, an observer, bourgeoisie, landlord, to warn, to become obvious, property, to be difficult to separate from, to consolidate one's rights, to be a security, continuity of the family, morality, a prejudice, hypocrisy, ambiguous.

В этом мире, все реальности которого уже раскрыты, объяснены, описаны, подвергнуты критике и разоблачены в произведениях литературы, мистер Голсуорси избирает темой своей книги Семью – институт, существующий, по моему мнению, так же давно, как самая старая, хотя не самая почтенная

сказка. Но мистер Голсуорси не теоретик, а наблюдатель, и в поле его зрения попала семья определенного типа. Это семья буржуазная, вернее, ей место в рядах крупной буржуазии, о чем нас предупреждает подзаголовок романа, и подобные семьи можно видеть всюду и везде, если не сегодня, то еще вчера <...>.

<...> Прочность основы, на которой мистер Голсуорси строит свой превосходный роман, сразу становится очевидной. Ибо началась ли организация общества с семьи, или с собственности, или с того и другого одновременно, так как вначале их, в сущности, трудно было отделить друг от друга, – совершенно ясно, что именно в тесном объединении этих двух институтов нашло общество путь к развитию, и именно в нем обрело оно надежду на спасение. Чувство собственности помогает Форсайтам упрочить их права и является залогом продолжения их рода. Это инстинкт, примитивный инстинкт. Практицизм Форсайтов возвел его в принцип; их идеализм превратил его в своего рода религию, под влиянием которой сформировались их понятия о счастье и благопристойности, их предрассудки и ханжество, скудные их мысли и даже самый строй их чувств. Жизнь в целом стала доступной их пониманию только в тех случаях, если ее можно было выразить на языке собственности. Удержать – приобрести, приобрести – удержать. Законы, мораль, искусство и наука, по их представлениям, не лишены основания, посвящены достижению этой двойственной и, в то же время, единой цели. Таков их символ веры. <...>

(Дж. Конрад. «Джон Голсуорси»)

## Unit II

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Bernard Shaw (1856–1950)

When a great writer dies high in honour and in fame, criticism is for a while at a loss; as the applause dies down, praise sounds unnaturally loud. So it had to be with Bernard Shaw. Even now he begins *to assume a position* in English drama second only to Shakespeare. He built up his own new drama: true, Shaw followed the *inspiration* of Ibsen, but he would seem to have been himself ready to be the English Ibsen.

He turned to the drama as his medium of expression. That Shaw chose the drama as the means to criticize and educate society was due to a most happy combination of experience, coincidence and chance. His own experience had taught him that he had no promising future in the novel.

In his long period of dramatic writing, more than twice the length of Shakespeare's, Shaw *displayed the many-sidedness of his genius* in a great *variety of plays*. It is hard, however, to discern any clear periods or trends in his development. There is on the whole a change of theme from the particular to the general, from the contemporary scene to the future, and of attitude from the satiric and destructive to the philosophic and constructive, from the materialistic to the mystic.

Shaw's drama gave a powerful impulse to developing of the English theatre.

The first period of Shaw's creative work consists of three cycles: "Unpleasant Plays" ("Widower's Houses"<sup>1</sup>, 1892; "The Eater of Hearts,"<sup>2</sup> 1893; "Mrs. Warren's Profession,"<sup>3</sup> 1894); "Pleasant Plays" ("Arms and the Man,"<sup>4</sup> 1894; "Candida,"<sup>5</sup> 1894; "The Man of Destiny,"<sup>6</sup> 1895); "Three Plays for Puritans" ("The Devil's Pupil,"<sup>7</sup> 1896-1897; "Caesar and Cleopatra,"<sup>8</sup> 1898; "Captain Brassbound's Address,"<sup>9</sup> 1899).

The high spirits which characterized his plays before 1914, often bringing into his comedy a lively element of farce, did not appear so much afterwards. Instead something of grandeur and poetry *found expression* in famous passages of "Saint Joan"<sup>10</sup> and "Back to Methuselah."<sup>11</sup> Before "Heartbreak House,"<sup>12</sup> which was finished during the war, he had certainly never written a play with such deep underlying seriousness. He called it "a fantasia on English themes in the Russian manner," by which he *alluded to* his being inspired by Chekhov.

Bernard Shaw's publicist attitude towards the drama demanded an effective language. His ideas are expressed in short wise, witty sayings, aphorisms, as they are called. When writing on the *social contradictions* of the 20th century, he often uses striking paradoxes, which bring out his attitude to England's 19th century conventions. B. Shaw *has introduced a new form of drama*, the publicistic drama. His plays *are suited for* reading as much as for acting. He expresses his ideas not only through the individual characters but through *the settings* of the plays as well. Each play has a preface in which portraits of the persons in the play are drawn, and

*the setting* described.

### **Notes:**

1. "Widower's Houses" – пьеса «Дома вдовца»
2. "The Eater of Hearts" – «Сердцеед»
3. "Mrs. Warren's Profession" – «Профессия миссис Уоррен»
4. "Arms and the Man" – «Оружие и человек»
5. "Candida" – «Кандида»
6. "The Man of Destiny" – «Избранник судьбы»
7. "The Devil's Pupil" – «Ученик дьявола»
8. "Caesar and Cleopatra" – «Цезарь и Клеопатра»
9. "Captain Brassbound's Address" – «Обращение капитана Брасбаунда»
10. "Saint Joan" – пьеса «Святая Иоанна»
11. "Back to Methuselah" – «Назад к Мафусаилу»
12. "Heartbreak House" – «Дом, где разбиваются сердца»

II. Give Russian equivalents to the following English words and word combinations. Use them in the sentences of your own:

to assume a position, inspiration, to display the many-sidedness of one's genius, a variety of plays, to find expression in, to allude to, social contradictions, to introduce a new form of drama, to be suited for, a setting.

III. Translate Shaw's aphorisms into Russian. Discuss the problems raised in them.

... the love of money is the root of all evil.

...When people are very poor, you cannot help them, no matter how much you may sympathize with them. It does them more harm than good in the long run.

... the dirtier a place is the more rent you get...

I'll have to learn to speak middle-class language from you, instead of speaking proper English.

The great secret ... is not having bad manners or good manners or any other particular sort of manners, but having the same manner for all human souls...

Time enough to think of the future when you haven't any future to think of.

Independence? That's middle-class blasphemy. We are all dependent on one another, every soul of us on earth.

IV. Give a literary translation of the following extracts. Speak on Shaw's style.

1. Shaw's plays, as a whole, give the impression of his creative powers in a spontaneous unity. We can well believe that, when he told Ellen Terry that "Candida" came easily enough, he was expressing a general truth about his work. The component of plot, stagecraft, characterization and dialogue grew into one natural unforced creation. Shaw himself, in the Postscript to "Back to Methuselah," declared: "When I am writing a play I never invent a plot: I let the play write itself and shape itself, which it always does even when up to the last moment I do not foresee the way out. Sometimes I do not see what the play was driving at until quite a long time after I have finished it." Certainly his method of developing a play often involves a turn which takes the audience half by surprise, as it may have taken the dramatist himself. Thus his success lies partly in the command of stagecraft which instinctively knows how to turn stage situation to profit.

2. As for Shaw's style, it never failed from the earliest plays to the last, or in his pamphlets, prefaces or letters. Shaw himself refused to admit the existence of style apart from the matter. Style arose, he held, "from the having something to say. Effectiveness of assertion is the Alpha and Omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none; he who has something to assert will go as far in power of style as its momentousness and his conviction after it is made, yet his style remains."

With the union of assertion and provocation his style is never dull.

In the plays it rarely has a chance to be dull, for there is the further animation given by the dramatic clash of dialogue.

V. Speak about B.Shaw's best comedy using the additional text.

"Pygmalion" is one of Shaw's best comedies. The title of the play comes from a Greek myth. Pygmalion, a sculptor, was said to have carved a statue out of ivory. It was the statue of a beautiful young girl whom he called Galatea. He fell in love with his own handiwork, so the goddess Aphrodite breathed life into the statue and transformed it into a woman.

The principal characters of the play are Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins. Eliza, a girl of eighteen, comes from the lowest social level and speaks with a strong Cockney accent, which is considered to be the most illiterate English.

Eliza's father is a dustman. Eliza will not stay with her father and her stepmother, she makes her own living by selling flowers in the streets of London.

The play shows how Eliza struggles to rise to a higher cultural level. Bernard Shaw knew the common fate of those who were born in poverty. There was no rising from it to another standing without outward culture. The Cockney English spoken in the East End of London was like a stamp on a person's reputation.

Henry Higgins is a professor of phonetics. He studies the physiological aspects of a person's speech, that is the sounds of the language. When in the street one day, he points out the flowergirl, Eliza, to his friend Colonel Pickering, a phonetician studying Indian dialects.

"You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party. I could even get her a place as lady's maid or shop assistant, which requires better English. That's the sort of thing I do for commercial millionaires. And on the profits of it I do genuine scientific work in phonetics."

Eliza hears this conversation and is impressed. She sees a chance of being pulled out of the gutter. The next day she goes to the professor's house and insists on being taught. Higgins makes an agreement with Pickering and bets him that he will pass her off as a duchess in six months.

VI. Render the text in English using the following key words and word combinations:

reformer, represent, symposium, clash, to be highly appreciated, to mark the 75th anniversary, innumerable striking blows, narrow-mindedness, banality, to ridicule, valuable, an autobiographical novel.

Б. Шоу называли реформатором английского театра. Сцену Шоу представлял как место дискуссии, как площадку для столкновения идей, постановки проблем. Он создает новую структуру драмы – проблемную пьесу-симпозиум. Шоу пользуется особым способом изложения проблем – парадоксом.

Шоу высоко ценили лучшие и крупнейшие представители литературы его времени. Среди них были Горький и О'Кейси.

В 1931 году Горький писал Шоу, приехавшему в Москву на празднование своего 75-летия: «Три четверти столетия прожили Вы, и неисчислимы сокрушительные удары, нанесенные Вашим острым умом консерватизму и пошлости людей».

Высказав ряд ценных наблюдений о творчестве Шоу в своих литературно-критических статьях, Шон О'Кейси посвятил драматургу целую главу – «Уголок Шоу» – в автобиографическом романе «Заход солнца и вечерняя звезда».

### Unit III

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

#### John Boynton Priestley (1894–1984)

J.B. Priestley, critic, essayist, storyteller, *broadcaster*, novelist and playwright, has the rare distinction, for an Englishman, of being well known all over the world. He has the power to entertain and his plays in particular are the work of a man who *provokes thought*.

He was born in Bradford in 1894 and ever since his first appearance as an author in 1919, he has poured out



a succession of books of very diverse kinds. At first it was as an essayist that he won recognition. Then, gradually, changing over to fiction, he *achieved resounding success* in 1929 with his long, episodic and *robust novel* "The Good Companions." It was what the schoolboys call "a smasher." It was twice the normal length; it *had a Dickensian scope* as well near-Dickensian *vigour*; it had a host of characters and *a swirl of movement*. "The Good Companions" was also a smasher in its success. It was filmed and dramatized as well as selling vastly in book form in many countries. The survey of Bruddersford, with which the book opens, is Priestley at his best and the unfolding panorama of small provincial towns with their mouldering theatres and concert halls, their drab hotels sustains the high level of social landscape.

The next novel "Angel Pavement"<sup>2</sup> (1930) took its name from a typical side street, an alley which housed, among others none too prosperous, a firm of timber dealers, now in financial trouble. The atmosphere of gayety characteristic of the first novel is changed by sad humour. The ending of the book is bleak indeed, for all the employers of the broken timber firm *are left in the air*, the cold economic air of the nineteen-thirties, when unemployment cruelly swept the world. The period of "Angel Pavement" was, for millions of people, grey with fear, fear of never getting a job, fear of losing the job, and fear of an existence without security and without hope.

The shorter novels are very numerous in most cases. Priestley drew on immediate scenes and happenings, the wartime "blackout," the coming of demobilization and release, and the readjustments to a new economy. One of the best of them is called "Bright Day" (1946). The description of Boxing Day at Mr. Ackworth's is wonderful comedy. Written with tenderness as well as gusto, it responds with friendliness to the cult of "good stuff in food and drink and musicmaking."

As a playwright Priestley occupied a prominent place in English literature in the thirties. He wrote more than 40 plays, the most significant of them are "Dangerous Corner"<sup>3</sup> (1932), "Time and the Conways"<sup>4</sup> (1937), "An Inspector Calls"<sup>5</sup> (1946).

Some critics hold the view that Priestley is at his best in plays of this kind, realistic in style, cordial in their comedy, sympathetic in mood. But he himself became impatient with the humdrum and the natural. Realism in the arts *has been dismissed*. One of the earlier ventures in escape was the creation of "Johnson over Jordan" (1939). Expressionism, a foolish and unhelpful term, is a name applied to such a form of playwriting.

In the plays followed "They Came to a City" (1944) and "Home Is Tomorrow" (1949) Priestley brought news and views of the great world changes and fresh outlooks into the wartime and after-war entertainment.

Priestley's work, especially his dramatic work, has found much admiration outside Britain. He has certainly proved himself to be one of the most versatile, as well as one of the most vivid, of British authors. A man of such various gifts belongs to no "school." He creates, and recreates, in his own way. He is immensely himself.

### Notes:

1. "The Good Companions" – роман «Добрые товарищи»
2. "Angel Pavement" – роман «Улица ангела»
3. "Dangerous Corner" – «Опасный поворот»
4. "Time and the Conways" – «Время и семья Конвей»
5. "An Inspector Calls" – «Визит инспектора»

### II. Give Russian equivalents to the following words and word combinations:

a broadcaster, to provoke thought, to achieve resounding success, a robust novel, to have a Dickensian scope and vigour, a swirl of movement, to be left in the air, to dismiss.

### III. Explain in English and use in your sentences the following words and word combinations:

to entertain, to win recognition, to be "a smasher" in its success, prosperous, versatile, vivid.

### IV. Discuss the following points concerning J.B. Priestley's creative work.

1. Prove that J.B. Priestley was a prolific writer.
2. What can you say about the author's first novel? and the second one?
3. What place in English literature does Priestley occupy as a playwright?



4. In what play did he dismiss realism?

5. Why is J.B. Priestley admired not only in Britain but outside it as well?

V. Give a literary translation of the following extract:

In one of the prefaces to his volumes of Collected Plays Priestley has distinguished between High, Light and Broad Comedy. High Comedy he regards as unpopular with British writers and public, but appealing with particular force to Latin and Central European audiences: our preference, especially among the wealthier playgoers, he allots to Light Comedy, since it provides admirable opportunities to skilled starperformers in this line and of these the British Theatre has been a growing reliance on the players with a "box-office name" and the combination of a slick example of Light Comedy with one or two of these "names" is so powerful that managers naturally prefer to put their money on this type of article.

"My own choice, he wrote, is Broad Comedy, which is stronger in situation than Light Comedy, and more frankly farcical and less intellectual than High Comedy. It is, I believe, peculiarly suitable to the English temperament, it is the field of comedy in which I have chosen to work."

*(From "J.B. Priestley" by Ivor Brown)*

VI. Read the article and make up a short summary of it. Discuss it with your groupmates.

There are many illusions about the theatre among people who have never worked in it. One is that what happens on the stage is improvised. Actually, in a serious production the smallest movement, the shortest speech, is carefully rehearsed.

Another illusion is that while acting might be very difficult to the ordinary man, it is very easy for a man born to be an actor. Ability to imitate a voice, a walk, a gesture, is often thought to be enough to make a man an actor. Though there have been great actors with little formal training, most actors nowadays were once students in drama schools.

There they learnt how to use their voice, how to speak clearly, how to control their breathing. They were taught good body movements; how to walk, to sit down and get up, to dance, to fence. In advanced schools they learnt to observe and interpret character.

Each great capital city has several dramatic schools, some attached to particular theatres, like the Comedie Francaise in Paris. London's largest dramatic school, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, is not attached to any dramatic company but to London University. Russia's Moscow Art Theatre runs its own state-supported school where students selected from all over the country study for four years. Here the more advanced instruction is based on methods devised by the co-founder of the Moscow Art Theatre, Konstantin Stanislavsky, himself a magnificent actor.

The Actors' Studio in New York, which teaches "The Method," has been much influenced by Stanislavsky. "The Method" teaches the actor to identify himself inwardly with the character he has to play; to work from this inner identification to outward signs of character tricks of voice, gait and gesture. What must be remembered is that acting, like everything belonging to the Theatre, has a double aspect: the actor must be the character he is playing and also himself.

*(From "The Wonderful World of the Theatre" by J.B. Priestley)*

VII. Render the text in English using the following key words and word combinations:

morals and mode of life, the plot of the novel, narration, cunning swindlers, to depict, to make an impression if, "parliamentary twins."

В романе «Эта старая страна» ("It's an Old Country," 1967) нравы и быт современной Англии показаны глазами главного героя, приехавшего из Австралии. Том Адамсон, преподаватель Сиднейского университета, едет в Англию, чтобы разыскать своего отца – Чарльза Адамсона, которого не видел тридцать три года. Действия, предпринятые для этого Томом Адамсоном, составляют сюжетную линию романа. Повествование строится в форме обозрения различных характеров. В основном это бизнесмены или ловкие мошенники, в сатирическом свете изображены парламентские деятели Дадли и Ноукс. Они все время спорят, так как представляют в парламенте разные партии. Но по

существованию между ними нет никакой разницы, и автор называет их «парламентскими двойниками».

Англия производит на Тома Адамсона впечатление «мрачного и холодного ада, в котором нет ни тепла, ни света, ни настоящих ценностей ума и сердца». По словам Тома, «Англия пытается двигаться вперед и одновременно стоять на месте, а это, разумеется, весьма трудно».

(Г.В. Аникин. «История английской литературы»)

## Unit IV

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

The work of Aldous Huxley developed through four of the most interesting decades in the history of Western Man and he *responded* all the time *to* what was going on around him: the breaking of Europe, the technological revolution, the population explosion with the appearance of Mass Man, the economic revolution. During these decades violent oppositions *came into being*. It became possible for the population to be properly fed, clothed and housed; it became possible for them to be destroyed in a few minutes.

Huxley *was* always *sensitive to* these oppositions, the eternal balance, between good and evil in nature and in a human society. He spent much time in exploring the new possibilities of advantage to man. He believed in the individual, and he saw the possibilities of greater *awareness* for the individual.

A. Huxley was born in 1894, and would have gone to war if he had not been nearly blind. The rich creative years of early manhood were spent in a society which was trying to forget the horrors of war, and the social earthquakes it had brought. He began with books of verse and intellectual satirical novels. The verses showed promise but never said much; a characteristic of most verses in England ever since. The prose was *witty* and he discovered *a gift of style*.

This was the first decade of his writing, and the second, the thirties, was the decade of *anxiety*. The pursuit of pleasure in writing gave way to the search for sanity in human affairs. In the novels the lighter play of the intellect *was enriched by* a serious search for truth in human affairs which would make stable belief in human ideals possible.

Huxley's novels from "Crome Yellow"<sup>1</sup> (1921) through "Antic Hay"<sup>2</sup> (1923), and "Point Counter Point"<sup>3</sup> (1928) to "Brave New World" (1932) reveal his ironical manner and awareness *of the ills of the world*.

In the mid-thirties Huxley gave up satire for the sake of sermons ("After Many a Summer," 1939, "Time Must Have a Stop," 1944, "The Island," 1962).

A. Huxley has left a very considerable amount of novels, short stories, essays, anthologies, travel books, biographies and in them all he has left strong impressions of his own spirit. His sense of style never deserted him and we see him in all his writings as clearly as through a windowpane. His work has that double interest we expect in any writing worth studying; it is by an interesting and powerful individual, and it has something unique to say. Huxley in his life, and in his writing demonstrates an admirable way of *coping with* our extraordinary world.

### Notes:

1. "Crome Yellow" – «Желтый хром»
2. "Antic Hay" – «Шутовской хоровод»
3. "Point Counter Point" – «Контрудар»

II. Translate the following words and word combinations into Russian and use them in your own sentences. to respond to, to come into being, to be sensitive to, awareness, witty, a gift of style, anxiety, to be enriched by, the ills of the world, to cope with.

III. Answer the following questions discussing the creative work of A. Huxley:

1. What can you say about the historical background of A. Huxley's life and creation?
2. How did he respond to reality?

3. What trend in literature did he represent?
4. What are the main themes of his novels?
5. Why is A. Huxley considered to be a great satirist of our time?
6. Have you read any novels or short stories by A. Huxley?

IV. Read the text given below with the help of a dictionary and make up a summary of it.

More than any other contemporary novelist he takes in the whole range of the individual's life, from birth to death. His world is not one exclusively of young men or middle-aged men or old men; it is a world of children and adolescents as well as adults.

"Children are remarkable for their intelligence and ardour, for their curiosity, their intolerance of shame, the clarity and ruthlessness of their vision." Those, who study the souls of children in hopes of finding out something about the souls of men, will be disappointed. This difference between child and adult, between innocence and falsity seems to have made a deep impression on Huxley.

V. Give a literary translation of the following passages.

1. Aldous Huxley published his first novel when he was twenty-seven, and he had no trouble in completing his design.

He takes us, like so many English novelists before him, to a country house and there the characters talk to one another just as peacocks did. The characters are sketches, caricatures, characters in the old literary sense rather than people who react upon one another. There are young people, so there are love affairs but they exist only to be thwarted in an entirely comic atmosphere. There are old people, typed and true to their types, and they talk and do nothing. It is all very agreeable, for the scene unfolds in unnoticeable prose and it is intelligent and amusing, with no thought of stresses or clashes or vulgarity or anything disagreeably real. The young novelist has lived a little and read a great deal and he relies on his reading and his sense of comedy to carry him through. There is no criticism of life, because life does not intrude on this fantasy, but there is a good deal of criticism of literature in the pleasant and precise way of parody.

(From "On 'Crome Yellow'" by Laurence Brander)

2. We visit the right restaurants in this novel, go to the right picture dealers, listen to the right music in the right concert halls. Huxley fulfils the traditional obligation of the London novelist so well fulfilled by Thackeray in his grandfather's time, to take us to places most of us would never otherwise see and to introduce us to people we should never meet. Huxley, in the twenties, was allowed to show us a side of life that the English novelist had not been allowed to show us a very long time.

In the beginning of the novel there is an instruction on education, architecture, politics and music, but that mood soon gives way to jazz, restaurants, taxis and the lights of London.

"Antic Hay," when it was published, was a very daring novel. It was a stronger piece of writing than either "Crome Yellow" or the early short stories.

(From "On 'Antic Hay'" by Laurence Brander)

VI. Speak on Huxley's literary work, using some supplementary information.

## Unit V

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

William Somerset Maugham is one of the best known English writers of modern literature. He was not only a novelist of considerable rank, but also one of the most successful dramatists and short-story writers. His first novel "Liza of Lambeth" came out in 1897, and he went on producing books at the rate of at least one a year for sixty odd years. "Of Human Bondage," the first of his masterpieces, came out in 1919. This is a fine

*achievement*, some part of which is recollective of phases of his own life. With the publication in 1919 of the "The Moon and Sixpence"<sup>2</sup> his reputation as a novelist was established. "Cakes and Ale"<sup>3</sup> written in 1930 had brilliance, genuine pathos and beauty. It is his best novel, for, here, *sardonic wit and satire* do not drive out *human sympathy* and understanding. It represents the backstage life of the literary profession and unmasks the scheming and humbug behind the popularity to which Drifffield, the hero of the novel and "A Grand Old Man of Letters" is exposed.

Novels and novelists are usually meant chiefly for the literary genre, but the story of Drifffield – whose attraction to common things and common people in bar parlour makes him faintly *derisive of his own fame* as an author – *has a much wider appeal*. The character of Rosie, the barmaid who becomes Drifffield's first wife, is S. Maugham's masterpiece and one of the great creations in English fiction.

Always *keeping in the public eye* and *striving to satisfy the public tastes* so as to make his books sell, Maugham achieved a great popularity with the reading public in England and especially in the USA.

He *triumphed* not only as a novelist but as a short-story writer as well. He produced some of the finest stories in modern English literature. They are usually very sincere, *well-constructed* and *logically developed*. No matter how many times you read them, they always give you the same feeling of freshness and excitement that you experienced on the first reading.

Many of Maugham's stories are set in foreign lands where the author was as easily at home as he was in his native England. They *were inspired by* his travels in China, Malaya, Borneo, Siam and many other countries.

His rich experience of life and his *acute insight into* human nature gave Maugham an analytical and critical quality which found its expression in the vivid depiction of characters and situations.

The technique of short-story writing always interested Maugham. He has stated repeatedly that a story must have a beginning, a middle and an end. "I should define a short story as *a piece of fiction* that has unity of impression and that can be read at a single sitting." Maugham believes that the charm of a story lies in its interesting plot and exciting situation, but we cannot share this opinion: his own stories, though they are indeed interesting and exciting, at the same time convey deep thought, *keen observation and sharpness of characterisation*. These very qualities assure Maugham of an outstanding place in the annals of literature and in the hearts of all who love good stories.

### Notes:

1. "Of Human Bondage" – «Бремя страстей человеческих»
2. "The Moon and Sixpence" – «Луна и грош»
3. "Cakes and Ale" – «Пирог и пиво»

II. Translate the following word combinations into Russian and use them in sentences of your own:

a novelist of considerable rank, a fine achievement, sardonic wit and satire, human sympathy, to be derisive of one's own fame, to have a wide appeal, to keep in the public eye, to satisfy the public tastes, to triumph, well-constructed, logically developed, to be inspired by, an acute insight into, a piece of fiction, keen observation and sharpness of characterization.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What was William Somerset Maugham?
2. What was his first novel?
3. What can you say about the novel "Of Human Bondage"?
4. Why is "Cakes and Ale" considered to be his best novel?
5. What does it represent?
6. Why did S. Maugham achieve such a great popularity with the reading public?
7. Can we speak about the influence of Chekhov and de Maupassant upon the works of S. Maugham?
8. What qualities assure Maugham of an enduring place in literature?
9. What novels or short stories by this author have you read?

IV. Translate the following extracts into Russian in writing.

1. Young persons, who are anxious to write, sometimes pay me a compliment of asking me to tell them of certain books necessary for them to read. I do. They seldom read them, for they seem to have little curiosity. They do not care what their predecessors have done. They think they know everything that it is necessary to know of the art of fiction when they have read two or three novels by Virginia Woolf, one by E.M. Foster, several by D.H. Lawrence and oddly enough, "The Forsyte Saga." It is true that contemporary literature has a vividness of appeal that classical literature can never have, and, it is well for a young writer to know what his contemporaries are writing about and how. But there are fashions in literature and it is not easy to tell what value there is in a style of writing that happens to be the vogue at the moment. An acquaintance with the great works of the past serves as a very good standard of comparison.

2. The only two dramatists in our time who have made their mark as thinkers are Ibsen and Shaw. Both were fortunate in the time of their appearance. Ibsen's advent coincided with the movement for the liberation of women from their inferior position in which they had so long stood; Shaw's with the revolt of youth from the conventionality of the Victorian epoch. They had to their hands subjects new to the theatre that could be displayed with dramatic effectiveness. Shaw had the advantage, useful to any dramatist, of high spirits, rollicking humour, wit and fertility of comic invention. Ibsen as we know had a meagre power of invention; his characters under different names are very dully repeated, and his intrigue from play to play is little varied. It is not a gross exaggeration to say that his only gambit is the sudden arrival of a stranger who comes into a stuffy room and opens the windows; whereupon the people who were sitting there catch their death of cold and everything ends unhappily.

*(From "The Summing Up" by W.S. Maugham)*

V. Read the two extracts and answer the questions following them.

1. His only passion was for the beauty of nature and he sought felicity in the simple and natural things that life offers to everyone. You may say that it was a grossly selfish existence. It was. He was of no use to anybody, but on the other hand he did nobody any harm. His only object was his happiness, and it looked as though he had attained it. Very few people know where to look for happiness; fewer still find it. I don't know whether he was a fool or a wise man. He was certainly a man who knew his own mind. The odd thing about him to me was that he was so immensely commonplace. I should never have given him a second thought but for what I knew, that on a certain day, ten years from then, unless a chance illness cut the thread before, he must deliberately take leave of the world he loved so well.

*(From "The Lotus Eater" by W.S. Maugham)*

2. For thirty years now I have been studying my fellow men. I do not know very much about them. I suppose it is on the face that for the most part we judge the persons we meet. We draw our conclusions from the shape of the jaw, the look in the eyes, the shape of the mouth. I shrug my shoulders when people tell me that their first impressions of a person are always right. For my own part I find that the longer I know people the more they puzzle me; my oldest friends are just those of whom I can say that I don't know anything about them.

*(From "A Friend in Need" by W.S. Maugham)*

1. What impressions did the hero of "The Lotus Eater," Wilson, make on the author?
2. On what do most people judge the persons from Maugham's point of view? (See extract 2.)
3. Which sentences of these extracts can serve as Maugham's sayings? Comment on them.

VI. Render the following text into English and be ready to speak on W.S. Maugham's way of writing. Use the given key words and word combinations:

to concentrate on, a triumph over, public opinion, a compatriot, natural aspiration, humiliating, a clearly-cut plot, dependence on, artistic details, to give a reserved appraisal, to ensure demand and success of the play, a link in a chain connecting...

Один из самых проникательных в английской литературе XX столетия авторов, писавших о трагикомедии жизни, Моэм делал упор на комедии, но не с меньшим мастерством изображал

трагические судьбы, торжество «общественного мнения» над естественными стремлениями личности. Он предпочитал говорить своим соотечественникам вещи малоприятные и даже оскорбительные. В этом он продолжал традиции Свифта, Филдинга, Смоллета, Диккенса, Теккерея.

Мозэм не пролагал новых путей в литературе, но создал свой оригинальный стиль, составляющими которого были крепко сбитый сюжет, строгий отбор жизненного материала, емкость художественной детали, естественный диалог, подчинение своим целям богатств родного языка. Он писал выразительно и точно, экономно и просто.

Биограф Мозэма Энтони Кертис давал довольно сдержанную оценку его драматургическому наследию: «Мозэм... превратил себя в своеобразный компьютер по производству пьес, заложив в программу все элементы, необходимые для того, чтобы обеспечить пьесе спрос и успех».

Он писал для того, чтобы его читали, он этого хотел, и он этого добился: с его смерти минуло более 30 лет, а его читают все так же. Как-то незаметно он перешел из современников – в классики.

Пьесы Мозэма – неотъемлемая страница английской драматургии XX века, звено в цепочке, соединяющей драматургию О. Уайльда, Д. Б. Пристли и Д. Осборна.

(В. Скороденко. Вступительная статья к собранию сочинений У.С. Мозэма в 5 томах. М., 1991)

## VII. Read and comment on W.S. Maugham's quotations:

1. People ask you for criticism, but they only want praise.
2. I would sooner read a timetable or a catalogue than nothing at all. They are much more entertaining than half the novels that are written.
3. It is very seldom that life provides the writer with a ready-made story.
4. We know our friends by their defects rather than by their merits.

## Unit VI

### I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

#### Richard Aldington (1892-1962)

Early in 1929 a great number of antiwar books appeared in different countries. Erick Maria Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front"<sup>1</sup> (1929) *proclaimed* to millions of readers all over the world that the First World War had been fatal to a whole generation of youth by *causing moral and spiritual death*, though it had spared their physical lives. The years of the spiritual growth of this generation were, those of the bloody imperialist war, in the course of which all *human values* seemed to have been lost. The deadly reality of war made all the fine phrases of politicians and demagogues empty and *meaningless*.

The hero of Ernest Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms"<sup>2</sup> (1929) threw aside the traditional values of society as *hypocritical*. The ex-soldiers could not find a place in postwar life, and therefore were called "the lost generation." *The term was coined* by Gertrude Stein, an American woman writer, who once said to Hemingway: "You are the lost generation." The name "lost generation literature" was later *applied to* the wings of many authors, including Hemingway in the USA, Remarque in Germany and Aldington in Great Britain.

Richard Aldington is one of the most prominent twentieth century English authors. He began his literary work in the years preceding the First World War. His participation in the War *left a deep mark on* his general outlook and greatly influenced his work as a writer. Most of his novels and short stories are *a passionate bitter protest against* the senseless cruelty and brutality of the war. Among these antimilitary books "Death of a Hero"<sup>3</sup> (1929) undoubtedly *occupies the first place*. It is a story of a young man, George Winterbourne, of his childhood and youth, first love and marriage, his service in the fighting British army and, finally, his tragical death at the front. The book is extremely powerful and *leaves a lasting impression on* the reader.

Of the other books by R. Aldington especially famous are "All Men Are Enemies,"<sup>4</sup> "Very Heaven," "The Colonel's Daughter" and some short stories. He is also the author of several biographies (O. Balzac, D.H. Lawrence).

R. Aldington was a very versatile and talented man-of-letters who produced important work in several different genres of literature. His best poetry and prose fiction should survive as "minor classics" of the twentieth century.

## Notes:

1. "All Quiet on the Western Front" – «На Западном фронте без перемен»
2. "A Farewell to Arms" – «Прощай, оружие»
3. "Death of a Hero" – «Смерть героя»
4. "All Men Are Enemies" – «Все люди – враги»

II. Translate the following word combinations into Russian and use them in sentences of your own:

to proclaim, to cause moral and spiritual death, human values, meaningless, hypocritical, to coin a term, to apply to, to leave a deep mark on, a passionate bitter protest against, to occupy the first place, to leave a lasting impression on.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What books appeared in 1929?
2. What did Erick Maria Remarque's "All Quiet on the Western Front" proclaim to millions of readers?
3. What did the war cause?
4. Who was called "the lost generation"?
5. Who coined the term "the lost generation"?
6. When did R. Aldington begin his literary work?
7. What do most of his novels and short stories demonstrate?
8. What place does the novel "Death of a Hero" occupy among the antimilitary books?
9. What other novels by R. Aldington do you know?

IV. Read the text with the help of a dictionary and write a summary of it.

The most important work written by Richard Aldington is his novel "Death of a Hero." It is not only an antiwar novel exposing the inhuman nature of war. It is also a history of the spiritual growth of those "who spent their childhood and adolescence struggling ..., whose early manhood coincided with the European War." The author called his book "a memorial to a generation which hoped much, strove honestly, and suffered deeply."

"Death of a Hero" is a lyrical improvisation in prose where the author, sometimes sympathetic, sometimes ironic, sometimes indignant, appears not only as narrator, but as friend to the main character. He often comments on the action and expresses his opinion of the characters, and his commentary occupies a larger place in the book than the actual story itself.

Aldington begins his Prologue on a very personal note. The author-narrator informs the reader of the death of George Winterbourne only a few days before the end of the war, and then proceeds with the description of how several people closely related to his late friend, that is George's father and mother, and also his wife and his mistress, reacted to the fact. The parents did not care much, being deep in their own problems. Their response was much more conditioned by the conventional patterns of behaviour than by any deep personal feeling. The Winterbournes are for the author a symbol of the English bourgeoisie. "It is the tragedy of England," he says, "that the war has taught its Winterbournes nothing."

As for George's wife, Elizabeth, and his mistress, Fanny, they soon dried their tears after George's death. So the narrator feels it necessary to tell the story of George Winterbourne's. The author hopes to find and expose the forces in the social life of prewar England that made it possible for a whole generation to perish in the fire of a world war.

The Winterbournes were ignorant, snobbish, selfassured. They were ready to condemn everything that departed from the acceptable, long settled bourgeois way of life. But young George Winterbourne turned away from the gods of his class and found an alternative in art and literature. It was the concept of Beauty that he opposed to the hateful narrow-minded bourgeois way of thinking. He reveals his own ideas in conversations with his future wife Elizabeth. They talked a great deal about social problems and the need for social reform.

Aldington, like his hero, hated the society he was part of. In his novel he tells the bitter truth about it. But like his hero he could not overcome his individualistic view of life, and that is why George Winter-bourne's fate



is so tragic.

V. Give a literary translation of the following extracts. Compare the two extracts.

Given below are two fragments from Aldington's novel "Death of a Hero." In the first (Part II, Chapter 2) George Winterbourne, the main character of the novel, is shown in times of peace. George is a painter and journalist. At a party he meets Elizabeth Paston. George and Elizabeth become interested in each other. They are both young and full of life and a happy future seems to await them.

The second fragment (Part II, Chapter 8) shows George at the front and describes the horrors of war.

1. "What do you do?"

"Oh, I'm a painter, and I write hack articles for Shobbe and such people to earn a living." <sup>1</sup>

"But don't you sell your pictures?"

"I try to, but you see, people in England aren't much interested in modern art, not as they are on the Continent or even in America. They want the same old thing done over again and done with more sugar. One thing about the British bourgeois – he doesn't know anything about pictures, but very stoutly stands for what he likes, and what he likes is anything except art."

"Surely there are some up-to-date collectors in England." <sup>2</sup>

"Why, yes, of course, probably as many as anywhere else but too many of them collect pictures as an investment and so only take what the dealers advise them to buy."

...At that moment they were interrupted by the gentle Mrs. Shobbe.

"Excuse me for interrupting you, Mr. Winterbourne. Elizabeth dear, do you know how late it is? I'm afraid you'll miss the last bus, and you know I promised your dear mother I would look after you..."

**Notes:**

1. I write hack articles for Shobbe and such people to earn a living – Чтобы заработать на жизнь, я пишу статьи по заказу Шобба и ему подобных.

2. Surely there are some up-to-date collectors in England – В Англии наверняка есть коллекционеры, интересующиеся современным искусством.

3. They easily found the new Front life in the daylight. Directions in English had been hastily scrawled on the old German trench notices and they wondered how on earth, they could have missed the way the night before. The Front line was full of infantry: some on sentry duty, some sitting hunched up on the fire-steps; many lying in long, narrow holes like graves, scooped in the side of the trench. They found an officer who took them along to show them the new communication trench was wanted. Winterbourne, turning to answer a question from Evans struck the butt of his rifle sharply against a sleeping man in one of the holes. The man did not stir.

"Your fellows are sleeping soundly," said Evans.

"Yes," said the officer tonelessly, "but they may be dead for all I know." <sup>1</sup> Stretcher-bearers too tired to take down all the bodies. Some of 'em <sup>2</sup> are dead, and some asleep. We have to go round and kick 'em to find which is which."

**Notes:**

1. he may be dead for all I know – я не уверен, жив ли он

2. 'em = them

VI. Read the article and speak about R. Aldington's contribution to world literature.

Richard Aldington is best known as one of the leaders of the imagist movement, during the second decade of the twentieth century. His role as an imagist poet and theorist, however, was only a small part of a literary career which lasted nearly fifty years and which witnessed the publication of more than a hundred different books in England and America. He continued to write poetry for many years after imagism had ceased to function as a movement, and his volumes include a series of long poems which embody a variety of poetic techniques. In addition, he has produced several novels and collections of short stories, the majority of which have been published in other languages. He has also published many biographies, translations and volumes of

critical essays; he has edited and written introductions to a large number of books.

In addition to the imagist poems and his famous war novel "Death of a Hero," his best long poems are "Life Quest," "The Crystal World" and "A Fool in the Forest." His other good novels are "All Men Are Enemies," "The Colonel's Daughter," "Seven Against Reeves" and "The Romance of Casanova." Along with "Death of a Hero," all but the last of these novels are satires on English society. Two collections of short stories "Roads to Glory" and "Soft Answers" must be included among his best prose fiction.

## **Unit VII**

### **English Writers of the Period Between the Wars (1920-1940)**

The period between the wars (1920–1940) was marked by: Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, and James Joyce. Woolf and Joyce permanently altered novelistic technique through the development of the stream of consciousness style of writing; Lawrence brought to the novel a fresh strain of vitality.

I. Read and translate the texts about the authors mentioned above and discuss their creative work:

1. What literary trends did they belong to?
2. What contribution to English literature did they make?
3. What major works did they create?
4. Speak about each writer's peculiar manner of writing.
5. Why is each writer considered to be great?

### **David Herbert Lawrence (1885–1930)**

David Herbert Lawrence began his literary career with "The White Peacock" (1911) and "The Trespasser" (1912). Following a limited success with these novels, he stepped into the front rank of contemporary novelists with "Sons and Lovers" (1913). He led a wandering life which in Australia yielded material for "Kangaroo" (1923) and in Mexico for "The Plumed Serpent" (1926). One of his purposes was to revolutionize the modern English attitude towards sex, and in "Lady Chatterley's Lover" (1928) he threw off such restraints of convention as had hitherto kept that purpose in leash. The book was temporarily repressed on the charge of obscenity.

Coming from the working class, Lawrence was inevitably class-conscious. He was a good hater, hating principally the lust for money and the "modern" way of living.

However, his few attempts to touch upon the problem of class struggle are somewhat obscure and rather insecurely supported by psychological analysis in the Freudian manner.

The stylistic quality of Lawrence's writing is of great interest. His methods of character creation are original. He seems intimately close to his characters, and the reader is brought into immediate relation with them through the sheer urgency of his writing; the words seem hot and quivering on the page. Lawrence takes us right inside his characters. He captures, it seems, the moment of life itself, both in men and women and in the physical world of nature.

Yet, the world of his books is a somewhat lop-sided world, in which the conflict between man and woman takes disproportionate dimensions.

D.H. Lawrence's reputation has greatly varied since his death in 1930. His work undoubtedly had a great deal of influence on the writers of the 1930s, both in prose and verse, but there was at the same time a widespread feeling that he had been overrated because of the personal appeal he exercised. The usual critical opinion was that, while undoubtedly gifted, he was an artist manque. But in the 1950s Lawrence was acclaimed as a great novelist.

The best thing Lawrence wrote in novel form may be the early part of his semi-autobiographical "Sons and Lovers" (1913). It has a freshness and candour he never achieved again. At one time it was alleged that Lawrence could not create character but the best answer to the allegation is that Lawrence could create character – in "Sons and Lovers."

Are there any better drawn characters in English fiction than Mr. and Mrs. Mord? Another attractive area in Lawrence's work is the travel book, to which he gave a distinctive form. Verse, apart from a few striking poems, was something Lawrence wrote a lot of but did not do well: the most poetically effective passages in his work occur in the novels and tales. But in the "Birds, Beasts and Flowers" volume he created a new kind of

poem. Lawrence is unsurpassed in another new genre created by him in "Studies, in Classic American Literature." Completely original in method and challenging in judgment these "Studies" have won applause from American critics and have influenced the way they see the history of their own literature.

Lawrence died in 1930, but he remains a living writer, not only studied as a literary classic, but avidly read. He divides opinion, as he always did. Some readers cannot stand the sultriness of his work. Others are put off him because they resent the way in which the doctrinaire of sex usurps the place of the poet of love. But there is quite a different side to Lawrence's work. A miner's son from the English Midlands, he knew in a way that few great English writers have done the life of the men and women who do the practical work of the world. Though like many writers of the twentieth century he was a restless traveller, and some of his best work evoke the impact on an English temperament of the exotic, of peoples and cultures remote in time or space, again and again the tone sardonic, Sharp-tongued English Midlander returns. Whatever their defects, Lawrence's books always suggest things that are living and moving and growing. It seems probable that he is one of the leading writers of the world.

### **James Joyce (1882–1941)**

James Joyce is a famous English writer of Irish descent. He was born and educated in Dublin which forms the scene of his "Dubliners" (1914), fifteen stories of Dublin life. Joyce is also the author of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man"<sup>1</sup> (1916) (autobiographical novel), the world-famous "Ulysses"<sup>2</sup> (1922) and "Finnegan's Wake"<sup>3</sup> (1939).

He is one of the first authors who introduced in literature the so-called stream of consciousness technique by which is meant an attempt to render the character's consciousness in itself as it flows from moment to moment, placing the reader, as it were, within the mind of this or that personage.

This method found its supreme expression in "Ulysses" in which it resulted in complete loss of bonds with objective reality and in utter destruction of literary form.

Joyce's formalistic experimenting had a considerable number of followers among the more reactionary modernist writers.

Yet, "Dubliners" (his first great book, "Dubliners" is a collection of stories, each dealing with life in Dublin) represent the before-stream-of-consciousness period of Joyce's creative work. They are written in a frank and factual way, and the author of "Ulysses" is made recognizable here only by his deep interest in psychological matters.

Most of the stories depict a cheerless life of lonely, unhappy people of Dublin. The theme of hopelessness and frustration of best human aspirations runs more or less through all of them as a kind of leitmotiv.

"A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" was a revision of an unpublished book, "Stephen Hero," a fictionalized autobiography of Joyce's formative years. As with "Dubliners," this story is a small-scale model not just of Dublin, but of all human life, indeed of all history and geography. The creation of such a microcosm continued to be one of Joyce's major objectives throughout his career.

Joyce had no questions about own genius and that his proper medium was fiction. He made these decisions early in his life and never deviate from them.

In his two great master novels, "Ulysses"<sup>2</sup> and "Finnegan's Wake"<sup>3</sup> (1939), Joyce broke completely with traditions of the Victorian novel. "Ulysses" unfolds on a single day in 1904 in the life of three people: Leopold Bloom, an Irish Jew; his wife, Molly; and Stephen Dedalus, the hero of "A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man."<sup>4</sup> In this book Joyce further developed the stream-of-consciousness technique of moving into and recording the thought processes of characters as they went through the affairs of daily life. Each incident corresponds to an incident in Homer's "Odyssey," so that the immediate becomes historical and universal. Joyce felt that Ulysses was the most complete man ever depicted and he compares Bloom to him.

His final work, "Finnegan's Wake," takes its departure from an old folktale of the corpse that returns to life at a wake when whiskey is poured on him. The wake becomes an awakening. Weaving in and out of history, literature, and languages, Joyce creates a dense tapestry that continues to puzzle scholars. Often he creates new words or combines parts of words in a new way. Publication of Joyce's works was fraught with difficulties. The publication of "Dubliners" was held up for years because both Irish and English publishers had changed or eliminated words and phrases without his permission. "Ulysses" was banned in both the United States and England when published, and it took nine years before an American court lifted the ban. England soon followed suit.

## Notes:

1. "A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man" – «Портрет художника в юности»
2. "Ulysses" – «Улисс»
3. "Finnegan's Wake" – «Поминки по Финнегану»

### **Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)**

Virginia Woolf, like Joyce, and unlike Lawrence, was an aesthete. She does not seek to judge life, only to depict it. Objections have been raised that depiction without judgment is impossible, because human life cannot exist without moral decisions. But this is only to say that the characters must be shown as judging, not that the author has to be.

In Woolf's novels, plot has become only a minor element. Woolf's novels are basically a series of interior monologues, or inner soliloquies. Although she was a bold stylistic pioneer, Woolf was never popular with reading public. But she exerted a major influence on the writers that followed. There is a constant stream of publications devoted to the doings of her literary circle. "To the Lighthouse" (1930) is agreed to be her best novel because of the effective depiction of "Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay," no doubt based on her own parents. "The Waves" (1931), the most experimental of her novels, is more effective in quotation than as a whole; the best things in it are short prose-poems, Virginia Woolf's songs of solitude. The critics who admire Mrs. Woolf's work are divided about her rank among writers. It seems best to regard her as occasionally great but very uneven.

«Orlando» is one of the poorest novels by V. Woolf. While «Orlando» (1928) may lack the subtle internal lyricism of "Mrs. Dalloway," or the brilliant artistic revelations of "To the Lighthouse," it manages to expose, Woolf's specific shortcomings as a writer. By rejecting classical techniques, Woolf simply could not transcend the traditional understanding of human nature (something that her 'colleague and contemporary, James Joyce, was able to do). Be that as it may, the writer's admirers will find this book interesting, and they are numerous indeed. Another master of 20th century world literature, Garcia Marquez, once said: "It's strange that not a single critic ever discovered the influence Virginia Woolf has had on me, an influence that truly exists. She has an astonishingly keen perception of the world, and most importantly, a keen perception of time, and this is precisely what helped me write."

#### II. Read and reproduce the jokes:

1. Critic: The poets of today put plenty of fire into their verses.

Poet: The trouble with some of them is that they do not put enough of their verses into the fire.

2. Old man: Why are you looking so bad, dear boy?

Young poet: Brown does not know who Shakespeare was.

Old man: Well, how does that concern you?

Young poet: I have been thinking that one day I too may be forgotten.

3. Critic: Which are the two best novels of the year, sir?

Novelist: I am sorry, I can't tell, for I have published only one of my novels this year.

### **Unit VIII**

#### I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### **Survey of Poetry**

There was a profound change in the climate of literature during the decade immediately following the end of the First World War. Poetry, which appears most contemporary in spirit, has a different look from that which preceded it. Such is the shifting character of historical reality that poems which looked important in the 1930s owing to their *contemporaneity* look less important in 1960. What appeared *outmoded* in the 1920s may be called Georgianism; what was new may be called Modernism.

One of the greatest English poets is **William Butler Yeats** (1865–1939). He *derived a poetic style from* Pre-Raphaelites and *the subject matter from* Celtic legend. Some of Yeats's early poems now appear *precious* and

others such as "Down by the Salley Gardens" have become a part of the lyrical tradition of English poetry. In his middle period, that of "Responsibilities" (1914) and "The Wild Swans at Coole" (1917) he adopted a plainer, more homespun style, and themes of more immediate contemporary interest.

But it was the work of his last period that *earned him his posthumous reputation* as one of the most talented poets. His later poetry resolves the conflict between the romantic pseudo-philosophical and mystical side of Yeats's character and the ambitious politician: the feudal realist.

Given below is W.B. Yeats's famous poem "When You Are Old."

When you are old and grey and full of sleep  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look,  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.  
How many loved your moments of glad grace  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim's soul in you  
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;  
And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

**Alfred Edward Housman** (1859–1936) was a *forerunner* of the Georgian movement which was, during the First World War and for some years after it, the leading force in English poetry. As a movement it *was* very *loosely co-ordinated* and had no formal platform or programme.

Housman *had localized his poems in* the agricultural county of Shropshire, and like him the Georgians were consciously English in reaction against the Continental influences. The outbreak of war in 1914 gave the movement a still stronger patriotic impulse. Its Englishness consisted rather in an extremely articulate consciousness of the beauty of the English landscape, its ancient villages and declining rural crafts. One of the causes of the later reaction against Georgianism was its failure to take note of *urban and industrial manifestations*, except by way of protest.

With certain exceptions the Georgians mostly wrote short poems, *free from didactic intention*, simple in theme, neither strenuously passionate nor intellectually demanding. They accepted traditional lyrical forms and metres and were unexperimental.

They appealed to, and reached, a very wide public, and during the period of their ascendancy poetry achieved a popularity it has lacked since their decline.

A.E. Housman's work consists of two volumes of short poems – "A Shropshire Lad" (1896) and "Last Poem" (1922). In a short poem from the first collection he sings praise to the beauty of the English landscape which is in harmony with the youth's feeling.

In the morning, in the morning,  
In the happy field of hay,  
Oh, we looked at one another  
In the light of day.  
In the blue and silver morning,  
In the haycock as we lay,  
Oh, we looked at one another  
And we looked away.

In his poem "When I Was One-and-Twenty" he says:

When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard a wise man say,  
Give pounds and crowns and guineas  
But not your heart away:  
Give pearls away and rubies

But keep your fancy free,  
But I was one-and-twenty  
No use to talk to me.  
When I was one-and-twenty  
I heard him say again,  
The heart out of the bosom  
Was never given in vain;  
'tis<sup>1</sup> paid with sighs aplenty  
And sold for endless rue.  
And I am one-and-twenty  
And oh, 'tis true, is true.

At the age of seventy-three he embodied in a single lecture his unorthodox and provocative views on "The Name and Nature of Poetry" (1932). *The distinguishing marks* of his poems are a concrete and economical vocabulary, *a rhythm regular* but without monotony, *a classic brevity*. These lyrics, partly because of their technical assurance and partly because of their unmistakable emotional conviction, *gained* wide and rapid *currency*. The English quality background *made a strong national appeal*.

Among the most prominent and *prolific* of the Georgians was **John Masefield**, whose "Salt Water Ballads" (1902) celebrated the English seafaring tradition, and made a great many readers think they were more nautically minded than they were. In 1911 "The Everlasting Mercy" *inaugurated* a new series of realistic narrative poems whose brutality of theme and treatment aroused considerable attention. In 1919 Masefield expressed the Englishman's love of fox-hunting in his long Chaucerian narrative of "Reynard the Fox," which *attained enormous popularity*. As a lyric and reflective poet he *was* somewhat *neglected*, and his wide appeal was due to his fellow-country-men's love of action.

**Walter de la Mare** also made his first appearance in 1902 with "Songs of Childhood." This was followed by further collections of short of unusual imaginative quality, notable "The Listeners" (1912) and "Peacock Pie" (1913), one of the most beautiful books of poems of his generation.

Tom sang for joy and Ned sang for joy  
  and old Sam sang for joy;  
All we four boys piped up loud, just like one boy;  
And the ladies that sat with the Squire,  
  their cheeks were all wet,  
For the noise of the voice of us, boys,  
when we sang our Quartette.

As a writer of poems about, and for, children, de la Mare is almost unsurpassed. In other moods he showed a marked attraction for the uncanny, and revealed a world of suggestion existing somewhere between reality and pure fantasy.

**Notes:**

1. 'tis = it is

- II. Translate into Russian the following words and word combinations and use them in the sentences of your own:

contemporaneity, outmoded, to derive a poetic style from, the subject matter, precious, to earn a posthumous reputation, a forerunner, to be loosely coordinated, to localize the poems in, urban and industrial manifestations, free from didactic intention, a distinguishing mark, a regular rhythm, a classic brevity, to gain currency, to make a strong national appeal, prolific, to inaugurate, to attain enormous popularity, to be neglected.

- III. Discuss the poetic legacy of W.B. Yeats, A.E. Housman, J. Masfield, W. de la Mare with your fellow students.

IV. Try to give the translation of the poems given in text in verse.

V. Recite one of the poems given above.

## Unit IX

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965)

An American by birth and early training, T.S. Eliot settled in England in 1914 and became a British citizen in 1927. Since he published *his first volume of poems* ("Prufrock,"<sup>1</sup> 1917) T.S. Eliot had gradually overcome the incomprehension of critics and *has won an authority such as* no other poet in English has ever enjoyed an authority as a poet seconded by *his prestige as a critic, publicist and playwright*. His poetry and criticism embraced a tradition from Homer to Dante and Shakespeare and included a special preference for the 17th century English metaphysical poets and the French symbolists. His technique was formed out of learned reference and echoes from Ecclesiastes, Shakespeare, Dante, Homer and classical myths mingling strangely with slang, scraps of popular music, poetry and *scenes from high and low life* in contemporary London.

"The Waste Land"<sup>2</sup> (1922), the masterpiece of his earlier manner, expresses powerfully, through the use of ancient myths translated into contemporary social life, man's need for Salvation. The poem was generally read as giving voice to the disillusionment of the post-war world.

With years Eliot became *aescetic* and *contemplative* and *developed a more composed lyrical style* to suit his new meditative manner ("Ash Wednesday,"<sup>3</sup> 1930).

*His mature masterpiece* "Four Quartets"<sup>4</sup> (1943) is based on the poet's memories of certain locales in America and England which became *the starting points for his probings into* the mysteries of time, history, eternity, and the meaning of life.

From 1935 he experimented with the verse drama ("Murder in the Cathedral," "Family Reunion," "The Cocktail Party").

Eliot *received the Nobel Prize* for literature in 1948, with a citation recognizing his *innovations in modern poetry*. The poems of T.S. Eliot together with his critical essays are now regarded as among *the most influential literary documents* of the twentieth century. As a critic puts it, "we owe an immense debt to Eliot *for extending the range of English poetry*. But it is a chilling reflection of the poet and on his age that so distinguished a writer should have spent so much of his energy in negation."

### Notes:

1. "Prufrock" – сборник стихов «Пруфрок»
2. "The Waste Land" – поэма «Бесплодная земля»
3. "Ash Wednesday" – поэма «Пепельная среда»
4. "Four Quartets" – «Четыре квартета»

II. Translate into Russian the following phrases and use them in your own sentences:

the first volume of poems; to win an authority as; one's prestige as a critic, publicist and playwright; scenes from high and low life; aescetic; contemplative; to develop a more composed lyrical style; a mature masterpiece; the starting point for one's probing into; to receive the Nobel Prize; innovations in modern poetry; the most influential literary documents; for extending the range of English poetry.

III. Speak on the creative work of T.S. Eliot, the leading poet of the English-speaking nations. Use some additional material.

IV. Learn the poems. Try to translate them into Russian.

1.  
Words strain,



(From "Collected Poems")

(From "Four Quartets")

various years devoted to the subtleties of poetic mastery or to different poets (Dante, Byron, Keats).

VII. Answer the following questions:

1. What writers were preoccupied with experiments in form and structure?
2. What common features were typical of modernists?
3. Why do you think modernism deserves the attention of the reader?
4. What is it preoccupied with?
5. Have you read any books by Lawrence or Joyce?

VIII. Comment on the quotations:

1. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

(F. Bacon)

2. What is vice today may be virtue tomorrow.

(H. Fielding)

## PART II

### Unit X

- I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

#### English Postwar Literature

After World War II the novel continued to be *the dominant genre* in postwar literature and many writers depicted the postwar world *in realistic colours*. Several major writers like C.P. Snow, Gr. Greene came to the fore in interwar period, but their specific manner outlined itself most markedly in their postwar work. Young writers like James Aldridge, who are ready to keep up the standard of wholesome optimism, *deserve notice*.

In the fifties there appeared a very interesting trend in literature, the followers of which were called "The Angry Young Men." The postwar changes had given a chance to a large number of young people from the more *democratic layers of society* to receive education at universities. But on graduating, these students found they had no prospects in life. Unemployment had increased after the war and besides that, English society continued to follow the old *conservative rules of life* and apparently did not need them. No one was interested to learn what their ideas on life and society were. They felt deceived and became angry. The young people's disillusionment *determined the character of fiction* created by a group of writers, among them were Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Osborne. Through their characters these writers were eager to express their anger with society.

Many works of English writers of the period *were dedicated to* the philosophical problems. The most influential philosophical trends of twentieth-century thought often *evoked an existential attitude*. It implied a certain skepticism about ever knowing the nature of a human being. Existentialist philosophy placed limitations on man's knowledge and power.

The influence of existentialist ideas *left a profound impression on* the creation of Iris Murdoch. She created a *series of intricate novels* that deal with the nature of man and his delusions. With I. Murdoch the trend in creative writing moved to philosophical fiction.

William Golding's novels and especially his most successful novel "Lord of the Flies" *are notable for* their symbolic treatment of human nature.

The proclaimed need was, in fiction for a return to *straightforward narrative* with no symbolic, trickery, interesting plots and well-rounded characters in the approved 19th century way. "The novel should not only tell a story," it should take an intelligent observant interest in the world in which ordinary people lived their day-to-day lives. And in poetry there was a demand for strict forms. There was a natural desire *to cling to* familiar cultural forms in a strange and unsettling world.

*The major achievements in* the postwar English novel are William Cooper's "Scenes from Provincial Life,"

Kingsley Amis's "Lucky Jim," Angus Wilson's "The Old Men at the Zoo," William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," Iris Murdoch's "Under the Net."

II. Translate and learn the following words and word combinations from the text. Use them in the sentences of your own.

a dominant genre, to depict in realistic colours, to come to the fore, to deserve notice, democratic layers of society, to follow the conservative rules of life, to determine the character of fiction, to be dedicated to, to evoke an existential attitude, to leave a profound impression on, a series of intricate novels, to be notable for, straightforward narrative, to cling to, major achievements in.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What literary genre was dominant in postwar literature?
2. Why is the movement of "The Angry Young Men" called like that?
3. What writers belonged to that literary trend? Have you read any novels by these writers?
4. How can you classify the works of Iris Murdoch and William Golding?
5. Do you remember the quotation about the predestination of the novel?
6. What are the major achievements in postwar literature?

IV. Read the following texts and render them in English.

1. *William Cooper's* "Scenes from Provincial Life" appeared in 1950. This novel looks at the everyday lives of a group of young people in a Midlands city during the spring and summer of 1939 just before the outbreak of war: their love affairs and jobs and casual social collisions. The characters are fairly ordinary young people working as school teachers, accountants, commercial artists. And the setting is ordinary, too: schools and cafes and trams. During the fifties many other writers used Cooper's manner of writing in novels that were set in the provinces in lower middle-class or occasionally working-class situations.

2. Among them is *Kingsley Amis* with his celebrated work «Lucky Jim" (1954). Jim Dixon, Amis's skeptical hero desperately trying to hold down a job he does not want as a junior lecturer in a provincial university is a representative type. Jim's desire to find a comfortable niche for himself, his hatred of anything that could be called pretentious were the qualities that appealed to young intellectuals who had been educated in local grammar schools.

3. The next important writer who began as a realistic commentator on social life and has steadily tried to push beyond realism is *Angus Wilson*. Wilson is a highly intelligent writer who is interested in the problems of power and responsibility, the conflict between generations in contemporary England. He began in the tradition of the 19th century realistic fiction but in "The Old Men at the Zoo" (1961) he wrote a fable that showed a desire to move on from realism. Even in an age when the dominant taste was for unexperimental realism novelists felt the pull towards a different kind of fiction, to fantasy, fable or allegory, even some who began as realists like Amis and Wilson. And in fact, some of the best admired fiction of the 50s was written in this vein of fable or fantasy.

4. Thus in 1954 *William Golding* published "Lord of the Flies," a work which was to achieve global popularity. Golding is a brilliant storyteller and his novel "Lord of the Flies" is an exciting story about the fate of a party of English schoolboys who are marooned on a desert island. But it is also a philosophical allegory about the nature of evil and good.

5. The mid-fifties also saw the publication of *Iris Murdoch's* first novel "Under the Net." This is an engaging story of the casual adventures of a young Irish writer living in London. She has published innumerable other novels. She usually writes about intelligent sensitive characters whose lives are complicated by secrets and mysteries. It is not always easy to believe in Murdoch's characters, they often seem like puppets acting out their author's love of pattern-making.

(From "A Short History of English Literature " by I. Evans)

V. Render the following text in English. Use the key words and word combinations given below:

to be marked by, to make a noise, a playwright, "Hurry on Down" by John Wain, "Look Back in Anger" by J. Osborn, to approve enthusiastically, indignation, resentment, conservative.

Начало 50-х годов ознаменовалось в литературной жизни Англии событием, которое произвело немало шума как в самой стране, так и за ее пределами. На литературную арену вышли прозаики, поэты и драматурги, получившие название "разгневанных", или "рассерженных", – родилась литература "рассерженной молодежи".

"Рассерженные" выступили в 1953 году, когда были опубликованы романы Кингли Эмиса "Счастличик Джим" и Джона Уэйна "Спеши вниз" (1960). С тех пор, в особенности с момента появления на сцене пьесы Осборна "Оглянись во гневе" (1956), вся Англия заговорила о "рассерженной молодежи" как общественном явлении. Одни говорили с одобрением и даже восторгом, другие с возмущением и брезгливым пренебрежением. Но не заметить ее было невозможно; она волновала, хотя и по-разному, молодых и старых, передовых и консервативных людей страны.

## Unit XI

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Graham Greene (1904–1991)

Few writers *have provoked such contradictory assessments* during their lifetime as Graham Greene. A broad sweep of *literary ancestors* have been summoned up to explain his style and thought, from those acknowledged by Greene himself, such as Conrad and James, to Dostoevsky, Kafka, the 19th century Decadents, the French Catholic novelists and more recently even the French Existentialists. This mesh of *literary cross-judgements* has been woven out of Greene's *peculiar contradictory development*, for he is a Catholic whose books, and particularly his *religious novels have earned him an international reputation* rare among contemporary English writers.

Born in 1904, the son of G.H. Greene, the Headmaster of an English public school, Greene *was given a conventional middle-class upbringing*. Later in Balliol College, Oxford, he read history for three years. It was at the end of his Oxford career, in 1925, that he published a collection of poems "Babbling April." For the most part these are imitative of the Oxford aestheticism of the 1920s.

After leaving Oxford, Greene worked as a journalist for four years, first in Nottingham and later as a subeditor of "The Times" in London. So he *reached maturity and independence as a writer* at the start of the 1930s.

Green *has roamed* the world from Vietnam to West Africa, Latin America and Haiti. Using these places as setting for his stories, he shows *protagonists* caught up in malignant circumstances. For example, in "A Burnt-Out Case"<sup>1</sup> (1961) an architect, *repelled* by modern life, attempts to lose himself in a leper colony deep in Africa and *to purge* all human desires and contacts.

Graham Greene himself divides his novels into two main groups: "serious" novels and novels of "entertainment." As "serious" he himself considers the following: "The Man Within"<sup>2</sup> (1929), "It's a Battlefield" (1934), "England Made Me"<sup>3</sup> (1936), "The Heart of the Matter"<sup>4</sup> (1948); these books *are marked with pessimism* and disillusion. For instance, "England Made Me" is a deep pessimistic novel and "The Heart of the Matter" is a novel about the fate of a well-meaning man who commits suicide to get out of the blind alley of the moral *problems* he had been trying *to solve*.

An *exciting and violent plot* is characteristic for the second kind of novel. The novels of "entertainment" are "Stamboul Train" (1932), "The Confidential Agent"<sup>5</sup> (1939), "Our Man in Havana"<sup>6</sup> (1958) and others. But these novels of "entertainment" are quite different from ordinary *detective "thrillers"*. There is one trait always present in his books, which singles Greene out of commonplace detective story writers – his humanism, *the deep psychological analysis* of his heroes and a very thoughtful attitude to the burning political problems of the day. "Our Man in Havana" is a social and political satire. In both serious and adventure detective stories. We see the *ambiguities* of moral judgment and intensely human crises of faith. In "The Quiet American"<sup>7</sup> (1955) Green *unfolds a theme* in which stupidity, hypocrisy and ambition play their sorry parts. It is suggested that on this occasion Green, turning from his favourite theme of religion and sacrifice, *has substituted* certain problems of morality. But it would be unfair to describe the purpose of the book as a problem novel. It is full of problems, but they emerge as part of the life which is so energetically, vividly, frankly offered for our

inspection. It is Graham Green at his best.

### **Notes:**

1. "A Burnt-Out Case" – «Ценой потери»
2. "The Man Within" – «Человек внутри»
3. "England Made Me" – «Меня создала Англия»
4. "The Heart of the Matter" – «Суть дела»
5. "A Confidential Agent" – «Доверенное лицо»
6. "Our Man in Havana" – «Наш человек в Гаване»
7. "The Quiet American" – «Тихий американец»

II. Translate the following word combinations from into Russian and rise them in sentences of your own:

to provoke contradictory assessments, literary ancestors, literary cross-judgements, peculiar contradictory development, religious novels, to earn smb an international reputation, to give a conventional middle-class upbringing, to reach maturity and independence as a writer, to roam, a protagonist, to repel, to purge, entertainment, to be marked with pessimism, to solve problems, an exciting and violent plot, detective thrillers, a deep psychological analysis, ambiguity, to unfold a theme, to substitute.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. Why has Graham Greene provoked such a contradictory assessment?
2. What earned him an international reputation?
3. What education did Gr. Greene get?
4. When and how did he reach maturity as a writer?
5. How does he show his main heroes?
6. Into what two groups does he divide his novels?
7. The novels of "entertainment" are different from ordinary detective "thrillers," aren't they?
8. What are both genres characteristic of?
9. Why is Gr. Greene's "The Quiet American" so popular with the reading public?

IV. Read the text and render it in English. Concentrate on:

1. The composition of the novel.
2. The image of Pyle, the quiet American.

### ***The Novel "The Quiet American" by Gr. Greene***

Graham Greene gained recognition as a big writer with the appearance of his "The Quiet American." By composition "The Quiet American" is a first-person story told by one Fowler, an English correspondent. In the course of the story the reader witnesses Fowler's transformation from a passive and impassive on-looker into one who can't help giving a hand to the patriots of Vietnam. Thus, with Fowler's help Pyle is physically removed.

Pyle is one of the US pioneer spies in Vietnam. Pyle's image is drawn with great truth and skill. He is the "quiet" American who even wins the reader's sympathy at first. He is young, strong, handsome, genial and... kind-hearted, which does not stop him, in the long run, from committing a great crime against the Vietnamese people. With Pyle out of the game, Fowler and Phuong (his girlfriend) come to an understanding again, and Fowler will be happy if only he can do away with the restlessness that never seems to leave him...

V. Translate the following text into Russian in writing.

Greene would characterize himself as a realist and a religious writer, not in the sense of a Francois Mauriac, the French Catholic novelist who admired him and who has been often cited as a major influence, but in a Jamesian sense. "After the death of Henry James a disaster overtook the English novel," Greene wrote in a

1945 essay on Mauriac. "For with the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act. It was as the world of fiction had lost a dimension." That dimension was something that Greene, much more recently, called a "ruling passion" that gives to a shelf of novels the unity of a system. No matter how extraordinary, he adds, talent cannot alone sustain an achievement.

From his journeys to Liberia and Mexico early in his career, when he missed that "terrible aboriginal calamity" to his present elder literary statesman's retreat at Antibes on the French Riviera (where he recently spoke without irony of failure, boredom, loneliness, and emptiness as the writer's most dependable allies), Greene has exhibited a world-weariness that he offsets – and then, only temporarily – by another voyage, the next book.

As a novelist, Greene's ruling passion has been an awareness of man's aboriginal corruption. His characters cannot dismiss that sense at the heart of things that life has no meaning, that life cheats when original sin is blurred. And this endless burrowing, for the corruption within testifies to Greene's battle as a novelist for the survival of consciousness. As a kind of English Dostoevski, Greene directs his characters to relentless probes within themselves for that deepest level of corruption known to the underground man, that aspect that he can only with the most agonizing difficulty acknowledge to himself.

*(From "Dictionary of Literary Biography " Volume Fifteen)*

VI. Find English equivalents to the following word combinations and render the text in English:

создать свой особый жанр; его внимание было сосредоточено на; иметь местом действия; горячие точки планеты; иметь огромную читательскую публику (зарубежную); по политическим мотивам.

Greene first came to the notice of the literary world with his novels of 1930s, such as "Brighton" (1938). With such books he introduced his characteristic genre, the thriller with theological and moral significance. At this period his attention was focused on English life and English types, as in "England Made Me" (1935), one of his best novels, though now rather neglected by critics. But after "The Power and the Glory" (1940), set in Mexico, which many think his best novel, Greene rarely returns to the English scene. His stories are usually set in some foreign political storm centre. "The Quiet American" (1956), for example, was written before what Americans think of as "the Vietnam war." He has a huge international readership, and has been taken seriously as a moralist and theologian, as well as a romancer and a sort of superreporter. That he has not been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature can only be due to political reasons.

*(From "English Literature" by W.W. Robson)*

VII. Render the following text into English using the given key words:

collected stories, illustrated editions, to try one's hand at, sketch, narrative works, subtitle, serious motives, to be devoted to, acute problems, political themes, to be combined with, adventure motives, delicate psychologism, to fascinate, fictitious plot, vividly, to represent, to learn a lesson from, in smb's opinion, to go deep into, experience, to make psychological analysis.

Грэм Грин начал со стихов, затем перешел к прозе, написал восемнадцать романов, выпустил несколько сборников рассказов, делал тексты к иллюстрированным изданиям для детей, пробовал силы в драме; напечатал очерки о совершенных им путешествиях и много статей по разным вопросам. Всего им издано около тридцати книг.

Свои повествовательные произведения сам Грин делит на две группы. Часть написанных им книг носит подзаголовок «развлечения», другие, которые сам автор считает более серьезными, он обозначает привычным определением «роман». Надо, однако, сказать, что развлекательные элементы имеются в серьезных романах Грина, а в его «развлечениях» встречаются серьезные мотивы.

Широко известные у нас романы «Тихий американец» и «Наш человек в Гаване» посвящены острым проблемам современности. Читатели, знакомые с этими произведениями, знают, что политическая тематика сочетается в них с авантурными мотивами и с тонким психологизмом.

...Грин умеет увлекать занимательными описаниями, без помощи какой-либо выдуманной фабулы, как это имеет место в его путевых очерках. Он привлекает наше внимание к тому или иному

человеческому типу, живо представив характер своего героя.

В своих книгах Грин приглашает читателя поразмыслить вместе с ним над теми уроками, которые можно извлечь из отдельных человеческих судеб.

К числу книг, посвященных раздумьям о жизни, относится роман «Суть дела». По мнению многих английских критиков, «Суть дела» – лучший психологический роман Грина. Грин глубоко вникает во все тонкости переживаний, мыслей и чувств своих героев и даже порой занимается психоанализом.

(А.Аникст. Послесловие к роману «Суть дела»)

## Unit XII

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Charles Percey Snow (1905–1980)

C.P. Snow is *a novelist of unique experience*. At a period of history when the worlds of literature, science and technology are sharply separated from each other, he has come to *hold a key position in both simultaneously*. A novelist by vocation, he is also a scientific administrator and man of affairs.

Snow was born in 1905, the second of four sons in a lower middle-class family living in Leicester. The city whose existence is based on the hosiery and boot-and-shoe trades, has always been relatively prosperous; the family – his father had a minor job in a boot-and-shoe firm – was relatively *unprosperous*. The effect of such a situation on an intelligent and affectionate young boy is touchingly described at the beginning of his novel "Time of Hope"<sup>1</sup> (1949). Nevertheless Snow's was a family strongly rooted in a stable, flourishing part of industrialized society, and consequently Snow's tone when writing about society has always been confident.

He was educated as a scientist. He attended Alderman Newton's Grammar School where he *specialized in science*. At Cambridge the quality of his research was such that in 1930 his College elected him to a Fellowship, which meant that he might hope *to find a permanent place in a university*: among scientists he was beginning to be spoken of, like Arthur Miles in "The Search,"<sup>2</sup> as a bright young man. His future career in scientific research looked as though it were settled. In the last few years, however, he grew certain that his future career lay elsewhere; so he *turned to literature*. He began to think of "*breaking through*."

The ultimate vocation he knew as his own was that of a novelist. As a beginning he wrote two novels, a detective story and a Wellsian work of scientific imagination. They served the dual purpose of enabling him to get his hand in as a writer and of getting him ready publication. In 1933 he came to a turning point. It is impossible *to sustain a career* as a research scientist and a career *as a novelist*. As a result was "The Search," his first serious novel. In effect, "the break through" was complete. Yet "The Search," though it made a reputation for Snow as a novelist, did not represent what he finally meant to write. In his Prefatory Note to the 1958 edition of "The Search" he says: "It was a false start. I wanted to say something about people first and foremost, and then people-in-society, in a quite different way, and at a quite different level from anything in the book."

In 1935 Snow had the original idea for the chain of novels, which is commonly known as the Lewis Eliot series, and which has finally been given the title borne by the first book in the series "Strangers and Brothers."<sup>3</sup> "The Search" was a study of individual character against a background of society, "Strangers and Brothers" is a study of individual character acting upon society and reacting to it.

During the autumn of 1939, Snow was asked by a committee of the Royal society to assist in organizing university scientists for the war. He became a civil servant. Thus he was brought into public affairs. After the war Snow was invited to become a Civil Service Commissioner with special responsibility for scientific appointments. For all his activities in public affairs he intended to make certain of reserving some of his time for creative work.

Since 1947 Snow has published seven more novels of the projected eleven which will complete the "Strangers and Brothers" cycle. In content it is essentially a personal story – the story of a man's life, through which is revealed his psychological and his moral structure, yet by extension it is an inquiry into the psychological and moral structure of a large fraction of the society of our times. This novel should be regarded as a key work of the decades in which it was written.

### Notes:



1. "Time of Hope" – «Пора надежд»
2. "The Search" – «Поиски»
3. "Strangers and Brothers" – «Чужие и братья»

II. Translate and learn the following word combinations from the text. Use them in the sentences of your own:

a novelist of unique experience, to hold a key position in, unprosperous, to specialize in, to find a permanent place in a university, to turn to literature, to break through, to sustain a career as a novelist.

II. Discuss the creative work of C.P. Snow as a novelist of unique experience.

III. Give a literary translation of the following extracts:

1. "Death Under Sail" («Смерть под парусом») (1932) was Snow's first novel. It is a detective story, about a murder on a sailing boat in the middle of the Norfolk Broads: it conforms to the conventions, and the plot is admirably organized. But what singles it out from other novels in the genre is the fact that the plot grows out of characters rather than the characters out of the plot. They are presented as interesting persons outside the puzzle; and though the author treats them with uncommon psychological understanding, something is always left, as it would be in a serious novel, for the reader's speculation.

2. The setting of the "The Affair" («Дело») is the same as that of "The Masters" («Наставники»), this time the year being 1953. The story relates how the fellows of the college deal with the situation in which one of their number, a young physicist called Howard, is accused of scientific fraud. Lewis Eliot is drawn into the affair firstly, when his brother Martin, who has returned to the college after resigning from Barford asks his advice privately, and later when he is called in to act professionally in the legal complications which arise.

While "The Masters" was a study in politics, "The Affair" is a study in justice, actually justice tied down and regulated by a "fine structure" of politics.

IV. Render the following texts into English using the given key words and word combinations:

1. to continue the best traditions of critical realism, to be aware of, to portray a man in close co-operation with society, a serious artist, to reject modernism, to defend the aesthetics of realism.

1) В английской прозе сегодняшнего дня Ч. П. Сноу продолжает лучшие традиции английского критического реализма XIX и начала XX века. Более того, он ясно сознает свои задачи писателя-реалиста и часто говорит о серьезности того дела, которому он служит. «Серьезными» он называет тех художников слова, которые умеют изобразить человека в теснейшем взаимодействии с тем обществом, часть которого они составляют, и к этим серьезным художникам с полным основанием причисляет и себя. Он решительно отвергает модернизм и во всех своих выступлениях встает на защиту эстетики реализма.

2. to consider to be the best work, work of art, entertaining exposition, dynamic plot, to develop a setting, to reveal the style of writing, manner of work, design, broader in scope, more considerable in subject.

2) Роман «Наставники» (1951) – любимое произведение Ч. П. Сноу. Он считал его одним из лучших.

«Почему?» – может спросить человек, привыкший искать в художественном произведении занимательную фабулу, динамический сюжет. «Наставники» – роман почти бессюжетный, действие в нем разворачивается медленно. И в то же время «Наставники» – действительно одна из лучших книг Сноу, притом ключевых, раскрывающих не только манеру писателя, но и характер его письма, структуру его метода. Прочитав этот роман, лучше понимаешь более широкие по охвату, более значительные по теме книги писателя, такие как «Новые люди» или «Коридоры власти».

(В. Ивашева. Предисловие к романам Чарльза П. Сноу «Наставники», «Коридоры власти». – М., 1981)

3. a creator of a series of novels, psychological problems, to turn to the conflicts of contemporary life, to be a reflection of the struggle, one of the most burning problems, atomic warfare.

3) «Новые люди» – так многозначительно назван роман, созданный в середине пятого десятилетия. Новы в нем не только герои. Роман явился переломным в эволюции Сноу как создателя серии романов о современной Англии. В «Новых людях» писатель не ограничился созданием образов отдельных людей с их психологическими проблемами, а обратился к большим конфликтам современности, в которых отдельные люди и их личные судьбы – лишь отражение острейшей борьбы эпохи. В центре книги – одна из актуальнейших тем современности – возможности истребительной атомной войны. Основные персонажи книги – ученые-атомники. Сноу показывает, как реагируют различные представители ученых, работающих над проблемами ядерной физики, на практическое применение своих научных исследований.

### Unit XIII

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

#### Kingsley Amis (1922–)

Kingsley Amis was educated at Oxford and after graduation taught English at the University of Swansea. "Lucky Jim" was published in 1954 and *brought* its author *immediate success*. By January 1957 it *had sustained eighteen editions* and was acclaimed by the critics as one of the most hugely successful first novels in the English language. It was followed by "That Uncertain Feeling" (1955), "I Like It Here" (1956), "Take a Girl Like You" (1960), "One Fat Englishman" (1963), "Antideath League" (1966).

Although Amis himself *objected to being classified as* an Angry Young Man, he is generally considered one of the leading representatives of the young English writers of the nineteen-fifties, colloquially called the Angries.

These writers *had much in common* as far as the attitudes and characteristic features of their heroes were concerned. Their books expressed very clearly *the disgust* of the young generation *with an outworn and morally bankrupt social order*, and their *protest against the inhumanity* of the bourgeois world of our time. These young authors' strength also lay in "creating a convincing English background" of the fifties.

His latest book is *a departure from the main line* of his previous novels. As he put it himself, he tried to make "Antideath League" as timeless as possible. He is no longer a rebel, neither are the other Angry Young Men so young, and so angry as they used to be ten years ago.

"Lucky Jim," characteristic of the early Amis, is essentially an English University novel. *Concern with educational problems* in general, and the crisis of outlook and vocational prospects of the Arts Departments in "redbrick" universities, in particular, is typical of this group of writers.

II. Translate and learn the following word combinations from the text. Use them in the sentences of your own:

to bring immediate success, to sustain eighteen editions, to object to being classified as, to have much in common, a disgust with an outworn and morally bankrupt social order, a protest against inhumanity, a departure from the main line, concern with educational problems.

III. Speak on the creation of Kingsley Amis as a representative of the Angry Young Men.

IV. Read the article and be ready to characterize the main hero of K. Amis's novel "Lucky Jim."

Kingsley Amis depicts provincial university life in a mood of amused disgust. He surveys the problems of a junior lecturer in humanities through the eyes of a vivacious young man who has beliefs and no enthusiasms, – nothing but contempt for his subject, his colleagues and his elders. The bareness of Dixon's outlook reduces his revolt against the shams and pedantry of academic life to despising his own work, making faces when nobody sees him, to practical jokes and drinking. Teaching others what it has bored him to learn is not a particularly

inspiring prospect, and it has a thoroughly demoralizing effect.

The writer's manner of narration and inner speech affords him a possibility of introducing us to Dixon's worries about his prospects and his intense fear of being "sacked." When asked about why he had chosen the Middle Ages as his subject, Dixon readily confesses to have taken the line of least resistance.

The main personage is convincing. His mentality cannot make him very attractive to the reader; his realness, however, cannot be questioned. The sadness of the story lies in its being a story of a split personality fighting to retain what he hates to possess. As in spite of his aversion for the university Dixon is very eager to be kept on the staff, his last wistful question: "Haven't you noticed how we all specialize in what we hate most?" is almost tragic.

It might be of interest to point out the glaring difference in the treatment of university problems by Amis and Snow. C.P. Snow portrays the elder generation of scientists who during the war shoulder the responsibility of bringing into the world nuclear physics and are fully aware of all the horrors and benefits it may bring to mankind. These were people in love with science, people for whom science was the one permanent source of happiness.

Amis deals with the problems of the younger generation in postwar England. His hero's approach is cynical, irresponsible, without a trace of self-regard. The novelist does openly project himself into his book and does not help us with any generalizations.

V. Translate the following extract into Russian using a dictionary.

Hurrying through the side streets deserted at this hour before works and offices closed, Dixon thought of Welch.<sup>1</sup> Would Welch have asked him to set up a special subject if he wasn't going to keep him as a lecturer? Substitute any human name for Welch's and the answer must be no. But retain the original reading and no certainty was possible. As recently as last week, a month after the special subject had been mentioned, he'd heard Welch talking to the professor of education<sup>2</sup> about "the sort of new man" he was after. Dixon had felt very ill for five minutes; then Welch had come up to him and begun discussing, in tones of complete honesty, what he wanted Dixon to do with the pass people<sup>3</sup> next. At the memory, Dixon rolled his eyes together like marbles and sucked in his cheeks to give a consumptive or wasted appearance to his face, moaning loudly as he crossed the sunlit street to his front door.

*(From "Lucky Jim " by K. Amis)*

### **Notes:**

1. Welch – Dixon's professor
2. professor of education – professor of pedagogics
3. pass people – students reading for a degree

VI. Render text in English using the following key words and combinations:

a humorist, to possess a gift of, a new edition, defiant boldness of conception, novelty of form, artistic device, huge success.

Критика увидела в Эмисе прежде всего юмориста и сразу заговорила о нем как о писателе, обладающем огромным дарованием в создании смешного. «Счастливчик Джим» был объявлен «самым смешным английским романом после войны». Об этом кричала реклама, писали критики. Об этом же сообщалось на суперобложках новых изданий его книги, выходивших в течение года одно за другим. Вместе с тем «Счастливчик Джим» не отличался ни вызывающей смелостью идейного замысла, ни большой новизной формы. Связь многих художественных приемов Эмиса с приемами английских юмористов XVIII и XIX веков очевидна. Причины того почти неслыханного успеха, который имел «Счастливчик Джим», надо искать не только в его комедийности.

## **Unit XIV**

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

## Iris Murdoch (1919-)

*Iris Murdoch's achievement as a novelist* has frequently seemed problematic to critics, reviewers and even readers, though her books *have always sold extremely well* both in Britain and in other countries. When her first novels appeared in the mid-1950s, she was immediately classed with the "Angry Young Men," for reasons now hard to discern, since she was certainly not angry and was interested much more in philosophical games and in the nature of fiction itself than in social protest. What she had then in common with writers like Kingsley Amis and John Wain was *an interest in rapid comedy*, and the long English tradition of the episodic novel. Though in fact, even then, her work was much more closely related to that of Beckett and the French existentialists and surrealists than to the eighteenth-century comic novels which Amis and Wain admired.

Iris Murdoch is a philosopher as well as a novelist. Her philosophical work deals with the relations between art and morals.

Her best-known piece of conceptual writing is "Against Dryness," published in 1961 in "Encounter," in which she argued that one of the major problems of the modern novel is that after two wars "we have been left with far too shallow and flimsy a view of human personality."

I. Murdoch is the author of about thirty novels. The first two novels "Under the Net"<sup>1</sup> (1954) and "The Flight from the Enchanter"<sup>2</sup> (1935) differ from all the later novels. Both are *philosophical fables*, using a proliferation of characters and dramatic incidents *to illustrate a central theme*. In "Under the Net" the theme is the necessity and danger of concepts, forms, in thought and action, both in the worlds of art, politics, work, morals and love. In "The Flight from the Enchanter" the theme is social, and concerns the proper and improper uses of power. Both novels are close to Miss Murdoch's work on satire, they take up the relationship of the individual and of art, to political structures and ideals, the nature of freedom, the nature of language.

Her next book "The Sandcastle"<sup>3</sup> (1957) is dedicated to her husband, John Bayley, and her work from "The Sandcastle" onwards *shows a concern with the moral and critical principles* explored in his book

"The Characters of Love" and later in "Tolstoy and the Novel."

Iris Murdoch's technical interest in 19th century "realism" is *an interest in the fictional world* in which separate individuals meet, change, communicate. A good novel is "a house fit for free characters to live in." Now she makes an effort in the novels "The Bell" (1958), "An Unofficial Rose"<sup>4</sup> to learn from Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James.

Both "The Bell" and "An Unofficial Rose" are concerned with the relationships between freedom and virtue and also between beauty and truth.

There are several novels which one could call "mythical" novels. They are "A Severed Head"<sup>5</sup> (1961), "The Unicorn"<sup>6</sup> (1963) and "The Time of the Angels"<sup>7</sup> (1966).

For her highly acclaimed novel "The Sea, the Sea," Iris Murdoch won the Booker Prize in 1978.

Many serious English novelists nowadays are moving away from realism, from social analysis and emotions of individuals to "unreal" forms. Not only I. Murdoch but Angus Wilson and some other writers were taking an interest in the fairy stories in Dickens's plots, in *the grotesque caricatures*, so, like *fairy-tale characters*. Both Angus Wilson and Iris Murdoch *have deep roots and strong moral attachments to the English realistic tradition*. Both write novels which combine old realistic morals and old realistic techniques, with a new kind of *literary playfulness*.

### Notes:

1. "Under the Net" – роман «Под сетью»
2. "The Flight from the Enchanter" – «Бегство от волшебника»
3. "The Sandcastle" – «Замок на песке»
4. "An Unofficial Rose" – «Дикая роза»
5. "A Severed Head" – «Отрубленная голова»
6. "The Unicorn" – «Единорог»
7. "The Time of the Angels" – «Время ангелов»

II. Translate into Russian the following phrases and use them in your own sentences:

one's achievement as a novelist, to sell extremely well, an interest in rapid comedy, philosophical fables, to

illustrate a central theme, to show a concern with the moral and critical principles, an interest in the fictional world, grotesque caricatures, fairy-tale characters, to have deep roots and strong attachments to the realistic tradition, literary playfulness.

### III. Answer the following questions:

1. Why have I. Murdoch's novels always sold well?
2. What common features did the works of K. Amis and I. Murdoch have?
3. What philosophical conception did she use in her creative work?
4. Speak about I. Murdoch's novels: prove that she is a prolific writer. Concentrate on the themes of her novels. What can you say about her "mythical" novels?
5. Draw a parallel between I. Murdoch and Angus Wilson.

### IV. Do a written translation of the text using a dictionary. Analyse the text.

Iris Murdoch appears to be on the verge of achieving a major reputation in contemporary English fiction, and as is so often the case today, her achievement does not depend upon any single work. It is rather the totality of her work with which we are impressed.

I. Murdoch is prolific enough. Since 1952 she has published about thirty novels, a short volume on Sartre and a number of philosophic and literary essays. Her novels contain the language of ideas but what they lack is the reality of flesh touching flesh. She possesses a sense of craft and an obvious dedication to the demands that novel writing makes upon one and she has accepted a world complex enough to make even the absence of tragedy endurable. She possesses humour and broad human sympathies, but for all of its turbulence and violence her world is surprisingly calm. What she lacks is rage.

The world she creates is permeated with too much Victorian insularity; it is not our world. "Sartre," she noted, "is profoundly and self-consciously contemporary, he has the style of the age." It is an accurate observation and it leads one to the further observation that is missing in her own work is that very style of the age, that contemporaneity which she sees so clearly in Sartre.

IV. Choose the right word (a hinterbrand, to succeed mixture, cast of characters, artistry, ambiguous, to manifest, characterized, unity, underline, puzzle-like, convention, degenerate, a series brilliant games, reality, devoid, be engaged) and insert it in the text.

All Iris Murdoch's books are novels of passions, ( ) by gripping narrative and deep emotional impact.

In most of them there is ( ) of something like myth or fairy tale.

As one of the critics puts it:

"Her ( ) is to weave the improbable and the fantastic into the normal world, so that we cannot be sure, moment, just what level of reality is being presented."

It is important to note that Iris Murdoch's interest in existentialist philosophy ( ) most of her novels. And is particularly at the level of fantasy that she ( ) in producing her most skilful and evocative writing. Thus her free-flowing and unresolved fantasy gave her first two novels "Under the Net" and "Flight from the Enchanter" their ( ), but when in her third novel- "The Sandcastle" (1957)- Iris Murdoch moved closer to the traditional fictional structure, with a strong plot and a carefully worked out( ), her limitations began ( ) themselves.

The fantasy which had been effective when it was left ( ) and unresolved now tended to turn into not very successful symbolism. At the same time the plot began to appear too much like an existentialist formula glossing over ( ). And in "The Bell" (1958), in spite of the continuing brilliance of style and compulsive story-telling, her symbolism became more and more ( ).

Her fifth novel- "A Severed Head" (1961) - is the most existentialist of all her novels and is also most convincing.

There is no ( ) here of fantasy and realism: it is all fantasy – but fantasy in the head. In addition Iris Murdoch has evolved a set of highly stylized ( ) within the limitations she has chosen, so that the "dance of sex," in which her characters ( ), takes on a sombre quality of "dance macabre."

In many of her subsequent novels the sexual or emotional complications may from time to time ( ) into something very close to dark Gothic melodrama and her patterns of fantasy woven into reality may sometimes

produce the effect of something contrived and mechanical.

One of her ( ) novels, "Fairly Honourable Defeat" (1970), was described in the "Observer" as "a symbolist pantomime" and though in many ways it is her best book since "A Severed Head" and perhaps morally one of the most positive, it does point to the fact that her work is in danger of becoming ( ) for the very high highbrows, though not ( ) of versatility and technical expertise.

V. Render the following text in English using the key words and word combinations given below:

1. Irish by origin, English by language and religion, to move to, English-Irish roots, creators of paradox, to break traditions, devotion to, non-standard fantastic situations.

Айрис Мёрдок родилась в Дублине в 1919 году. Ее родители были тем, кого принято называть англо-ирландцами: ирландцами по крови, англичанами по языку и религии (протестантизм). Вскоре после ее рождения семья переехала в Лондон, и детство будущей писательницы прошло уже в Англии. Англоирландские «корни» дали английской литературе не одного знаменитого автора, в том числе великих парадоксалистов О. Уайльда, Б. Шоу, Б. Стоукера. Айрис Мёрдок традиции не нарушила. Можно предположить, что ирландские предки сыграли свою роль в склонности писательницы к изображению парадоксальных положений и нестандартных фантастических обстоятельств.

(В. Скороденко. «Достоинство человека и хаос жизни» (заметки о романах Айрис Мёрдок). – М., 1991)

2. a novel with a philosophical tendency, to declare, a leading genre, an essay devoted to, to be a spokesman of the spirit of the time, to be true to, to concentrate the attention on the inner world of the heroes, to display a mastery in rendering the subtleties and contradictions of life, subtle, delicate, consciousness, the burning problems, human feelings and relationships, actions and motives.

Роман с философской тенденцией, который порой сами его авторы условно называют философским, заявил о себе в середине 50-х годов. Сегодня он стал в Великобритании едва ли не ведущим жанром. В нем выступают такие известные писатели, как А. Мёрдок, У. Голдинг и К. Уилсон.

А. Мёрдок – философ по специальности. В 60-х годах, уже имея за плечами 10 лет творческой деятельности, она сама назвала свой роман философским. В специальном очерке, посвященном Сартру, которого она объявляет своим главным наставником, Мёрдок декларировала связь своего творчества с творчеством Сартра-экзистенциалиста. «Сартр глубоко современен, – писала она. – Он выразитель духа времени».

Со своего первого романа «Под сетью» (1954) А. Мёрдок была верна исходному принципу экзистенциализма: отображать «существование» как оно дано сознанию. Она фиксировала внимание преимущественно на внутреннем мире своих героев. Образы, созданные Мёрдок уже в первых ее книгах, обнаруживали ее большое мастерство в передаче тонкостей и противоречивости жизни отдельных людей. «Под сетью» – тонкая, изысканная, полуфантастическая «игра ума», размышления молодой последовательницы Сартра над «чудесами нашей жизни» и «запутанностью современного сознания».

Ранние романы Мёрдок уводят читателя от подлинно злободневных проблем сегодняшнего дня, акцентируют приоритет влечения над разумом, декларируют относительность человеческих чувств и отношений, поступков и побуждений.

(В. В. Ивашева. «Литература Великобритании XX века»)

## Unit XV

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### William Golding (1911-1993)

*The strong moral tone* of W. Golding's novels suggests a grim and uncompromising figure, an image which the warmth, wit and humanity of some of his , other writings have quite failed to dispel from the public mind.

He is not obviously a member of any group or "school" of writers. His short and concentrated books *demand sustained attention from the reader*. He was forty-two before his first novel was published, and he continued to teach for several years after that before finally *earning his living solely as a writer*. The importance and significance of his contribution to the modern novel *is already widely recognized*.

He was born in 1911, and spent a relatively isolated childhood, during which he read widely and *developed an early interest in words*. From Marlborough Grammar School he entered Oxford to read science and eventually graduated in English literature.

Golding's best-known novel "Lord of the Flies"<sup>1</sup> (1954) portrays the gradual reversion of a group of middle-class boys into primitive savagery. The children impose "civilized standards of conduct on their small community." They elect a leader, they have a meeting place for discussion. But the civilized standards of the 20th century fade from the boys' minds with appalling ease.

First come irrational fears: of imaginary monsters, the dark and the unknown. There is a feeling of "something behind you all the time in the jungle."

It is difficult to give term adequate to describe the form of the novel. It operates clearly enough as normal fiction, yet it is also full of *allegorical significance*. This is an unusual literary achievement, it is a fiction and a *fable* at the same time, it represents a change in the nature of the novel itself.

The prose of Golding's second novel "The Inheritors"<sup>2</sup> describes the extermination of Neanderthal man by homo sapiens. The style has its *expressive strengths*. It allows the author to make two important points in his presentation of the Neanderthals – the limitation of their intelligence and the quality of their innocence.

### Notes:

1. "Lord of the Flies" – «Повелитель мух»
2. "The Inheritors" – «Наследники»

II. Translate the following words and word combinations into Russian and use them in the sentences of your own:

the strong moral tone of the novel, to dispel from the public mind, to demand sustained attention from the reader, to earn one's living as a writer, to be widely recognized, to develop an early interest in words, allegorical significance, a fable, expressive strengths.

III. Answer the following questions discussing the creative work of W. Golding.

1. To what group or school of writers does W. Golding belong?
2. Why do his books demand sustained attention from the reader?
3. Is the author's contribution to the modern novel recognized?
4. Speak about W. Golding's education.
5. What are the writer's best-known novels? Give reasons for that.
6. Have you read any books by W. Golding? Which of them have been translated into Russian?

IV. Read the text with the help of a dictionary and make up a short summary of it. Discuss it with your groupmates.

Even in an age when the dominant taste was for unexperimental realism novelists felt the pull towards a different kind of fiction, to fantasy, fable or allegory, even some who began as realists like Amis and Wilson. And in fact some of the best admired fiction of the 50s was written in this vein of fable or fantasy.

Thus in 1954 William Golding published "Lord of the Flies," a work which was to achieve global popularity. Golding is a brilliant storyteller and "Lord of the Flies" is an exciting story about the fate of a party of English schoolboys who are marooned on a desert island. But it is also a philosophical allegory about the nature of evil and good. In a purely conventional novel Ralph would be called the hero. In a book which contains Simon who sacrifices himself for others and Piggy who is unquestionably Ralph's intellectual peer, it's difficult to place Ralph according to accepted terminology. He is the central character, however, and many of the events, reactions and descriptions are seen through his eyes. Ralph is a natural leader; he has seen his ideals crush and evil triumph and in his suffering he breaks down and cries. Ralph represents the boy of character and sensitivity



who tries to face in an adult way a situation which is beyond him. He has integrity, compassion, courage and authority and a strong awareness of the values of the civilization the boys have left. He battles for what is good and right against what is wrong and evil. He fails and we feel in his failure the failure of mankind to deal with the forces of evil.

V. Render the following text in Russian.

In his novels Golding exhibits a certain indifference to the characters, a quality that is often found in classical literature. He does not suffer with his characters in the way, for example, Dostoevski did.

But in his essays there is a warmth and at times a nostalgia that illuminate his other side; Golding can sit for more than one portrait. The essays are a valuable companion to the novels, for they reveal a world view. In "Billy the Kid" he vividly recaptures his emotions as a sensitive eight-year-old. "The Hot Gates" is primarily a series of recollections of teachers and school experiences.

Although it is difficult to categorize Golding's novels, Kingsley Amis has suggested that Golding is the only serious writer currently working within the framework of science fiction. Certainly Golding's work shows some of the features of science fiction: an emphasis on ideas to the exclusion of full-blooded characterization, flashes of dark wit but no real humour, indifference to the female and sex in general.

One can also speak of Golding's work as parody, but in his own sense – using something else as a point of departure. Thus "Lord of the Flies" is a parody of "The Coral Island," "The Inheritors," of "The Outline of History," "Pincher Martin," of "The Prometheus Myth," "Free Fall," of "The Divine Comedy."

VI. Render the texts into English using the key words and word combinations given below:

1. to claim to, to be fully content with, to read a lecture, to make as a principle, parable, to stress the didactic tone of, a free choice, a philosophy of joyless interpretation of the nature of man, grim illustrations of.

Голдинг не претендовал на положение лидера модернистов, но ведущим принципом своего творчества модернистов чрезвычайно устраивал. В 1962 году, будучи в Америке, писатель прочел лекцию в Калифорнийском университете. Он повторил ее затем в ряде университетов США. В ней он излагал мысли, положенные в основу романа «Повелитель мух» и, по существу, дал ключ ко всему своему творчеству или, во всяком случае, к философии, которая положена в основу того, что он писал. Эта лекция, опубликованная в 1965 году в сборнике статей разных лет «Горячие врата», была названа им «Притча». Притчами называет Голдинг все свои книги, подчеркивая тем самым назидательный характер, их смысл как поучений. «Повелитель мух» – это притча о природе человека, «Наследники» – художественное изложение философии и истории, «Свободное падение» – дискуссия по поводу основного тезиса экзистенциализма о свободном выборе.

Философия его книг – философия безрадостного истолкования человеческой природы. Все книги Голдинга – мощные по силе красок и разнообразию музыкальной оркестровки, но всегда мрачные иллюстрации одной – всегда негативной – мысли.

*(В. В. Ивашева. «Литература Великобритании XX века»)*

2. to award the prize, to give an exact and total idea of writer's outlook, in chronological order, in another way, to turn out, indivisible, subordinated to the only purpose reflection, human essence, interrelated worlds, unity of people's behaviour, to clear up the mystery, self-interest, generosity, faith, lack of belief, nobility, meanness, honesty, cynicism.

В 1983 году У. Голдингу была присуждена Нобелевская литературная премия. В 1981 году в Москве были изданы три его повести: «Повелитель мух», «Наследники» и «Шпиль», дающие достаточно точное и полное представление о характере мировидения писателя.

Если рассматривать повести У. Голдинга не в хронологическом порядке, а расположить их иначе: сначала «Наследники», затем «Шпиль» и лишь потом «Повелитель мух», то окажется, что это единое и целенаправленное размышление о человеческой сути и судьбе в прошлом и настоящем. Это картины из жизни трех взаимосвязанных, по мысли У. Голдинга, миров. Взаимосвязанных единством поведения живущих в них людей, пытающихся понять, кто они и зачем пришли в этот мир. Пытающихся разгадать

тайну жизни и смерти. Любви и ненависти.

...В прозе У. Голдинга как в зеркале узнаешь тени своей и чужой доброты и жестокости, корысти и бессребреничества, веры и неверия, благородства и подлости, совестливости и цинизма. «Се – человек», – говорит У. Голдинг, подразумевая: это также и ты.

(Г. Оцет. «Миры Уильяма Голдинга» (предисловие к роману «Повелитель мух»), – М., 1990.)

## Unit XVI

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### Agatha Christie (1890-1976)

A. Christie represents the "light genre" in the twentieth-century English literature. A great master of a detective story, she thrilled the world. As yet, little *scholarship has been done* on the detective story as a literary form. First, the form is still relatively new, if one accepts the 1841 publication of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" as making the birth of the detective story, and this date is now generally so accepted. Thus, the detective story is a good century younger than the novel, if we take Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones" and other works to represent the birth of the novel.

A. Christie found it hard to be specific about just how she created the plots which consistently *baffle her readers*. She readily *acknowledged her debt to Conan Doyle*, in fact, she admitted that she *carried on the torch lighted by Conan Doyle*. The author's first detective novel "The Mysterious Affair at Styles"<sup>1</sup> was written in 1915 and published in 1920 – seven years before the last Sherlock Holmes short story collection appeared in book form. She *produced a mystery novel or a short-story collection at the rate of* at least one a year since 1920, and one might imagine that the early books would be somewhat dated by this point. Surprisingly enough, they are not. A career which exceeds forty-five years in length is remarkable in any field, but is especially noteworthy in the field of so-called "popular" literature, for it would seem that people's tastes would change radically in that *span of time*.

Although A. Christie's mysteries remain remarkably *consistent in their appeal to readers*, it is possible to notice some changes or advances in the manner and style of mystery-writing from 1920 to the present day. As the mystery story as a form *becomes more mature and sophisticated*, so do its readers. They can keep in their heads as many details as the detective can. So diagrams, maps and parables have been out of vogue since the 1930s. The two devices which the author has used over and over again are the *nursery rhyme* as an organizing theme and spiritualism as a cover for a perfectly straightforward crime.

A. Christie has evidently found in nursery rhymes *an inspiration* which permits her to develop plots with *built-in suspense*: the reader knows that the murderer *is following the rhyme*, and he knows in general terms what will come next (if he can remember the rhyme), but he is kept guessing as to how the author and the murderer will make the crime fit the rhyme. The most famous example of a nursery rhyme followed to the last detail is "Ten Little Niggers."

Other favourite nursery rhymes of the author include "Sing a Song of Sixpence," which has been used in the short story of that name from "The Listerdale Mystery," very prominently in *the full-length novel* "A Pocket Full of Rye," and also in the short story "Four and Twenty Blackbirds" from "The Adventure of the Christmas Pudding and Other Stories." "How Does Garden Grow?" provided a unifying theme for the story of the same name in "The Regatta Mystery." "One, Two, Buckle My Shoe" was followed religiously in the novel of the same title, called "The Patriotic Murders" in America. "Five Little Pigs" suggested the inspirations for the Poirot novel which *was later made into a very successful play*. One of A. Christie's own *special favourites* is "Crooked House," which she says "saved up for years, thinking about it, working it out." "Hickory, Dickory, Dock" (1955) is the full-length novel using a nursery rhyme as its theme.

A. Christie's interest in spiritualism is evidently quite an old one. "The Hound of Death" short-story collection contains quite a few stories which are not detection at all, but rather pure fantasy.

In her 1956 interview with Nigel Dennis, the author *expressed a keen interest in science fiction*, but in the intervening decade she avoided both science fiction and fantasy as main themes. She rather made spiritualism a cover or camouflage for straight mystery and detection, although one at times wonders in "The Pale Horse"<sup>2</sup> if it is possible to commit murder by telepathy.

A. Christie's talents seem most aptly used in the detective story– her talents are analytical, wryly humorous,

and penetrating in telling a tightly-knit story, and her romance always seems *less convincing*. Perhaps this is due to the fact that detective story and novel are essentially a cerebral form, thanks to their conventions and confines of plot and the sort of mind who likes well-made plots is not likely to go in for formless romance and *affection*.

### Notes:

1. "The Mysterious Affair at Styles" – «Таинственное дело в Стайлз»
2. "The Pale Horse" – «Вилла "Белый конь"»

II. Give Russian equivalents to the following words and word combinations. Use them in the sentences from the text and in your own situations:

to do scholarship, to baffle the reader, to acknowledge the debt to, to carry on the torch lighted by, to produce a mystery novel, at the rate of, span of time, consistent in its appeal to readers, to become more mature and sophisticated, a nursery rhyme, an inspiration, built-in suspense, to follow the rhyme, a full-length novel, to be made into a successful play, a special favourite, to express a keen interest in science fiction, less convincing, affection.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What can you say about the detective story genre? Prove that it is relatively new.
2. Whom did the author acknowledge her debt in creating a detective story?
3. Was A. Christie a prolific writer?
4. What devices did the author use in her novels?
5. What inspired her to create interesting plots?
6. What nursery rhymes were used by the author?
7. In what other genres did A. Christie express her keen interest?
8. Have you read any stories by A. Christie? Have you read them in the original? What language does she use?
9. What is the most popular novel by A. Christie with Russian readers?
10. Discuss one of A. Christie's stories with your groupmates.

IV. Summarize the main idea of the text.

Why is Agatha Christie the best-loved detective story writer?

Agatha Christie has conquered the world, and the critics are puzzled. Part of her charm for her readers is the setting of many of her mysteries in a context of English village life, but her stories appeal to people in countries remote from England who know nothing about England and have no interest in the English. It will be said, of course, that her appeal is merely that of the puzzle, but there were plenty of other ingenious puzzlers in this period, and they are forgotten. Why has she succeeded with her flat style (even her warmest admirers concede this) and her cardboard characters? Perhaps the answer is that the characters (in the books, rather than the dramatization of them) are not cardboard – or not all of them. There is something deeply appealing about Christie's stories which has not yet been adequately analyzed. Conan Doyle created the genre with "Sherlock Holmes," establishing it on a basis of English comedy, as unclassifiable as the "Alice" books, or the "Pooh" of A. A. Milne (1882–1956). But strange and terrible things in the "Holmes" stories remain strange and terrible, whereas Agatha Christie assimilates everything to what would seem on the face of it a self-stultifying literary form: the reassuring tragedy.

(From "A Prologue to English Literature " by W. W. Robson)

V. Translate the text with the help of a dictionary.

Agatha arrived at the height of her fame in 1970, her eightieth year. It was to be a strenuous one. For the rest

of the spring she tried to tidy up her new book "Passenger to Frankfurt."

She had begun to think about the plot in 1963, asking Collins to find a copy of "The Royal Family of Beyrouth" by F. Wagner, the composer's granddaughter, who she, Max and Mathew had met at Beyrouth. Friedelinde had taken them behind the scenes of the Opera House and had told them anecdotes about her grandfather and Hitler. Agatha brooded on all this, fitting it to her ideas about world conspiracy and espionage. She also asked Collins for "Contributions to European History" and Cork for a list of "Iron Curtain Coins, all of small size and small value," and the origins of the quotation "For want of a nail, the horse was lost..." Her draft took another thought, long germinating, for a book beginning in "An Air Lounge" – a place which is no place, designed for arrivals, departures, exchanges. "Passengers in Transit" was one of Agatha's working titles for the development of this idea, or "Missing Passenger Story." This plot acquired the title "Passenger to Frankfurt," in 1966, in the notebook Agatha kept on her American visit: "Airport Renata. Sir Neil at War Office of M 14. His obstinacy aroused. Puts advertisement in... Hitler idea. Concealed in a lunatic asylum. One of many who think they are Napoleon – or Hitler – or Mussolini." Thus Agatha started to mix her old obsessions: disguise; people who actually are who they say they are, mixed up with people who are not; the hiding of people in the obvious place for them to be... at last. They are fixed in their own development.

(From "Agatha Christie" by Janet Morgan, 1984)

VI. Render the text into English using the key words and word combinations given below:

to resemble, from the point of view, flame of the burning candle, to be worth nominating, to consist in, fame, period of one's reigning, to possess an unusual gift in the proper sense, to form, petty persons.

О жизни Агаты Кристи, которая сама по себе порой напоминает детективную историю, написано немало, в том числе и самой писательницей. С точки зрения художественного творчества, эта жизнь напоминает пламя ровно сгорающей свечи.

Ответ на вопрос о том, почему Агату Кристи заслуженно именуют королевой детектива, заключается не только в том, что слава ее в XX веке не знает аналогий и что период ее «правления» длился рекордно долго – шесть десятилетий, – но прежде всего в том, что она обладала особым даром фантазии и мистификации. <...>

А. Кристи не является в собственном смысле социальным историком; однако атмосфера и проблематика ее сюжетов, как правило, имеет выход к социальной и культурной сфере. В романах А. Кристи мы видим маленькие английские провинциальные городки и села, целую галерею типов, составляющих английское общество, аристократию и мир обывателей.

(А. Сагмаров. «Подвиги во имя любви». Послесловие к сборнику романов А. Кристи «Подвиги Геркулеса». – М., 1991.)

## Unit XVII

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### British Theatre of the Mid-Century

Since the mid-fifties English drama *has been in a vigorous condition*, contrasting with the stagnation of the immediate postwar years, which *saw the decline of* the "well-made" play and *the traditional drawing-room comedy*. Many highly talented writers are now working in the theatre, and some *have achieved international reputations*.

John Osborne's "Look Back in Anger" first performed in 1956, is generally regarded as a milestone in the postwar English theatre. With its *provincial setting* and its rebellious young hero this play represents the new fiction of that time, the so-called school of the Angry Young Men. Osborne's second play "The Entertainer" (1957) was more experimental and *innovatory*, making use of the techniques of the music hall.

In the late fifties the realism of Arnold Wesker's "Trilogy" (1960), comprising "Chicken Soup with Barley," "Roots" and "I Am Talking about Jerusalem," was widely admired. Wesker *deals with some interesting themes* – Jewish working-class life, the cultural poverty of the masses – but *in retrospect* his work looks naive and

theatrically limited.

A number of plays give a very vivid sense of the self-questioning, the dwelling on the past and uncertainty about the future. No one did this more brilliantly than Alan Bennett in "Forty Years On" (1969). The author uses the technique of the play-within-a-play *to dramatize* crucial moments in twentieth-century English history. Though Bennett has all the conscious concern with theatrical effect that was the hallmark of the serious playwright in the sixties, he is at the same time a literary dramatist who can be read with pleasure because of *the intelligence and wit of his writing*.

Of all the many dramatists now writing for the English theatre, there is one who *has occupied a dominant position* ever since the late fifties, namely Harold Pinter. His work is particularly hard *to assess*, though it must be noted that he is one of that small company of writers whose name has been turned into an adjective which seems to sum up some common element in our experience. It is those situations when language is used without communicating, when one misunderstanding leads on to another, when no one listens to what anyone else is saying, that is described as "Pinteresque." It is part of Pinter's achievement. He *remains concentrated on problems of* communication; on how far a small group of people can convey anything to each other, whether by words or silences or gesture.

"The Caretaker" (1960), a disturbing but funny play, first established Pinter as a major talent.

Given such a variety of talents it can be said that at the present, English drama *is in a healthy condition*. But a great many people who do not have convenient access to the London theatres may never or rarely have the opportunity of seeing the work of contemporary dramatists performed. *The most widely available form of theatrical experience* is provided by television drama. Some very able and *much admired dramatists* have worked mostly in television, such as Dennis Potter, David Mercer and John Hopkins, and the scripts of their plays have been published. But in a television play the role of language is even more *subsidiary* than in contemporary stage drama. So one must conclude that if more creative energy goes into the television plays, as opposed to writing for the stage, drama will become still further removed from literature.

II. Translate the following words and word combinations into Russian and use them in sentences of your own:

to be in a vigorous condition, to see the decline of, a traditional drawing-room comedy, to achieve international reputation, a provincial setting, innovatory, to deal with a theme, in retrospect, to dramatize, the intelligence and wit of one's writing, to occupy a dominant position, to assess, to be concentrated on problems of, to be in a healthy condition, a widely available form of, theatrical experience, a much admired dramatist, subsidiary.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. In what condition was English drama of the mid-fifties?
2. Which play is regarded as a milestone in the postwar English theatre? Why?
3. What dramatists are admired in the late fifties?
4. What author uses the technique of the play-with-in-a-play?
5. Why is it hard to assess the work of Harold Pinter?
6. Which play established Pinter as a major talent?
7. Describe the state of English drama at present.
8. What is the most available form of theatrical experience nowadays?

IV. Translate the following extracts into Russian. Be ready to speak about the dramatists of the 20th century theatre and their plays.

1. John Osborne's play "Look Back in Anger" (1956) marked the beginning of a new era in British drama. Before the West Theatre mostly played to a formula wittily defined by James Bridie as "two hours amidst the erotic misadventures of the English upper classes." Then the theatre had become liberated. Arnold Wesker, Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett emerged; fresh writers with new styles. The old type of theatre as an entertainment for genteel minds was definitely out.

2. Harold Pinter's most successful play "The Caretaker" is a realistic play, almost a slice of life, but on

another deeper level, it is a poetic image of the human condition itself. Man fighting for a place, for security, but at the same time deprived of it by the weakness of his own selfish nature. Pinter's achievement points the way towards the future; he has shown that it is possible to combine the poetic imagery, the open construction of the Theatre of the Absurd with techniques which do not deviate too much from the mainstream of the tradition of drama. The plays leave the action and the characters unmotivated and unexplained, they reach no neat solution or conclusion, they raise questions rather than answer, they force the audience to find their own interpretations.

3. The main merit of Arnold Wesker in writing the play "Roots" is that he managed to give the character of Beatie in development, in dynamics. The American critic Riballow Harold said: "The final scene in 'Roots' shook and changed the British stage. Beatie's awakening is an awakening for the entire segment of the British population."

A common Norfolk family is in the centre of Arnold Wesker's attention. He treats his heroes, farmers, labourers profoundly realistically. It is known, that when the play was first staged in Norfolk, the spectators were indignant. The matter was the author depicted and criticized the wretchedness, stagnation, coarseness, meanness of people's relations. Through his heroine Beatie he blames the existing social conditions and people who drag out a miserable, dim and animal-like existence and who are too lazy to think because it bores them, needs a mental effort. The roots of the boring sameness and narrow-mindedness of their life are in the existing social conditions of life. But Ronnies and Beaties appear human beings with human dignity who are apt to nip in the bud the roots of the evils of life.

4. In the programme for the Royal National Theatre's new production of Joe Orton's "What the Butler Saw at the Lyttelton," there is a quote from, of all people, Sir Terence Rattigan. "What Orton had to say about England and society," Rattigan declares, "had never been said before. The first thing it showed was a society diminished by telly technology. Everybody expresses themselves as if they were brought up on TV.

I don't know about you, but I was amazed to find that Rattigan had appreciated Orton. The leader of the 1940s and 1950s Haymarket tradition of middle-class drama seems an unlikely admirer of the prickly, swaggering boy, butch and louche and kinky, a foul-mouthed, lower-middle-class Wilds dripping cheeky, poisonous aphorisms. And, yet, when you begin to think about it, Rattigan's praise, apart from being perceptive and generous, is understandable. It is rooted, I think, in a deep-seated perception, which he may not even have been aware of. You get a glimpse of it in "In Praise of Love" (1973), which has just opened at the Apollo in a subtle, quietly moving, deeply perceptive production by Richard Oliver. I won't say that this is Rattigan at his best, but it ought to help to extinguish the idea, if it is still lurking about, that he was a superficial boulevard dramatist who bought his seriousness or his emotions cheap. It is about Sebastian Cruttwell, a top literary reviewer (Peter Bowles), married to Lydia, an Estonian (Liza Harrow, giving a beautifully understated performance in an underwritten role), whom he had met at the end of the war in Berlin where he worked in Intelligence.

This is both first-rate melodrama and searching psychology. Husband and wife share both truth and deception, in more ways than one. Lydia loves Cruttwell, pities his touching immaturity and thinks that he simply could not cope with life without her; Cruttwell, who loves her much more than either of them realises, cannot bear the thought of telling her the truth after all that she has survived. Neither of them can see that the other is stronger than he/she seems. Both are prisoners of Cruttwell's English middle-class emotional inhibitions, which can strangle one's feelings by damming their spontaneous expression."

V. Read the text given below with the help of a dictionary and make a summary of it.

A great deal of contemporary English fiction and drama is dedicated to the subject of man's search for identity, and the stress is not so much on political or social issues as on moral problems. The problem of identity closely linked with one of the most influential philosophical trends on twentieth-century thought, often evoked an existential attitude. It implies a certain scepticism about over knowing the essential nature of any of man's various experiences, particularly when that experience is received only through individual consciousness. At the same time, man must live and make his choice, must come to some terms with his own existence and true meaning of everything around him. Existentialist philosophy places limitations of man's knowledge and power and even on his search for identity on the necessity for serious action or engagement.

## Unit XVIII

I. Read the text and do the assignments following it.

### English Poetry of the Mid-Century

Early in the 1950s there were signs that a new generation of poets was about to appear. Oscar Mellor's Fantasy Press books and pamphlets, John Wain's series of readings on the Third Programme, a few volumes printed by the Reading School of Art, and the anthology *Springtime*, edited by G.S. Fraser and Gain Fletcher (1953), were among *the early manifestations of this new spirit*. Then came *the launching of a periodical* called "Listen," produced by G. Hartley who also published volumes by Philip Larkin and by John Holloway.

It is undeniable that R. Conquest's anthology, "New Lines" (1956) provided much the same platform for the poets of the fifties that "New Signatures" (1932) had offered to the poets of the thirties. The poets in this anthology were united by "a negative determination to avoid bad principles" rather than by any positive programme. The nine contributors, to the anthology *shared a common tone*, a belief that the intellect and the moral judgment must play a decisive part in the shaping of a poem.

The most widely admired of all the Movement poets **Philip Larkin** published his first volume "The North Ship" in 1945. In his witty introduction to the 1966 edition of the "The North Ship" he remarks that he *was infatuated with* the poetic music of Yeats, and that poetic talent was preserved from ruin by his discovery in early 1946 of Hardy's verse. The poem is an enormous advance on Larkin's earlier work, exhibiting the characteristics of his *mature poetry* – a fine, though unobtrusive, power of *evoking an atmosphere*, a muted wit, a masterly control of tone, a lyrical irony.

Larkin's poems *present* with a rare accuracy *the social climate* of suburban England in the 1950s. His verse is suffused with a compassionate melancholy, a sense of sadness and the transience of things. He pronounces his verdict on our lives:

Life is first boredom, then fear.  
Whether or not we use it, it goes,  
And leaves what something hidden from us chose,  
And age, and then the only end of age.

It would be misleading to claim that all the best poets of the 1950s were represented in "New Lines," or that the Movement comprised everything that was vital in the poetry of the decade. As at all times, there were few poets working in solitude, indifferent to current literary disputes.

**R.S. Thomas's** first two volumes "The Stones of the Field" (1946) and "An Acre of Land" (1952) were printed by small, little-known firms in Wales, and it was not until 1955 that *he made his mark with* "Song at the Year's Turning," a selection of poems written between 1942 and 1954. Although he owes nothing to the Movement poets his work exhibits many of the virtues which they admired. He presents a small world of the Welsh hill country where he favoured as priest. *The background of his poems* is almost always the Welsh landscape in winter, the cold sky, the bare branches, the snow.

A much younger poet, **Ted Hughes**, published his first collection, "The Hawk in the Rain," in 1957. It is interesting to compare him with his Cambridge contemporary, **Thom Gunn**, who *is usually associated with the Movement*. Both are anatomists of violence; but whereas Gunn is concerned with its operation in society, Hughes broods on violence as a principle of the universe and, in particular, of the animal kingdom.

In his review of "New Lines" **Charles Tomlinson** *voiced dissatisfaction with* the practice of the Movement. After some years during which he was admired in the States but ignored in his own country, Tomlinson gradually won recognition in Britain. His poetry is *notable for clarity of outline and precision*. He believes that Symbolism was the major poetic achievement in the late 19th century, admiring not only the French Symbolists, but the work of Tyutchev and of Machado, whom he has translated in collaboration with Henry Gifford.

There are other poets who deserve more than a passing mention. **Thomas Blackburn**, whose early verse draws on myth and legend in order to illuminate his own perplexities, has become more direct in the exploration of his inner tensions.

**Geoffrey Hill**, who has published only two small volumes, writes poetry of extraordinary concentration and purity. **Burns Singer** and **Edward Lowbury**, two fine undervalued poets, have wrestled with the metaphysical

problems of time, death and nothingness.

II. Translate into Russian the following key words and word combinations and use them in the sentences of your own:

the early manifestations of the new spirit, to launch a periodical, to share a common tone, to be infatuated with, mature poetry, to evoke an atmosphere, to present the social climate, to make the mark with, the background of his poems, to be associated with the Movement, to voice dissatisfaction with, notable for clarity of outline and precision.

III. Answer the following questions:

1. What poets manifested the new spirit of the 1950s?
2. What collection of poems provided the platform for the poets of the fifties?
3. The nine contributors to the anthology shared a common tone, didn't they?
4. Who was the most widely admired of all the Movement poets and why?
5. What other poets not belonging to the Movement do you know?
6. What can you say about R.S. Thomas's poetry? What is the background of his poems?
7. Who voiced his dissatisfaction with the Movement?
8. Why did Ch. Tomlinson win recognition in Great Britain?

IV. Read the poem and say what it is about. Learn it by heart.

*Philip Larkin*

### **Wants**

Beyond all this, the wish to be alone:  
However the sky grows dark with invitation cards  
However we follow the printed directions of sex  
However the family is photographed under the flag staff.  
Beyond all this, the wish to be alone,  
Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs:  
Despite the artful tensions of the calendar,  
The life insurance, the tabled fertility rises,  
The costly aversion of the eyes from death –  
Beneath it all, desire of oblivion runs.

V. Comment on the quotations:

1. Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and the best minds. (P.B. Shelly)
2. Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex, and vital. (O. Wilde)
3. "Classic" is a book which people praise and don't read. (M. Twain)

## **PART III. SUPPLEMENTARY READING**

### **Development of the British Novel 1970-1989**

The title of this essay begs definition and poses questions. There is no such thing as "the novel today"; there are only novels. Several hundred works of fiction of some literary merit are published every year. They are tangible objects which may be read. "The novel," on the other hand, cannot be read; it is an idea, an abstraction. As such, it is not even the Platonic idea of which individual novels are shadowy representations. Indeed the reverse is more nearly true. It is "the novel" which represents a concept formed as a result of reading a great many quite distinct novels. All talk of "the novel" is inevitably generalization, made more impressive, but perhaps less significant, the further it is removed from consideration of particular works of fiction.



Whether a book is a novel may itself be a matter of dispute. There is no satisfactory definition of a novel. Books have been published as novels in one country and as non-fiction in another. It is sensible to consider a book as a novel if its publisher has offered it as such.

For one thing is clear: it is no longer possible to impose narrow national categories on the novel. Thirty years ago it was still possible to write of "the English novel"; such a title would no longer make sense.

Twenty years is not necessarily a long time in terms of a novelist's career. Graham Greene, for instance, published his first novel in 1929 and his twenty-fifth in 1988. Anthony Powell's first novel, *Afternoon Men*, appeared in 1931; *The Fisher King* in 1986.

Clearly Greene and Powell are exceptional examples of longevity and the survival of talent. Death, illness, insanity, liquor, financial failure, disappointment, the malediction of critics, loss of ability, or the decay of ambition, truncate many careers. Nevertheless, in spite of all, a writing life of thirty or forty years is common. Any survey of two decades must at least take note of many writers whose reputation was established long before the commencement of the period under review.

However sceptical one may be of the value of speaking about "the novel," it is difficult to write about fiction without giving some sort of assent to that abstraction. Twenty years ago it was fashionable to speculate about "the death of the novel." It would, we were told, become an art form that pleased only a minority; like poetry. All forms of art of course appeal only to a minority of people, but it seemed plausible then to maintain that the novel had surrendered its primacy as a means of conveying imaginative experience. In 1975, in his introduction to *Beyond the Words: Eleven Writers in Search of a New Fiction*, Giles Gordon wrote that "fiction is no longer a popular art." Few would now agree. The recovery may have owed something to the introduction of prizes and the consequent heightening of public awareness. It has owed more to novelists themselves, and to their ability to address themselves to interesting themes in a sufficiently interesting manner.

In 1977 Malcolm Bradbury edited a collection of essays on *The Novel Today*. He found that "many novelists today have become uneasy with the code of old fictional expectations, with the established history of the novel, and have sought to reexperience and remake the form by enquiring into its essentials." The codes of which he wrote had come from two sources. There was realism, emphasizing plot and character, and drawing its strength from a "real" world beyond the novel; and there was the "modernist aesthetics of the earlier part of the century, in which 'pattern,' 'form,' and 'myth' assumed a paramount importance." Both these modes had, he thought, ceased to satisfy writers, and he identified two responses to this dissatisfaction.

The first was a withdrawal from the established mode "towards the lexical surface of the text" which "becomes the sufficient event." The second "related phenomenon" was "a fascination with the fictional process as a parody of form – it becomes the games-like construct with which permutations can be played."

(From "*The Novel Today*" by Allan Massie)

## Genre Fiction

### The Historical Novel

The expression "the literary novel" has entered common usage in the last twenty years; it is a useful, but unhelpfully restrictive, term. Employed to differentiate novels which have some ambition to be works of art from those which have not but seem to aim only for popular success, it loses value if it excludes from critical consideration novels which belong to particular genres, but which may nevertheless be written with true imagination and artistic integrity. In fact, genres like the historical novel, science fiction, mysteries and the novel of espionage may all yield work of a quality which transcends the limitations of the genre's conventions.

This is most obviously true of the historical novel, if only because so many of the greatest novels of the nineteenth century fell into that category. Yet dull and conventional practitioners have endangered the critical validity of the genre. Most historical are tripe, sentimental fantasies which offer no challenge to any reader. Conversely, therefore, the writing of a historical novel offers a peculiar challenge to the novelist for he or she is required to liberate the form from the easy assumptions with which it has become encrusted. At the same time its attractions are obvious: it allows the writer to consider permanent qualities of mind and character simply by setting a distance of time between the novelist and his material; it frees him from the tyranny of the here and now.

Two approaches to the writing of historical fiction seem both possible and fruitful: the first is that which investigates grand politics by means of a scrupulous and detailed recreation of a particular time. The

outstanding modern practitioners of this form have been the American Gore Vidal and the South African Mary Renault, who in her last novels, the trilogy dealing with Alexander the Great and with the disintegration of his empire after his death, achieved remarkable effects by her manipulation of the point of view and her refusal to sentimentalize or romanticize her material. These novels, which were popular successes but underrated by many critics, are likely to last longer than many of the books which have won literary prizes.

Both Anthony Burgess (*The Kingdom of the Wicked*) and William Golding (the *Rites of Passage* trilogy) have experimented with historical fiction. Burgess's has his characteristic virtues of erudition and verve. Golding's pastiche enables him to explore the moral implications of action and the development of sensibility.

The second type of historical novel allows its author greater freedom, for it treats history as myth. Novelists like Robert Nye, Peter Vansittart and John Banville are less interested in creating a simulacrum of historical reality than in capturing the essence of an age and in tracing the mythical elements which connect it, psychologically and imaginatively, with modern sensibility. Nye's characteristic theme is the erotic nerve that trembles behind our thoughts, imaginings and actions. His outstanding novel, *Falstaff* (1976) is the masterpiece of this sort of fiction. It is at once homage to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan vitality, and a comic portrayal of the waste land created by power politics. It is a celebration of man and God; its crudities are as much part of the human edifice as the gargoyles are integral to a medieval cathedral. Written in a rich, yet abrupt and incomparably rapid prose that makes no pretence to belong to the age in which the fiction is ostensibly set, it is nevertheless a timeless novel; modern, yet not confined to the twentieth century. It delights in the exuberance of the life force while keeping the reality of death, and of the fear of death, ever before us.

### Science Fiction

A concern with different modes of thinking and feeling is also manifest in the novels of J.G. Ballard and Michael Moorcock. Both began by writing conventional science fiction; both transcended its barriers to write novels which, retaining the genre's virtues of directness, imaginative freedom and intellectual enquiry, discarded its reliance on arbitrary and whimsical resolution of narrative.

Both Ballard and Moorcock are prolific – at one time Moorcock was writing a novel a month. This is the way they have come up, through the science fiction magazines. It has a curious double consequence. On the one hand, each is capable of writing with a direct lucidity which makes for easy reading; on the other both are capable of mandarin opacity, the result perhaps of fast writing against deadlines: Moorcock's *A Cure for Cancer* (1971), for instance, is, in his own words, "too pretentious and obscure, too many private jokes, everything I dislike in someone like Nabokov."

The great strength of these writers is that they look beyond the world of orderly social fiction. They are both conscious of the imminence of a dehumanized world, dominated by technology, a world in which traditional values appear to be obliterated. Neither welcomes this; quite the contrary. Yet they are willing to confront it. Both have at the same time a range which makes it possible for their work to change direction abruptly: Ballard has written a realistic novel, *Empire of the Sun* (1984), about a Japanese internment camp. Moorcock is engaged on a series of novels set in Edwardian England.

They have weaknesses in common too. Both appear to find little difficulty in turning out well-structured and convincing novels; at the same time these seem insufficiently pondered. They have written so much that they can resolve difficulties of narrative by their mastery of structure rather than by the force of imagination.

Moorcock has an exuberance Ballard lacks. Though Ballard is pleased to deploy pop images throughout his fiction, he does so as an act of criticism, revolted by the naive acceptability of his original image. His novels accordingly are rarely affirmative; he is dismayed by the squalid commodity-dominated urban world. He has suggested that "the writer's job is no longer to put the fiction in ... people have enough fiction in their lives already." He sees it as the writer's job to question the subliminal goods which pass for reality. When he employs realistic techniques, he does so as a means of criticism of conventional notions of what is real.

### Spy Fiction

... The idea that shadows can assume a superior reality is central to the concept of spy fiction. The unquestioned modern master of this genre is John Le Carre, unquestioned at least since his early rival Len Deighton temporarily deserted the spy novel in favour of thoroughly researched and documented recreations of war, *Fighter* (1987) and *Bomber* (1970), and alternative history, *SS-GB* (1978).

Le Carre is the legitimate heir of John Buchan and Eric Ambler. Like them, he uses the form of the spy

novel as a means of assessing the moral condition of the nation. Like them he is aware of the precarious nature of civilization. Yet he has taken the form further, perhaps beyond a valid point. Whereas Buchan and Ambler characteristically portrayed the murky world of secret politics as an interruption in the decent and orderly lives of their heroes, Le Carre makes it an image sufficient in itself. There is no world beyond it for his characters, who have been so formed and corrupted by their experiences in the secret world that they are incapable of conceiving any decent way of life as a practical possibility. At times Le Carre seems to share this delusion. The Secret Services of which he writes have lost their reason for existence: they have come to protect nothing except themselves.

Yet there is a moral force in Le Carre's fiction, particularly evident in *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* (1974) and *Smiley's People* (1980), his best two novels, which makes a great deal of conventional literary fiction seem trivial. If Robert Nye shows how the erotic nerve disturbs and reforms moral attitudes, Le Carre in a very different manner never allows us to forget how the lust for power, even in a stale bureaucratic world, can become a dominating and subversive force.

This is the strength of his fiction, and it is scarcely vitiated by the frequently pretentious and convoluted style in which he writes. Le Carre has taken the spy novel so far from being in any normal sense of the term a novel of action that one might more exactly describe his world as one of mandarin inaction. His fondness for the indirect approach makes a virtue of secrecy and of deception of the reader, which serves as a parody of the moral attitudes that he critically dissects.

### **Mystery Novel**

Science fiction, historical novels and spy novels all lend themselves to formulaic treatment which allows the author to manipulate stereotypes whenever invention flags. Even the best rarely avoid giving off an impression of *deja vu*, at least in parts. Familiarity of this sort makes for easy reading; nothing is so undemanding as the formula novel. This criticism can be levelled with even more force at the classical English mystery novel, which in the hands of its best practitioners like Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers and Michael Innes achieved the remarkable feat of rendering even the bloodiest murder abstract. Raymond Chandler claimed to have given murder back to the people who commit it, but he did so by restricting crime to a criminal milieu. P.D. James and Ruth Rendell have avoided this limit while restoring the seriousness of the act of murder.

James writes only orthodox detective stories, scrupulously adhering to convention, creating an intellectual puzzle, which nevertheless do not exclude complexity of emotion. Rendell is extremely prolific, writing police detective stories and psychopathic studies under her own name, and also dense explorations of buried crimes, decorated with Gothic motifs, under the name of Barbara Vine. Both are addicted to an excessive degree to literary allusion – James's police detective is a poet himself, while Rendell's is an omnivorous reader with a remarkable memory. Despite this, both writers have succeeded in reintegrating genre fiction in the mainstream novel. James's last, *A Taste for Death* (1986), could most accurately be described as a novel of character turning on the investigation of a murder; in this it was closer to the Victorian master Wilkie Collins than to Christie and Sayers. Rendell's fecundity and understanding of psychopathic personality recall the Franco-Belgian Simenon, whom Andre Gide once described as "the best living French novelist." Rendell has not perhaps marked out her territory as decisively as Simenon did; but her work is of quality comparable to his.

### **Novel Is a Piece of News**

The novel has always been a loose and capacious term; for every discernible trend it has been possible to find contemporary countercurrents. So, today, while it may seem that the future of the novel is to appeal to an international readership, it does not follow that this excludes the local or particular writer. The Japanese author Shusako Endo is an example of one who has achieved international success without diluting his native culture.

It remains certain, however, that the novel can only flourish if it remains aware of its own definition as a piece of news. Novelty may rest in subject matter or manner, and the degree of novelty may be hard to identify. It must nevertheless be there if the book is not to stink of stale fish. All the writers considered here are to some extent at least conscious of their responsibility in this respect. They respond to changing social values and the changing shape of society with new perceptions. They are aware, even the most apparently naturalistic of them, that reality can no longer be complacently defined. They are aware too of paradox: the concept of character has been challenged by physiological and psychological advances and theories; yet perception of "real" character remains central to the way we try to understand the world. It is the novelist's task to explore this paradox.

Their duty of exploration may indeed be taken as the imperative which drives the novelist. The novel is an exploratory form, seeking out routes by which author and reader can together come to a truer understanding of the world. Dealing in imperfections, the novelist understands that this understanding can itself be never other than imperfect. This is why it is not a form suited to the ideologically committed. Orwell described it as "a Protestant form"; inasmuch as his phrase retains value, it has lost its sectarian significance. But it reminds us that the writing of a novel is an act of individual judgement, or rather that it is composed of myriads of such acts. Reading a novel is of the same order. Both writing and reading depend on the use of the imagination. This is true whether the novel superficially seems to set out to achieve a close resemblance to everyday life or whether it flies far away from it. Neither mode is admirable in itself; it depends on how it is done.

### Anthony Powell (1905 – )

The most ambitious venture in postwar English fiction was brought to a triumphant conclusion in 1975. This was Anthony Powell's novel in twelve volumes, *A Dance to the Music of Time*. An unfolding of English upper-class and upper-Bohemian life, extending over more than forty years in time (and twenty-five years in the writing), it is too subtle, contrived and self-aware to be described as a *roman-fleuve*. No English novelist has matched Powell's ability to achieve an intricate intertwining of art and reality. The critic John Bayley has remarked that "nothing shows the complete originality of Powell's technique more than the way his fiction imitates memoir, and almost in a double sense, like a *trompe-l'oeil* painting," so that the novel becomes "an anecdote arranging itself in the elaborate composition of a picture."

A harsher note, at times even brutal, and certainly sombre, was struck in the last two volumes, *Temporary Kings* (1973) and *Hearing Secret Harmonics* (1975). No doubt this was partly in response to changes in public morality which had afforded greater freedom to the writer, but the darker mood of these last volumes was principally determined by the inner dynamic of the whole series of novels in which characters are revealed as moving figures responding involuntarily to the mysterious music which compels them to perform intricate measures in the dance of life, according to a pattern which they neither will nor understand. So, in these last two books, which crown the series, Widmerpool, the comic, yet sinister figure who has tried to shape his life by the exercise of the will, disregarding in the process those claims of affection and sensibility which alone make life tolerable, rushes towards destruction, impelled by forces over which he has lost all control, and ultimately conquered by the more powerful will of the young Scorpio Murtlock.

Powell's achievement, unmatched by any contemporary, and indeed unique in the English novel since Henry James, was to render social reality convincing, in a rich expressive prose, while at the same time revealing the inadequacy of any attempt to understand human nature, and the human condition, only in such terms. Adroit in his deployment of factual detail, the accumulation of which makes every page ring true to life, scenes of social, army and business life all being presented with fidelity to common experience, Powell nevertheless, by the vividness of his imaginative perception, bathes the world he has called into being in the golden light of timeless myth. At its simplest level, this is the personal myth – the view of self – which each of us forms and which, if maintained, enables us to get satisfactorily, or at least tolerably, through life. But at a more profound level all his characters are seen to be enacting certain symbiotic roles in the lives of others, and hence in the reader's imagination also.

One of the most difficult of the novelist's tasks is to make those characters whom he has called into being with a few strokes of the pen achieve a semblance of autonomous life; and it is Powell's peculiar and double triumph to have brought this off, while at the same time suggesting to us that we all take on alternative lives in the minds of others, and that indeed the whole of experience may be a dream by some Great Unknown. The Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset asked whether "human life in its most human dimension was not a work of fiction. Is man a sort of novelist of himself?" This is the experience of Powell's characters, or rather perhaps it is the experience we have when reading of them. He contrives to make them more real than people we know – more real because they are presented with an authority we do not encounter in "real" life – while reminding us that they are only so because he has imagined them. Like Pirandello, he "pretends that the familiar parlour is not real as a photograph, but a stage containing many realities." Yet he never sacrifices common sense. His myth is always an alternative interpretation, not forced on the reader.

Powell has tackled, more effectively than any other writer of our time, the essential problem of the novelist: how to achieve a balance between what he sees out of the window and what goes on in his head. Only those who strike such a balance can convince us that their view of life is both valid and interesting.

He has another attribute, the possession or lack of which is one useful test of a writer's quality: the unmistakable personal voice. The writer who lacks this may have many virtues, but is likely to be forgotten because a common voice suggests common observation.

## Magic Realists

Angela Carter (1940–1992)

Emma Tennant (1937 – )

Coined by German critic Franz Roh in the 1920s, the term "Magic Realist" has been most usefully applied to Latin American writers like Borges, Garcia Marques, Alejo Carpentier and Vargas Llosa. According to the revised edition of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, "magic realist novels have, typically, a strong narrative drive, in which the recognizably realistic mingles with the unexpected and the inexplicable, and in which elements of dream, fairy story, or mythology combine with the everyday, often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence."

The label "Magic Realist" has at times been attached to Angela Carter and Emma Tennant. It is more appropriate in Carter's case. She is a writer of imagination and wit, who works most happily and inventively improvising on a theme supplied by myth or fairy tale. She is a writer in the dandy tradition, her novels, the best of which is perhaps *Nights at the Circus* (1984), being inconceivable written in any other manner. Style and theme are perfectly integrated, but this achieved perfection itself represents a limit which denies her a more profound resonance. Her imagination is self-consuming, unable to project itself beyond the immediate work. A great novel alters our understanding of the world beyond itself, changes our perception of that world; for all her imaginative virtuosity Carter fails to make the imaginative connections which render such an extension and deepening of comprehension possible.

Tennant is a more varied writer, and one who has shown herself more capable of interesting development. Early works like *Wild Nights* (1979) and *Alice Fell* (1981) were short, intense, lyrical, working by means of a highly charged impressionistic technique. She had already, however, written *The Bad Sister* (1978), a novel which took as its theme the idea of dual personality and as its literary model James Hogg's remarkable tale of demoniac possession *The True Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. In this novel she experimented with a method of indirect, frequently misleading narrative, which she was to employ subsequently in *Woman Beware Woman* (1983), *Black Marina* (1985) and *The Women of London* (1989). Tennant's fiction is based on the premise that things are both precisely what they seem, and often not at all what they seem. An interpretation of an action is, for her, a fact, but it is not necessarily, and perhaps only rarely, the truth. It is at most a partial truth. Our judgement of people is determined by our own experience and by what other people tell us. These are things worth recording, but they do not in themselves provide us with the means of coming to a true understanding. She realizes that people never see themselves as others see them, and that what is objectively ridiculous may be subjectively important. Her subject is the gap in an individual's understanding of human nature and human behaviour.

Such a subject lends itself to methods of indirect or fallible narration. She brings off the marriage of misperception and revelation most satisfactory in *Woman Beware Woman*, a novel dealing with a murder in Ireland, with the corrupting or distorting influence of celebrity, and with the possessiveness of love, which is lyrical, dramatic and disturbing. She is now embarked on a sequence of novels called *The Cycle of the Sun* of which only the first two volumes, *The House of Hospitality* (1987) and *A Wedding of Cousins* (1988), have been published.

Here she has a narrator, Jenny Carter, who can be trusted because she is honest, and yet cannot be trusted because she is ignorant. Even while persuaded that she is telling it as she sees it, and striving to understand the significance of what she reports, we cannot rely on her interpretation because her own experience is limited, and her feelings are both powerful and confused.

In these novels Tennant is concerned to be true to emotional experience and to create the appearance and texture of the social world with fidelity. Yet this fiction also rejects the claims to authority which naturalism, the mode to which it might at first seem to belong, has always made. Her use of the innocent and confused narrator reminds us that the naturalist conventions are themselves a matter of choice, and that the same events would look very different, would indeed be very different, if the point of view was altered. Tennant undermines the authority of naturalism by reminding us that the novelist's choice of angle is always arbitrary; that any interpretation of what happens is partial; and that human beings are more unpredictable and mercurial than

fictional conventions ordinarily allow them to be.

Tennant revels in the complexity of experience. It is too early to say whether *The Cycle of the Sun* will display the mastery of structure which alone can reconcile the author's awareness of the arbitrary and haphazard elements of life with a satisfying and integrated aesthetic. At present it can only be called one of the most interesting experiments in contemporary fiction.

### Muriel Spark (1918- )

Muriel Spark began as a sharp, funny and disconcerting observer of bourgeois life, with novels like *Memento Mori* (1959) and *The Bachelors* (1960), which attracted the admiring attention of Evelyn Waugh. Then in the late 1960s and early 1970s, she published a succession of novellas in which description was reduced to the minimum necessary for her immediate atmospheric purpose, and which achieved the dislocating clarity of dream. In all these books natural order is disturbed, most evidently in *The Hothouse by the East River* (1973), in which nothing is as it seems to be: the principal characters, living in the New York of the early 1970s where "sick is interesting, sick is real," were, we learn, killed by a flying bomb in London in 1944, and it is their alternative un-lived lives of which we read. In *Not to Disturb* (1971) everything which is going to happen in the novel has already happened in the minds of the characters: the servants in a chateau in Switzerland know that their master and mistress, and the secretary who has been lover to both, will die by murder and suicide, before the deaths have taken place, and have accordingly sold their stories to the world's press and arranged for the arrival of the television cameras. These novels are probably the finest examples of "Magic Realism" in English.

Yet in the five novels she has published since 1976 Muriel Spark has abandoned this sort of experiment with time and structure. Her fiction, though still original and unsettling, has nevertheless again positioned itself in the "real" world of sense and society. She has eschewed the oddity with which she flirted. Her latest novels affirm the truth of what the French critic Nathalie Sarraute (herself the author of some of the most interesting examples of the *nouveau roman*) wrote in *L'Ere du Soupçon*: "the traditional novel retains an eternal youthfulness; its generous and flexible form can still, without resorting to any major change, adapt itself to all the new stories, all the new characters and all the new conflicts which develop within successive societies. And it is in the novelty of characters and conflicts that the principal interest and the only worthwhile renewal of the novel can be found."

Her novels represent a distillation of experience; she has always remained true to her sense that "everything happens to an artist; time is always redeemed, nothing is lost, and wonders never cease" (*Loitering with Intent*, 1981). Her novels are notable not for their fidelity to life, nor for an attempt to impose patterns on experience, but rather for their awareness of that strange substance whence patterns are formed. Inasmuch as the novelist's problem is to effect the perfect marriage between manner and matter, so that the novel satisfies as an aesthetic object, while at the same time permitting the elaboration of discussible themes, then she succeeds time and again.

Nowhere is this more evident than in *The Only Problem* (1984). The subject might seem too large for fiction, for it is that posed in *The Book of Job*: "how can an omnipotent and benevolent Creator permit the unspeakable sufferings of the world?" Conversely, this short novel might seem too slight for its subject. But *Job* itself is a short book, and as Spark makes her hero Harvey Gotham observe, in a judgement that might be applied to the whole body of her fiction (or at least to its spirit): "moving passages about for no other reason than that they are more logical is no good for *The Book of Job*. It doesn't make it come clear. *The Book of Job* will never come clear. It doesn't matter. It's a poem."

Acceptance of the fundamentally mysterious nature of life is critical to an appreciation of Spark. Truth is beyond reason, its recognition an act of faith. But experience itself cannot be bounded by reason either. Human nature is contrary, and its remorseless selfishness always threatens to destroy the fabric which alone can sustain it. Spark's art is founded on paradox. The manner is inconsequential, but no modern writer has a clearer sense of the ineluctable nature of consequence. She has said that her narrative model is to be found in the Border Ballads, where one thing happens and then another, without explanation. Yet no one has a more intrusive authorial voice, setting us right, warning, advising, or choosing to mislead. She can write of the gravest matters in the lightest, even most frivolous, of tones, and then remind us that a thoughtless and apparently unimportant action can have the most appalling consequence, and be, in fact, a monstrous sin.

### Margaret Drabble (1939 – )

Margaret Drabble's best work concerns a critical examination of new directions being taken by English society. Drabble's early novels established her as the representative voice of educated women of her generation. To some extent she has remained this, but her work has become much more ambitious, as it has moved away from the personal-anecdotal novels with which she made her name. Her true subject now is the moral condition of England.

She tackles this with zest and virtuosity in her most recent, and most ambitious, novel, *The Radiant Way* (1987). It opens brilliantly. Liz Headland, a successful psychotherapist, is giving a New Year's party to usher in the 1980s. At the same time she is celebrating twenty-one years of marriage to Charles, a television producer. The duration of their marriage is "unique in their circle of acquaintance. Battle and bloodshed and betrayal lay behind them, and now they met peacefully in this large house, and slept peacefully in their separate rooms, and met at weekends over the marmalade, and would continue to do so until Charles's new appointment took him, in a couple of months, to New York." Liz congratulates herself on their achievement in language which suggests to the reader that her complacency is about to be shattered, that it is not as easy as she supposes to solve the problems of modern living. The party, handled with an assurance that is both scintillating and significant, reveals the extent of her self-deception. Her acute perceptions are not so acute. She has misunderstood her own life.

It is a weakness of the novel that this misunderstanding is not apparently intended to discredit her as a guide to the way we live now. In fact her response to the contemporary world is confused. Despite this, *The Radiant Way* is an unusually persuasive novel. It celebrates the power of friendship and it is animated by Drabble's awareness of objects – landscape, food and drink – by her sense of the surging metropolis and the cold cities of the North. Yet it is also angry, sombre and pessimistic. Her analysis of contemporary England is harsh. She is alarmed by the sense that social obligation is being supplanted by compulsion and selfishness. Her puritanism is offended by the new individualism which flaunts wealth, is thrilled by power, and has no respect for what should bind people together. Despite the anger, she is a sufficiently subtle moralist to realize that this is, in part, the consequence of what people like herself, and those characters she admires, have successfully demanded: that is, the freedom to live their own way, by standards they have chosen for themselves. Moreover, she knows that right is rarely concentrated on one side. In a scene at the end of the novel, Liz is having dinner with her friends Alix and Esther; they discover that the police have surrounded the house, intending to arrest a young man on the top floor. Liz is hostile to the police; she calls them "a bloody disgrace ... thick as two planks ... incompetent fools"; she says "perhaps they're hoping he will take all three of us hostage and they can have a big shoot-out. They like that kind of thing." But Alix argues the cause of the police: "it wasn't their fault if they had learned confrontation, their position in urban society was increasingly untenable."

The strength of Drabble's fiction rests in its nine-teeth-century seriousness. She never doubts the importance of the social world in which we live and which she seeks to reflect. Like Byatt, she never doubts that the novel has a part to play in deepening and refining our understanding of society. She cares passionately about the way we live, and credits her readers with a similarly intense concern. If her novels sometimes lack imaginative illumination, for which she tries to compensate by writing in a torrential style, in which adjectives and tautologies are heaped up with all the exuberance of a Victorian painter assembling fruit, vegetables and the carcasses of gamebirds for a still-life painting, she has a concomitant virtue: she never takes refuge from facts in elaborate fantasy. It is always here and now in her world; she has a respect for physical reality that is admirable and invigorating.

### Stanley Middleton (1919 – )

Stanley Middleton is the outstanding novelist of Middle England, greatly admired by Byatt who has written that his "is a world of questing morality, without the sanction of religious injunction, upheld only by decency." This is indeed the world in which all these writers live. It is perhaps the reward of a provincial upbringing in a society where "smart" was not an admiring adjective, and where "duty" was still presented as a moral imperative.

Middleton is the Cezanne of the modern English novel, achieving extraordinary effects with apparently the most ordinary of materials. He works at the same subject again and again, and its matter is never in itself striking or remarkable. His novels are all set in the Midlands and his characters are drawn from the middle classes: schoolmasters, solicitors, businessmen, whose roots are generally to be found in a narrow chapel-going

culture, which has in the course of time lost its religious element without surrendering its ethical content. Typically, his plot poses a complex moral problem: we find marriages at breaking point, people having to come to terms with retirement, bereavement or estrangement. "He works," Byatt observes, "on the borders between people where the nature of the self of the other is a mystery and a blank."

In his later novels, like "The Daysman," "An After-Dinner Sleep" and "Recovery," his mastery is so assured that he in fact dispenses with "plot" in the formal sense of the term. Instead he fastens on the haphazard nature of life. There is of course a story, but there is a story as there is one in ordinary experience. One thing succeeds another, and there is no satisfactory shape to events. To write a novel in this way is to take a great risk, for no work of art can dispense with form. The movement in a Middleton novel is internal. It is his characters' state of mind and spirit which is important, and it is by his deployment of feeling rather than incident that he contrives to give his work an aesthetically, and therefore morally, satisfying pattern. His characters are committed to a moral obstacle course, by means of which they learn, or learn again, how to go on living in the right way. Part of the strain imposed on them comes from their realization that in the modern world they have to make their own code of decent behaviour.

Middleton works tentatively, his prose echoing his characters' uncertainties and divagations. His is always an exploratory art. The sense of felt life is one of his qualities: he is admirable in the evocation of place, weather, mood, and in the isolation of significant moments in experience. He is also consistently interesting. This sounds a weak adjective of praise; yet the ability to be interesting, to make what happens to the characters he has imagined seem to matter to the reader, is not the least of the novelist's required talents. Indeed it is a fundamental one: if the writer does not possess it, all his other gifts may go for nothing.

On the whole, the people in Middleton's novels are decent, well-meaning, unremarkable; they really are the sort of people we might have as neighbours. Most of them try to be good, to be pleasant; they could even be called nice. Their ordinariness is a mark of the author's ambition. It is easier to create wild, flamboyant and extraordinary characters; the portrayal of evil is always a temptation to the writer because it is more dramatic than good. Middleton, however, brings to the depiction of ordinary humdrum undramatic life the high seriousness which less subtle and understanding writers can bring only to awful and extraordinary events.

### **Peter Ackroyd (1949 – )**

Ackroyd is a dandy, self-conscious, elegant and witty. His work is marked by an extreme artificiality. It is always at some remove from life, and he never leaves the reader in any doubt that he is reading a novel. Despite naturalistic passages, often extremely effective, his inspiration generally appears to be literature rather than life. This impression is reinforced by the knowledge that Ackroyd is also a fine literary critic and biographer, who has written illuminatingly of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. But he is also a poet, with a poet's awareness of mystery.

He has written five novels. The first, *The Great Fire of London*, derived from *Little Dorrit*, was a twentieth-century gloss on Dickens. Yet at the same time it was a highly individual and original work, a haunting novel of modern London – of all contemporary writers only Ackroyd reveals the poetry of modern London. It was followed by *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*, which won the Somerset Maugham Award, and *Hawksmoor* (1985) which won the *Guardian Fiction Prize* and the *Withbread Novel Prize*. Both showed his ability to get outside himself; Ackroyd's novels eschew the thinly disguised autobiography which less ambitious writers make the staple of their fiction. Both showed his talent for pastiche, a characteristic mode of post-modernist fiction. *Hawksmoor* offering a glittering reconstruction of late-seventeenth-century London in its exploration of the life of the architect who was a pupil of Wren and built St. Mary Woolnoth and St. George's, Bloomsbury. The novel is structurally ingenious, for a modern murder mystery is incorporated in the reconstruction, and the two plots, skilfully intertwined, play off each other. This novel, metaphysically convincing, masterly in its treatment of obsession, is Ackroyd's most assured success.

A similar technique, interweaving past and present, and employing pastiche, is used in *Chatterton* (1987). In one sense this novel raised the question whether Ackroyd's manner would stiffen into mannerism; yet it also, though marred by some grotesque and unconvincing caricature, revealed new aspects of his talent, in particular an ability to evoke tenderness, and a new depth of emotion evident in his treatment of the relationship between the unsuccessful poet Charley Wychwood (obsessed with the image of the dying Chatterton, the "marvellous boy" who, in the eighteenth century wrote poems in "old English" which deceived many into thinking them genuine) and his wife and small son. This ability to deal lucidly and unpretentiously with domestic emotions – and it is far more difficult to write well of a marriage than of a murder – suggested an intuitive sensitivity for



which nothing in Ackroyd's earlier work had prepared one.

In his most recent novel, *First Light* (1989), echoes of other writers are still to be found, but pastiche has been abandoned. So has London. The setting is Dorset, and Ackroyd has written a novel in which a chief element is the sense of the past as an enduring present, a sense which throws into relief the merely provisional nature of modern urban society, and done this without falling into the portentous solemnity which has afflicted the serious English rural novel since Hardy. The novel's themes are time and the immensity of creation. Its action is concentrated on two sites: an observatory and an archaeological dig. He pictures the heavens spinning away, old forms of life trapped mysteriously under the earth – the buried treasure of race memory – and between them, men and women day to day playing out their little roles in the demanding urgency of brief time. It is the novel of a poet, a speculative book, but it is also comic, for Ackroyd's eye for human oddity is acute. These people in between, the men and women of today, are vividly, tenderly and humorously brought to life.

Ackroyd is a writer who fulfils Nabokov's requirement that the novelist should see the world as "material for fiction." He is also one who can legitimately be described as Dickensian: he has the same sense of the strange poetry of life, the same relish in human behaviour, the same awareness that comedy derives from the point of view, and he has learned from him how to give authenticity and vitality to a novel by placing naturalistic, even dull, characters at the centre and creating around them characters conceived and displayed as grotesques, who press in on the central characters and then pull away from them in a joyous celebration of human variety.

### **Martin Amis (1949 – )**

Contemporary success requires a writer to be in tune with his times. Consequently his work may acquire a period flavour which may make it seem dated before it has the chance even to take on a period charm. The first novels of Martin Amis, for example, though evidently the work of a gifted writer, now emit stale gusts of the late 1960s and early 1970s; they are for the moment almost unreadable. It was not till his fourth novel, *Other People* (1981), that Amis began to escape from the limiting condition of being bang up to the minute, of having the ear of his exact contemporaries, and only theirs. These early books, *The Rachel Papers* (1973), *Dead Babies* (1975) and *Success* (1978), combined a shimmer of verbal brilliance with an adolescent desire to shock. This, however, was only a case of joining with other adolescents in shocking their elders; there was nothing to disturb readers of his own generation. They indeed were flattered by the novels, and, since the investigation of human nature was superficial, shrinking from the depiction of serious emotion, these novels were ultimately trivial and unambitious.

What makes Amis interesting, however, is the ability to develop which he has shown. *Other People* itself was an unsatisfactory novel, principally because of its indeterminate centre; but it was disturbing as none of his previous books had been, because he was now admitting to ignorance of certain aspects of personality, which he had formerly presented with a glib assurance.

*Money* (1984) showed a remarkable, not unexpected, advance. Set partly in a glittering but insubstantial New York, partly in a London that offered a shoddy imitation of New York, it was at once contemporary and timeless. Money is both its theme and title, as it was the theme of *Our Mutual Friend*; and Amis recalls Dickens in the exuberant fecundity of language, in his startling insight and moral seriousness, without, one may say gratefully, being in any way what is conventionally and slackly called Dickensian. Money, Amis perceives, has taken on a life of its own: "All America was interflexed by computer processors whose roots spread outward from the trunks of skyscrapers until they looped like a web from city to city, sorting, clearing, okaying, denying, denying. Software America on a humming grid of linkup and lookout, with display screens and logic boards of credit ratings, debt profiles." Money, he sees, has become metaphysical. People have it without showing it, and, having it, go down into the streets and with imaginary money purchase whatever comes into their heads. This is the atmosphere in which his novel lives and the atmosphere into which he launches his greedy innocent John Self.

The narrative is offered as an exaggerated and comic version of modern life; the characterization is no more than emblematic. The vitality of the novel arises not from incident but from the author's disgusted enjoyment of the world he has summoned into being. This money world is like Coketown in *Hard Times*, a monstrous and inhuman creation which fascinates the author; he responds with zestful loathing.

It is the style which constitutes the book's triumph, because it is the galloping and inventive prose which carries Amis's adoring revulsion from modernity. It has an amazing range. It can carry menace: "as my cab pulled off FDR drive, somewhere in the early Hundreds, a low-slung Tomahawk full of black guys came sharking out lane and sloped in fast right across our bows"; a sentence where the rhythm is just right, and the

weight rests on that word "sharking" like a fighter on the balls of his feet. It can accommodate reflection, can convey pathos and self-loathing. It is very funny and intensely visual. Whatever is sick, sad and ugly in modern urban life is caught in this style; its rare moments of beauty too.

*Money* is a delight to read, even though it is made of material which is disgusting and depressing. Almost everything that is good and natural and loving and lovely in life has been jettisoned; we are looking into the trash cans outside the fast-food eatery of a junk civilization. Yet from this Amis has created an entrancing work of art. There has been no novel from him since, though one sensed that *Money* represented a signing-off, that it was a bridge leading from his clever young man's novels to something deeper and more sympathetic. Whatever form his future fiction takes, one cannot think Martin Amis a candidate for Maugham's Italian *pensione*.

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"A Severed Head"  
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