

Sex in American Literature: A Comparison of Selected American and Immigrant Authors, 1945 to 1980

Marika Nováková

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děkanka



PhDr. Katarína Nemčoková, Ph.D.
ředitelka ústavu

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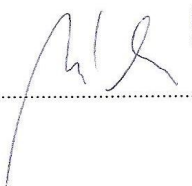
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem sexu ve vybraných dílech amerických autorů, J.D. Salinger a Tennesseeho Williamse, a imigrantů - Charlese Bukowského a Vladimira Nabokova. Úvodem jsou popsány dva koncepty sexuality a její vývoj v poválečném období v Americe a v migrantské literatuře. Následuje analýza vybraných děl z hlediska sexuální tematiky, která ústí v poslední část, a to je porovnání amerického a evropského vnímání sexu. Celá práce dochází k závěru, že pohled na sex se u vybraných autorů značně odlišuje, a že byli ovlivněni místem, odkud pocházeli.

Klíčová slova: sex, imigranti, Vladimir Nabokov, Charles Bukowski, J.D. Salinger, Tennessee Williams

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis focuses on the topic of sex in the selected works of American authors J.D. Salinger and Tennessee Williams, and immigrants - Charles Bukowski and Vladimir Nabokov. Firstly, two concepts of sexuality and its development are described in the American post-war period and in the immigrant literature. Secondly follows the analysis of selected works in terms of sexual topics and thirdly, the thesis results in the comparison of American and European perceptions of sex. The conclusion of the whole thesis reveals that the view of sex differs considerably among the selected authors and that they were influenced by their place of origin.

Keywords: sex, immigrants, Vladimir Nabokov, Charles Bukowski, J.D. Salinger, Tennessee Williams

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INTRODUCTION

After the World War II sex occupied a strong position in the American literature in its entirety. The selection of authors in this thesis is entirely goal-directed. Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* and J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* represent novels, Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* theatre and Charles Bukowski's *Love is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977* poetry.

Selected writers are divided into two categories in this thesis, immigrant and American authors. Regardless the fact that each of them has his own specific writing style, my hypothesis is that although all the books were written in the same country, their views of sex differed. Immigrant authors tended to see sexuality differently than their American counterparts. My assumption is that the European style of perception of sex differs from the U.S. in the basic concept - it is perceived as a simple physical act, while in America it is rather a complex matter associated with deeper feelings.

Sex is often seen as a tabooed topic accompanied by prohibitions and censorship even though it is a human nature and the area that has been scientifically defined and described. Sexual narrative is often accompanied by the confidentiality gained due to the cultural evolution and religion.¹ In the first place, I try to map out how the sexual thinking has evolved in the postwar America, how it was influenced, as the cultural development is inseparable from the works of selected authors, whether it is the attitude of young people, to whom J.D. Salinger dedicated his book, sexual crimes, which affected *Lolita*, the issue of immigrants, the topic which Tennessee Williams is dealing with or the simple sex act without any euphony described in the poems of Charles Bukowski.

The post-war period in the American literature is marked by the crucial breakthrough; tabooed subjects appear in the literature - rape, incest, prostitution, and homosexuality. Sex becomes an issue that the Americans were literally overwhelmed with in forms of paperbacks, high quality photographs or Television projections. There was a new way of expression that allowed authors to uncover hitherto unknown possibilities in the literature. The very fact that there has been a breach of something as fundamental as sexual taboos is one of the milestones in the entire American literary history. In the words of D. H.

¹ See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 53.

Lawrence: „Now our business is to realize sex. Today the full conscious realization of sex is more important than the act itself.“²

² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 157.

1 HISTORY OF AMERICAN SEXUALITY

Dr. Alfred C. Kinsey, 1945. The year of foundation of Institute for Sex Research or, as it has later become famous for, the Kinsey Institute - the first institution which scientifically explored human sexual nature with regard to openness and scope of the study.³ Kinsey may be denoted as one of the first, biggest and the most influential American sexual experimenter of that time - his purely voluntary studies included thousands of charts of facts and numbers from the sexual life of his respondents - for instance, how often respondents got an oral sex satisfaction from their partners or records of numbers of daily masturbations. All these studies took place in the premises of the Kinsey institute because of the huge lack of the resembling materials connected to this issue.⁴ Part of the general unconsciousness was caused by the fact that any sexually connected education at the American universities was only a part of lessons about hygiene. By then, it was an unprecedented experiment which of course had met a lot of indignation and negative comments. But not each reaction was condemning. Sexual issues were slowly about to stop being tabooed and not only the authors but even the public had an opportunity to be more educated in this field.

Sex education was taught differently in Europe. While Britain feared the impact of too much knowledge of this area, much more benevolent France stood for authorization of prostitution and did not attach too much importance to the education that was rather related to the higher circles of society.⁵ The perception of sex in American literature and culture in general is obviously different from the European. According to The Oxford Dictionary, "sex is sexual activity, including specifically sexual intercourse,"⁶ so based on the evidence, it is possible to say that the European perception of sex relates to the physical intercourse. As the Americans talked much less about their sexual activities with their children, they began to be more educated in this area after the phenomenon of pregnancy among young girls. Approach to this subject, however, remained very reserved and sex

³ See Sarah Findley et al., "History of Human Sexuality in Western Culture," *History of Sexuality*, accessed February 12, 2014, <http://historyofsexuality.umwblogs.org/mid-to-late-20th-century/post-world-war-ii/>.

⁴ See "Origin of the Institute," About Institute, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/about/origins.html>.

⁵ See Jeffrey P. Moran, "Sex Education," accessed February 12, 2014, <http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Re-So/Sex-Education.html>.

⁶ Angus Stevenson and Maurice Waite, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1320.

education has been for long only a part of the lectures on hygiene, thus not discussed publicly.

Therefore it was unusual that some authors showed more positive and open approach to this issue in their works. Sometimes the openness of sexual discussions is called "The European principle."⁷ Authors of the European origin tended to express sex in a different way which was not always well received in America. It could be, as it is described in Mary Austin's essay "Sex in American literature", because of the fact that it is not just an intercourse, not for the Americans. Austin is claiming that sex and love cannot be divided strictly without remarking the quality of the work. In other words - If sex is described too explicitly in the novel or any other type of literature, it can hardly be considered as a good-class literature.⁸ Consequently, the perception of sex on both continents is essentially different.

One of the main, if not the most important, factor causing this split of opinion could be found in the values and beliefs represented in the Bible, probably the most important book you can find in America - more than ¾ of the population adheres to some form of Christianity and Judaism is the second biggest religion and has the second largest number of followers.⁹ The Bible says: "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."¹⁰ Browsing the American canon, there is no doubt how influential Bible was for writers of all periods of the time. One need only to recall how Hester Prynne was at that time sentenced for adultery by society in *Scarlet Letter* (1850) written by Nathaniel Hawthorne - her punishment was stigmatization. The character of Gimpel in the story of Isaac Bashevis Singer *Gimpel the Fool* (1953) plays the role of the martyr of his wife's infidelity and despite her crime he decided to keep the illegitimate children. The perception of Bible and violation of its principles has been punished in the American literature from its beginnings.

The changes of the 20th century in the perception of sexuality can be attached either to the human sapient factor of curiosity or to the influence of one of the most violent conflicts

⁷ See Lisa Belkin, "A Different Kind of Sex Talk With Teens," *The New York Times Blog*, last modified November 5, 2010, accessed February 12, 2014, http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/11/05/a-different-kind-of-sex-talk-with-teens/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0.

⁸ See Mary Austin, "Sex in American Literature," *The Bookman*, 62, no. 4 (1923): 385-393, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Bookman-1923jun-00385>.

⁹ See Paul Jankowski, "The Bible's Series and Importance of Faith in America," *Forbes*, last modified March 28, 2013, accessed January 30, 2014, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/pauljankowski/2013/03/28/the-bible-series-and-importance-of-faith-in-america/>.

¹⁰ "Hebrews 13:4," accessed December 10, 2013, <http://biblehub.com/hebrews/13-4.htm>.

in American history, the World War II, which stroke and influenced the most intimate and sensitive parts of society. "By most people's standards we were immoral, admitted an American soldier, "but we were young and could die tomorrow"¹¹ High number of dead people and pictures from battlefields,¹² which were not rare, definitely changed the perception of human's body and everything, what was supposed to be hidden and private, was suddenly shown.

In any case, Kinsey's research helped the boom of newly opened topics which had been taboos for several centuries. It was almost myth busting in the sphere of sexuality, the growing openness can be seen in many literary works from 1950s to 1970s - for example, the explicit homosexuality of William S. Burroughs in *Queer* (written in 1953, published in 1985) and *Naked Lunch* (1959), women as sexual symbols, birth control pills or sex as a mean of rejection of society in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) by Toni Morrison in 1970s. During the American history sex was followed by censorship and taboo but Freud and his practical follower Kinsey caused that sex was nothing to be ashamed for and nothing that has to be hidden in the bedrooms at that time.¹³

1.1 Farewell to Arms - 1940s and 1950s

The change of the dress code after the Second World War was one of the first signs of the greater benevolence to the topic of sex in America. The invention of nylon stockings as a symbol of female sexuality in the previous decade was reflected also in the literature - as a necessary part of female superheroes, such as Wonder Woman in comic books, and as an instrument of emphasizing of the beauty of the uncovered woman body. Women were finally able to afford high quality underwear; blouses and work uniforms were designed for the curves of their bodies. Upper class of that time society had an opposite opinion - they were trying to get back to the conformism and the fashion that Dior provided them and their conservatism in the form of long skirts and balloon dresses. Moreover, the invention of the Television was the next step to the visualization and deviation from the literature.¹⁴

¹¹ John Costello, *Love Sex and War: Changing Values, 1939-45* (London: Pan Books, 1986), 19.

¹² See Lydia Warren, "Hell in the Pacific: Rare World War II Photographs Show American Soldiers' Fight for Survival in Brutal Battle of Saipan," *Daily Mail*, January 17, 2012, accessed January 24, 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2087023/World-War-II-photographs-American-soldiers-fight-survival-brutal-Battle-Saipan.html>.

¹³ See Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 55.

¹⁴ See James R Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce* - *asopisu Playboy*, trans. Jaroslava Ko ová (Praha : BB art, 2003), 195 - 200.

The upper-class of the American society stood at the other side of the barricade - they supported the comeback of the conformism, the revolt and preferred below the knee skirts. The ability to visualize books was a first step to the deviation from the literature. Even though the TV series of that time supported the traditional vision of family life, Mickey Mouse Club, the TV broadcast focused on youngsters, was hit by a scandal - the main star Lucille Ball got pregnant.¹⁵ An unmarried young woman who is expecting a child could hardly set a good example to America's youth.

This pregnancy aroused the discussions about promiscuity, sexual independence and birth control pills. Atomic Age and the threat of Soviet Union caused gradual loss of the position of the United States as the City upon a Hill and the invincible world power and the Americans were slowly coming back to the pre-war depression which they had been already very familiar with. This collapse of solid foundation in which the Americans believed gave impulse to the release of morality in many cases.

Wilhelm Reich, Freud's follower introduced another revolutionary theory - during the orgasm the positive energy is let out and there is only one way how to keep it - with the help of orgone box/orgone accumulator.¹⁶ This theory was extremely controversial and the Food and Drug Administration decided that this project must be stopped. FAD issued a statement that orgone energy did not exist but at the same time there were speculations why the authority is making such an effort to prevent the spread of theories about something that is not real.¹⁷

Despite the fact that the project was officially terminated, the references about the possible existence of negative energy remained, even though the authorities focused to the different direction - to the West. It was the beginning of paranoia from the ubiquitous threat of communism. One of the first mentions in the literature can be found in the book of John N. Makris *The Silent Investigators* (1959), which is inter alia dealing with the topics of rape and molesting. That could be one of the sources, which inspired either American authors or immigrants such as Vladimir Nabokov or Toni Morrison. Makris argued that this type of behavior has one originator in common - the sexual frustration.

¹⁵ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce - asopisu Playboy*, 201.

¹⁶ See Christopher Hitchens, "Inside the Orgone Box," *The New Yorker*, September 23, 2011, accessed January 30, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/25/books/review/adventures-in-the-orgasmatron-by-christopher-turner-book-review.html>.

¹⁷ See Jerry Morton, "Who Was Dr. Wilhelm Reich and Why Has History Tried So Hard to Erase Him?" accessed December 20, 2013, <http://proliberty.com/observer/20030310.htm>.

Sexual frustration may stem from ða ðnormalö sex drive.ö¹⁸ It may be associated with a lack of sexual experience that leads to an increased interest in sexual activity. This is one of the main reasons why the 1950s were a golden era for prostitution. Undercover prostitution, ðnurse-careö or the red light houses existed practically in every bigger city. Even though these activities were not supported by the American government, it caught FBI's attention, as it is described in the book of Herbert Philbrick - *I Led Three Lives: Citizen, Communist, Counterspy* (1959).¹⁹ The interest of FBI did not consist of fighting against those women but in their contribution to the fight against red enemies of America.

Media became the partner of this sexual mania. Sexual practice of Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis and Kim Novak were in the centre of readers' interest. The development of photography contributed a lot - it served the purposes of capturing the celebrities' privacy that had been hidden until this time.²⁰

Next step were the high quality nude photographs. The empire of sexually thematic prints had just begun. Magazines such as *Flirt* with pin-up girls, favored mainly amongst soldiers, were extremely popular. Even the books from the previous century as *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1892) by Richard Kraft-Ebing were in the centre of the attention. Among unconventional sexual practices was in 1950s, for example, homosexuality. Kinsey's study also included this topic, but much more scientifically. This literature was not forgotten even later, based on the evidence of popularity amongst beat generation writers.

Whether it was the result of the interest of media or not, the number of sex crimes increased. One of them has a direct link to Vladimir Nabokov's book, *Lolita* (1955).²¹ Sally Horner was a 12-year-old girl who was kidnapped and sexually abused by a middle aged man in America in 1940s. The striking similarity of the situation and the *Lolita*'s plot suggest that it was a part of the author's inspiration. Alexander Dolinin, professor at the University of Wisconsin, who wrote few works on Nabokov, also confirmed this allegation. According to his studies, Sally Horner's case was a perfect example for his idea of a sexual slavery.²² The sexually motivated violence represented the breeding ground for

¹⁸ Roy F. Baumeister, *Social Psychology and Human Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2001), 236.

¹⁹ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce asopisu Playboy*, 203.

²⁰ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce asopisu Playboy*, 160 - 163.

²¹ See Ben Dowell, '1940s Sex Kidnap Inspired Lolita', *The Sunday Times*, September 11, 2005, accessed January 24, 2014, http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/article147795.ece.

²² See Dowell, '1940s Sex Kidnap Inspired Lolita'.

critics of comic creators of this period which were written to explain more and more often that their works reflect reality and not vice versa.

Paperback pulps, those short novels usually without any literary value, where sex and crime happened at the same place, were another source - for adults only - and were available in every newsagent. Provocative covers and lascivious names were part of the popular sex literature such as *Jailbait* (1951) or a popular book from previous decade *The Private Life of Helen of Troy* (1926). American society started to have problem with distinguishing pornography from literature and this was the target of criticism, for instance the book *Seduction of Innocent* (1954) written by psychiatrist Frederick Wertham, shows the pebble in the shoe which pinched adults - the impact of this type of literature on American youngsters. Curious young people worried America. Salinger and his young rebellious Holden Caulfield or the first edition of Playboy magazine in November 1953 caused the rise of interest of parents about what their children were doing behind the closed door. The effort to reduce a generation gap was brought by Evelyn Duvall in her *Fact of Life and Love for Teenagers* (1950).

Theatre performances were slowly moving to the television screen, including sexually motivated pieces by Tennessee Williams - *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958) or *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951). Actresses became sex symbols and so did Elvis Presley who met his wife when she was under aged. The demand for unauthorized copies rose such as *The Lady Chatterley's lover* (1928) or even *Kamasútra*. Americans were obsessed by books which were forbidden and thousands and thousands copies came to America from Europe, such as books from Frank Harris or D.H. Lawrence.²³ When *On the Road* (1957), the book by Jack Kerouac, was published for the first time in 1957, travelling, drugs and sex were combined into one - the escape from reality.

The American underground had just begun.

1.2 Make love not war - 1960s and 1970s

The end of 1950s was the era when a non-mainstream literature began to be idealized. One of the idols of the underground lovers was Allen Ginsberg and his poem *Howl* (1955) received both standing ovations and the censorship for obscenity and for its brutal criticism. Ginsberg supporters rejected the importance of money; on the contrary they

²³ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce asopisu Playboy*, 240.

inclined towards music, poetry and marijuana smoking.²⁴ Timothy Leary, professor at Harvard University ate psychedelic mushrooms²⁵ and became a hero for all the hippie movement. Drugs had a kind of transcendental meaning for young generation in 1960s and helped them to escape from reality. Another war ahead commemorated the evil which they have already come through. The connection between war and sexual escape was back. The play *The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton Under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade* shortened to *Marat/Sade* (1963) by Peter Weiss echoed the voice of young Americans - "What's the point of revolution without general copulation?"²⁶ Besides, very influential books were also written- Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961) or Ken Kessey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) and right afterwards the five Academy Awards-winning film was created. America had another The Great Gatsby, young Hugh Hefner, billionaire and founder of *Playboy*, who got rich because of feeding the hunger for sex.²⁷

Literature had hardly ever been more open-minded than in these two decades - 1960s and 1970s. The rise of the homosexual literature, provided by writers from the Beat Generation or the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement, which brought the dissatisfaction of racial segregation and consecutive fight back to the literature. Malcolm X, minister and national spokesman of the Nation of Islam,²⁸ showed in his autobiography that if you want a revolution you must be able to cope with victims. "Every Muslim happily anticipated that now, through the whiteman's powerful communications media, our brainwashed black brothers and sisters across the United States, and devils, too, were going to see, hear, and read Mr. Muhammad's teachings which cut back and forth like a two-edged sword."²⁹ Sex, racism, drugs, religion and war - that was an American culture and that was what the Americans were interested in.

America acted confidently and the middle-class suburban families and satellite cities were symbols for happy 1950s. This kind of conformism ceased to be popular within a group of authors and it represented the commencement of the Beat Generation, radically

²⁴ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce asopisu Playboy*, 244-245.

²⁵ See "Dr. Timothy Leary, Ph. D." The life, last modified 2011, accessed January 3, 2014, <http://www.timothyleary.us/>.

²⁶ "17 Marat/Sade - What's the Point of a Revolution without General Copulation?" last modified October 11, 2011, accessed March 1, 2014, 1:49-1:55, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GC49xp-zHPg>.

²⁷ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce asopisu Playboy*, 253-254.

²⁸ See "Biography of Malcolm X," accessed January 30, 2014, <http://www.malcolmx.com/about/bio.html>.

²⁹ Malcolm X et al., *The Autobiography of Malcom X* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), accessed January 12, 2014, WeNovel.

criticizing in their works this American style of living. Looking for the *ōbeatitudeō* in drugs, sexual experience, travelling. *ō*I wanted to go and get Rita again and tell her a lot more things, and really make love to her this time, and calm her fears about men. Boys and girls in America have such a sad time together; sophistication demands that they submit to sex immediately without proper preliminary talk.*ō*³⁰

The Beat Generation horrified America right from the beginning. The spiritual father of the movement William S. Burroughs introduced his warm attitude towards homosexuality, promiscuity and obscenity in his novels *Naked Lunch* and *Queer*. Homosexuality also appeared in number of other novels; among the first specimen was *The Thin Red Line* (1962) by James Jones. In 1950s The Generation became quickly popular due to the novel *On the Road* (1957) by Jack Kerouac and thus rapidly became the mainstream.

However, their popularity and the number of followers caused their inability to fulfill the purpose of the movement, they turned into a part of marketing strategy and eventually, they became something that they had been fighting against before.³¹ The fact is that these people were the first generation of authors, who loved drugs the same way as they loved sex - uninhibited. *Thy Neighbor's Wife* (1981) by Gay Talese explains the phenomenon of erotic magazines and criticizes media for turning sex into something bizarre.

Not only men had something to say about sex. Even women were often criticized for their inappropriate behavior within their attitude towards the social role they were made to play. Works like *Feminine Mystique* (1963) and *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) are just examples which were supposed to show to the society that women have also their needs and desires. Another effort to reduce a generation gap was brought by the books of Patricia Campbell *Sex Education Books for Adults, 1892-1979* (1979). The big leap for them was the invention of birth control pills (ready for the oral usage in 1960)³² and thus this decade symbolized the period of female independence - thanks to the opportunity to control their pregnancy, they had finally an opportunity to focus on their carrier and the pleasure.

³⁰ Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: The Viking Press, 1957), accessed February 4, 2014, Ebook Browse, 36.

³¹ See Malcolm Bradbury, *Atlas Literary*, trans. Vladimír K ivánek (Praha: Ottovo Nakladatelství - Cesty, 2003), 252-255.

³² See Alexandra Nikolchev, *ō*A Brief History of the Birth Control Pill,*ō* last modified May 7, 2010, accessed January 4, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/need-to-know/health/a-brief-history-of-the-birth-control-pill/480/>.

Human Sexual Response (1966) written by William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson proclaimed that these puritan women, modest and obeying are gone. Virginity was a myth, buried by college students (Gael Greene, *Sex and the College Girl* (1964)).

2 SELECTED AMERICAN AUTHORS

2.1 J.D. Salinger

Sonny, as Jerome David Salinger was called from the day he was born, came from a Jewish family which hated convention and was very ambitious. He came from a generation of immigrants and although he was born in New York, it had a great influence on his later works.³³ Occasionally he is being classified as the American war literature author because of his work *Nine Stories*. As a young man coming from the Jewish background, owing to its roots, he was touched by war.

He started as a journalist and wrote, for example, for *The New Yorker*, and paradoxically the most successful was his initial novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). The character of Holden Caulfield, who was based on the original figure of Huckleberry Finn - just like Huckleberry, Holden does not recognize the authority and he is perceived as a rebel and uses his personal style of narration.³⁴ Furthermore, Holden Caulfield became a bad example for young people not only in America but in Europe, where it was almost impossible to get a copy of this book, as well. Although it stemmed de facto from the dislike of all things connected to America, which was caused by the impact of the Cold War, Holden remained misunderstood and the unwanted literary figure on both continents.

Regardless the Salinger's U.S. Army service between 1942 and 1944, he had not become the typical successor of Hemingway. His first novel refers to disgust at the American society rather than weep for the fallen Americans in World War II. Salinger's character Holden was frequently censored and criticized for warped view of the American society and the recognition of non-American values. Critics spared no effort in Salinger's criticizing but that does not mean that it would reduce the interest in his novel. When a copy of *The Catcher in the Rye* was found that day on the murderer of John Lennon and then when during the trial itself Mark David Chapman read the most famous part,³⁵ general public became aware of the impact a book can have. Along with the incident came the

³³ See Kenneth Slawinski, *J.D. Salinger: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2012), 3-9.

³⁴ See Richard Gray, *A History of American Literature* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 660-661.

³⁵ See Stashower Daniel, "On First Looking into Chapman's Holden: Speculations on a Murder," *The American Scholar*, Summer, 1983, accessed January 26, 2014, <http://theamericanscholar.org/on-first-looking-into-chapmans-holden-speculations-on-a-murder/#.Uz6sSKg0Gnc/>.

unfortunate advertisement and the unprecedented demand for the book and ultimately more than 120 million copies were sold worldwide.³⁶

2.1.1 The Catcher in the Rye

The first book of J. D. Salinger *The Catcher in the Rye* was for the first time published in 1951 and became the most censored book in the American history. Open consideration of sex in addition to the fact that the main character was a youthful hero, provoked a wave of outrage and revealed how big the impact on teenage American youth could be.³⁷

Censorship was in full swing and the same situation as with *The Catcher in the Rye* was subsequently repeating with another books. It is therefore not surprising that the authors renounced any barriers to satisfy demand - such as Henry Miller and *Tropic of Cancer* (1934 in Paris, 1961 in the U.S.) - that was due to its obscenity considered as a hardcore pornographic work.

In the beginning of the 1960s the hero of Salinger's novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield, experiences a very similar confusion as American youth. A sixteen-year-old student, who had just been kicked out of another school, addresses the issue of childhood versus adulthood. Although he claims that his behavior and expressions are similar to a 12-year-old child, due to his actions he is trying to be categorized as an adult. Equally important are the expressions of the main character which, however, compels the reader to think about Holden as he was a child and it symbolizes a kind of childlike awkwardness - "she had on those damn falsies that point all over the place, but you felt sort of sorry for her"³⁸ or "give her the time in ED Banky's goddamn car"³⁹. Also Holden's ways of expressing the feelings reflect the American youth. Although they are not afraid to talk openly about sex, they are hardly able to cope with the processes which are happening inside of them. The actual use of non-standard and vulgar words represents the mental immaturity and efforts to either fit or it is so common that it has become automatic to the protagonist. Therefore it might have been difficult for American readers to digest this work, Holden's departure to New York and his subsequent actions were certainly incompatible with the style how Americans were trying to raise their children.

³⁶ See "J.D. Salinger," accessed January 30, 2014, <http://www.biography.com/people/jd-salinger-9470070?page=2>.

³⁷ See Petersen, *Století Sexu: D jiny Sexuální Revoluce - asopisu Playboy*, 215.

³⁸ J.D. Salinger. *The Catcher in the Rye*. (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 2.

³⁹ Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 37.

Holden adopts a kind of mock adult role, and he hopes, due to his height, that he will be perceived the same way by his surroundings. In the bars, his actual age is being often commented and Holden, still a virgin, decides to step into adulthood by the loss of virginity. He orders a prostitute to his hotel room, but his immaturity does not allow him any intercourse and he suggests that they could spend the time just talking. According to him the prostitute is behaving childishly and the only thing she is interested in is money. For her character it is a routine, something that she does for a living. Clearly she is shocked by his claim. It could be seen as a distortion of morality to the extent that the plea for communication is worse than the actual sexual act.

In Holden's case, the boundaries of perception of the intimacy are shifted, as indicated in the different parts of book. Holden is interested in women, but the lack of experience, his young age and the sensitive nature of the main character do not allow him to see them just as sexual objects. Although healthy teen sexuality and the influence of the environment resulted in few short comments about how he likes female breast and women's provocative behavior, it can be attributed to the openness with which the whole book is written. It is never a long description; the author always expresses these situations in just a few sentences. Holden himself is unable to see sexual meaning in the very act of which he has no problem talking about, but rather in hints. "I held hands with her all the time, for instance. That doesn't sound like much but she was terrific to hold hands with."⁴⁰ Holden does not primarily perceive a woman as a sexual object, like his peers, based on the narrations in bars and on college. He appreciates Jane, his friend and his love, and the moments that they spend together.

Regarding the perception of sex in case of adults, he perceives them as perverts. He can see the scene, from the window of his hotel room in New York, when a man in the opposite room is putting women's lingerie on and when the couple above is spitting drink on each other within their flirtatious games. He even mentions sexual activities with animals, which lead us to the premise, that Holden summarizes sexual activities of adults as something disgusting. The word Perverts itself can be seen as a condemnation of practices of the older generation and the subsequent Holden's behavior to the prostitute, with who the sexual act did not happen as Holden is rather interested in naive child approximation, are the visible proofs.

⁴⁰ Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 71.

It is also essential how the author uses themes and the importance of prostitution in this book. While he is talking about his brother D. B.: "Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute,"⁴¹ by which the author means selling out his persuades he demonstrates clearly his condemnation of rich superficial society. But in case of the girl, who is perceived as a whore and used to be a burlesque stripper, he is able to have a common conversation with her on the phone without any prejudice. It is stated afterwards that for Holden the violation of your own principles is much worse than selling your own body.

This thought may stem from Holden's virginity, inexperience and total confusion when sex is concerned. In the whole book, he is literally surrounded by sex but from the point of view of outsider, who sees things differently than others, there can be an another perception that accompanies the book - is Holden damnable rebel, whose thoughts can be ruinous for any teen reader - or vice versa - Does Holden teach readers to see things in a different way than the mainstream is?

Although the generation surrounding the main character is talking about sex without any problem, basically they do not share any more feelings than just sexual attraction, and thus Holden himself manifests confusion. He is, of course, interested in sex which comes along with his age. Even though Holden does not lose his virginity throughout the book, the issue of sex is expressed in such a way that if his ideas were out of context, the reader may get the feeling that Holden already has had some experience in the field of sex.

"Sex is something I really don't understand too hot. You never know where the hell you are. I keep making up these sex rules for myself, and then I break them right away. Last year I made a rule that I was going to quit horsing around with girls that, deep down, gave me a pain in the ass. I broke it, though, the same week I made it - the same night, as a matter of fact. I spent the whole night necking with a terrible phony named Anne Louise Sherman. Sex is something I just don't understand. I swear to God I don't."⁴²

Although he is talking about sex rules, the sex itself never happened in the book. We, the readers, have no further information about what actually happened between Holden and the girls mentioned and for example, when he uses the term necking with, we cannot objectively assess the extent, in terms of having sex. Therefore, we practically do not know what happened between them. Holden's view of what is and is not sex is greatly distorted.

⁴¹ Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 1.

⁴² Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 56.

However, the protagonist is interested in deeper feelings. He is angry when his classmate is talking about Jane as she was just a sexual object because Holden is interested in her and although their relationship comprised so far just kissing, it has a deep meaning for him. 'I really got to know her quite intimately. I don't mean it was anything physical or anything - it wasn't - but we saw each other all the time. You don't always have to get too sexy to get to know a girl.'⁴³ This is a perfect example of Holden's feelings to Jane.

Despite all the condemnation of the American mainstream, one issue that reflects a general view of that time can be found - the question of homosexuality. Holden calls them flits, which in the true sense of the word means a person of poor intelligence. He believes in designated stereotypes, such as those homosexuals have their own specific look, for example, long hair, etc. When he meets his friend in a bar, he is trying to joke with him about gays and when it is over the speech on the sexual life of both actors is coming.

Although the censorship was harsh to the novel for its expressiveness and sexual topics which are discussed there, based on the evidence, the main character should not be condemned. His feelings for Jane are demonstrated positively and all the interest in sex comes with his young age. In addition to this topic - Holden is a virgin, so far unable to have a sexual intercourse. *The Catcher in the Rye* can be seen as a perfect example of American attitude to sex through Holden and Jane - the deep feeling is more intimate than sexual act itself.

2.2 Tennessee Williams

Tennessee Williams is regarded as one of the representatives of literature of the American South. He was not a typical writer devoting himself to the impact of war, racial tension and its effect on the south, such as William Faulkner, he is rather ranked among authors with a wider range of interests - whether they were the ever-increasing large cities of South or the individual problems of ordinary people. Those were the popular topics in the works of Eudora Welty or Truman Capote at that time.⁴⁴

Williams himself, as a playwright, is often compared with Arthur Miller. The success of their works was falling and rising in parallel - at first there was a failure, then came a time when both shone and in early sixties their stars went out. Themes of their works were vastly different - Williams was not interested in political affairs, he was more into a mental

⁴³ Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*, 69.

⁴⁴ See Bradbury, *Atlas Literatury*, 124-125.

and emotional state of the ordinary people. He focused on people on the margins of society, outcasts, and how they are able to cope with life. His works were òpoetic, rhythmic and emotional.ö⁴⁵ However, Williams and Miller both possessed a common kind of raw realism that marked their style and also symbolism has its place of honor in their works. The theatre stages at that time in the whole United States belonged to them.⁴⁶

His plays were adapted into several films and the lead roles were attributed to big screen stars and sex symbols at the same time - *Cat on the Hot Tin Roof* (1958), the play where the main character is dying of cancer and where the typical elements of the author's writing style can be found - such as alcoholism and the split between the main characters; starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman; *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), probably the most famous play by Tennessee Williams, in the leading roles starred Vivian Leigh and Marlon Brando or *Summer and Smoke* (1948) with Laurence Harvey and Geraldine Page.

2.2.1 A Streetcar Named Desire

It is problematic to define desire in every language. òLanguage is always less than òclarifyingö when it comes to desire.ö⁴⁷ There are many explanations for what it is really desire, but often prevails Platonic idea⁴⁸ - simply, it is a mental condition that affects the physical behavior. In *A Streetcar Named Desire* we can find a deep symbolism; it is not just the station to which Blanche is heading to visit her sister, it is the direction which her life is going to. Like her sister's home brought her doom, her lifestyle and the tendency to physically succumb to desire gave her hell much earlier.

Also the topic that was close to the large number of writers is appearing - homosexuality. The first and greatest love Blanche had was a man with whom she had an affair and it destroyed her marriage. In this part reader can find the emerging theme of the class collision, the struggle of the upper class Americans (at that time from the affluent South) and immigrants - in this case of their descendants. Stanley, husband of Stella and Blanche's sister, is the descendant of Polish immigrants, and although he was born in America, reader is still being reminded of his European origin. He is described as an

⁴⁵ Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 702-703.

⁴⁶ See Gray, *A History of American Literature*, 702-703.

⁴⁷ Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 369.

⁴⁸ See Lentricchia McLaughlin, *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, 369.

animal - an animal man who evaluates women as sexual objects - and an animal that is rough and its vocabulary is substantially earthbound. "Since earliest manhood the centre of his life has been pleasure with women."⁴⁹ Blanche, as the upper class representative, reminds him of his origin by her naughty behavior, but reader eventually learns that it was all just pompous tinsel. Although submissive Stella is impressed by his conduct, Blanche is disgusted by his animalism.

The play is very implicit in some ways, especially when expressing intimacies in case of the main heroine. The cadence with which Blanche uses the word love is high enough. The relationship of her sister and her husband Stanley is evaluated as love by her, nevertheless with a touch of irony. Throughout the whole play this word is used in this form more often than it is in its basic meaning - sex. Blanche is sure that the relationship of Stella and Stanley is not love, but desire, the sexual desire. That is the way how any problem that occurs in Kowalski family is being resolved. Whenever Stanley is rough or he needs to get a woman to his side, he uses sex to deal with the situation. The sexual act defines their entire relationship and Stella's pregnancy serves as a constant reader's memento. Stella loves Stanley blindly and this is how the boundary between love and animal instinct stays in symbiosis. In their relationship one cannot work without the other. Sex is natural and in fact, the main symbol of their bond. Since they are married, Stanley's rough tokens of aggression to his wife are socially acceptable, even though for Blanche it is something she cannot understand.

On the other hand, the case of Blanche represents just the opposite. She is condemned and banished by the society and by Laurel for her sexual relationships. As an unmarried woman, even her former high position does not help her. Sex without commitment of unmarried women is perceived negatively, even by a man of low morals, like Stanley. Thus the idea of the entire play is being confirmed - the separation of love from sex is in the American society unacceptable, and if it is done by an unmarried woman, she is immediately seen as a prostitute and condemned by the society, and on top of that in case of Blanche, even by the closest surrounding.

When Blanche's close friend and potential partner, Mitch, learns about her past, he begins to treat her very differently than he did before. Firstly, he courted her and was impressed that Blanche is without easy reach - that she is a lady and does not let him even

⁴⁹ Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 128.

kiss her. At the moment of revelation his desire wakes up and he begins to see Blanche just as the sexual object. Although Blanche has future plans with Mitch, he suddenly and strictly denies matrimony because of her past and puts the whole thing out of the question.

Casual sex cannot lead to marriage, however, it is rather a sign that a man may not appreciate woman for this act and can even condemn her, but at the same time he wants to have a sex with her, as it is the case of Mitch, who is angry at Blanche and even despises her.

Blanche: What do you want?

Mitch [fumbling to embrace her]: What I been missing all summer.

Blanche: Then marry me, Mitch!

Mitch: I don't think I want to marry you any more.

Blanche: No?

Mitch [dropping his hands from her waist]: You're not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother.⁵⁰

Blanche has a soft spot for men, especially for the young ones. Her greatest love was very young man; she often speaks about him and has the image of a young boy in her head. The aging spinster, as Blanche speaks about herself and her fear of death, which reader can see in the symbols throughout the play, feed her desire for young boys. The scene where the messenger arrives to collect money, and she is acting like she is senseless and kisses him, is clearly proving that. Likewise, her positive attitude towards soldiers, which she had in past, as we have to take into account that there were young boys serving in the U.S. Army, and last but not least, the reason for her destruction - the relationship with her seventeen-year-old student because of which not only she was dismissed from school, where she taught, but it is also the reason of her destruction in the future. Blanche desires youth, because she was very beautiful and desirable as a young girl, and thus she casts out the fear of aging by seeing young boys.

Younger Blanche does not perceive casual sex as a problem and finds it difficult to understand why she could be frowned upon because of it. When she cares about someone, such as Mitch, she is in a state of the sexual denial- in those situations for her sex does not matter. Despite everything, older Blanche feels dirty and it can be the reason for her

⁵⁰ Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays*, 207.

several hours long baths - she wants to wash off the fornication, but it is rooted too deeply. She is drowning her conscience in alcohol, although she does not admit it to herself or to the others. Additionally, in this part of play the comment to the young people of that time appears. When Blanche tells Mitch that she used to be a teacher, Mitch states that the students were certainly interested in the other things than studying English. Again, there is the general stereotype, which is demonstrated by young people's attitude towards sex - they are unbound and have no deeper interest than in a physical intercourse.

As already mentioned, the work is riddled with symbolism, from which large part refers to erotica - such as the plain theme of music, especially jazz. Jazz was at that time seen as something sensual and erotic.⁵¹ It helps the author illustrate the scenes where jazz music creates the sexual tension. After all, the reader can understand how Blanche is perceived by her new surrounding and so by the sentence that describes what is happening on the street when she is in the middle of the conflict with Stanley - "a prostitute has rolled a drunkard."⁵² It might be seen as a direct association to the role of main characters - Blanche lost her residence in the South, Stanley feels being robbed by this fact as the property belonging to the wife automatically belongs to her husband too. On the other hand, Blanche's positive attitude toward sex corresponds to her categorization as a prostitute.

Symbolism can be seen also in Stella's pregnancy. The author is probably trying to say that according to the stereotypical awareness of the society of that time, the sexual act usually resulted in the child. The unmarried women, however, did not expect nothing else than a rejection of the society and in case of Blanche, the author chose the rape. It expresses contempt of a woman of an easy virtue, such as the main female character is.

Stanley: Oh! So you want some rough-house! All right, let's have some rough-house!

[He springs towards her, overturning the table. She cries out and strikes at him with the bottle top but he catches her wrist.]

Tiger - tiger! Drop the bottle-top! Drop it! We've had this date with each other from the beginning!⁵³

⁵¹ See "Tension and Release: A History of Jazz and Sex," last modified February 27, 2013, accessed January 22, 2014, <http://www.ebony.com/entertainment-culture/a-history-of-jazz-and-sex-405#axzz2v51KoJzA>.

⁵² Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays*, 213.

⁵³ Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire and Other Plays*, 215.

Although the expressions of Stanley and his displays of affection towards women are often quite explicit, when it comes to Blanche's rape, the author is not so eloquent. There is no detailed description and the scene ends up on the threshold of the bedroom. However, one can assume that Blanche was raped and the final result of her decisions can be observed - the word of formerly wealthy and respectable woman has no weight against the word of the aggressive immigrant. Sex destroyed Blanche, not only by the rape itself, but mainly by her earlier open-minded view of sex.

3 IMMIGRANT LITERATURE

Discussing immigrant literature in America can be very misleading. Using the words of the 32nd President of The United States Franklin Delano Roosevelt - "Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists."⁵⁴ Also another American President, J.F. Kennedy, declared: "Every American who ever lived, with the exception of one group, was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrants."⁵⁵ Based on these statements, there is no such thing as the purely American literature - the only exception Kennedy mentioned were the Native Americans. The crossover between the 18th to 19th century represented the period of transition from oral to written forms of recording and despite the value of their works - biographies such as *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apess* (1829) or *The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-gahbowh* (1847), written by George Copway, these works are full of eastern influences - conversion to Christianity, abuse and pressure to adapt to the new culture and, last but not least English language.⁵⁶

We can be courageous enough to say that immigration represents a major part of the American history and that there is also not such a difference in literature. During the years, Anglo-American culture and language had been formed under various influences of predominantly European States. After the Second World War, Americans brought back not only a painful experience but also new wives and friends.

But more importantly, at the very beginning of the twentieth century immigrants from Europe brought the European style of perception of sex with them. As demonstrated for example in the work of Stephen Crane *Maggie: A Girl of the Street* (1893), that shows the moral decline of young women, conflict of thinking of the old Puritan generation and the uprising of the benevolent capitalist society.⁵⁷ For the sexual intercourse, which Maggie had as an unmarried, she was cast off by her own family and ended up as a prostitute. This style of literature often shows the difficulties that immigrants were experiencing upon arriving to America.

⁵⁴ Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Quotes about Immigration," accessed March 22, 2014, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/immigration>.

⁵⁵ "A Nation of Immigrants by J.F. Kennedy," *Discussion Guide for Secondary Level Educators*, last modified 2008, accessed January 22, 2014, <http://archive.adl.org/immigrants/guide.html#Uz6gz6g0Gnd>.

⁵⁶ See "Early Native American Literature," accessed January 12, 2014, <http://nativeamericanwriters.com/>.

⁵⁷ See Keith Gandal, "Stephen Crane's 'Maggie' and the Modern Soul," *ELH*, 60, no. 3 (1993): 759, accessed October 20, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25117001>.

Immigrant literature is "Often autobiographical in nature, these narratives reflect the experience of immigration and acculturation and the associated uneasiness of these processes."⁵⁸ It is often a description of author's feelings about coming to the new country, feelings of loneliness, marginalization and the feeling that they do not fit.⁵⁹ There is usually massive influence of their mother culture, that can be considered as a feature of comparison, criticism (for instance, in *My Antonia* (1918) by Willa Cather, who described tough lives of American immigrants after the WWI) or nostalgia and homesickness. In case of the immigrants from European countries, that represent an important part of this genre of the immigrant literature, their ability to deal with the end of the war, economic problems of post-war Europe or personal reasons for immigration, differed from person to person.

The perspective of the issue of the immigrant women was described by the writer of the Russian origin Tillie Olsen, the author of *Tell Me a Riddle* (1961). In her work she deals with the contemporary issues through the eyes of women and the author herself shows sympathy, understanding and also knowledge of other female authors. In her books the attention is not being paid too much to the sex and in the introduction of the book *Yonnondio* (1974) she declares why - "The absence of familiar discussions of love and passion in the text is deliberate, not the result of Puritanism - rather a desire for us to see women's lives and needs outside, beyond, sexual desire."⁶⁰ From this statement we can infer that the author herself is aware of the diversity of the concepts of love and sex.

The same division is also being used by previously mentioned writer Isaac Bashevis Singer, prominent representative of the Jewish American literature. In his book *Enemies: A Love Story* (1966) the protagonist has a mistress Masha. She is a demonstration of a young woman apart from the older generation, who found delight in exploring and practicing casual sex. Author is usually not condemning them; he ascribes their effort only to a desire to get closer to the rights of men.⁶¹ The both lovers are enjoying a wild passion that the sexual intercourse brings. The author himself was a familiar with gratuitous sex and the fact that he was married did not prevent him from it.⁶² This is the way how immigrant authors were presented - they brought the European perspective of sex with them.

⁵⁸ David J. Wishart, "Immigrant Literature," *The University of Nebraska-Lincoln*, 2011, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://plainshumanities.unl.edu/encyclopedia/doc/egp.lt.028>.

⁵⁹ See Wishart, "Immigrant Literature".

⁶⁰ Abigail Martin, *Tillie Olsen* (Boise: Boise State University, 1984), 37.

⁶¹ See Janet Hadda, *Isaac Bashevis Singer: A Life* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 68-69.

⁶² See Ilan Stavans, "Living With Isaac Bashevis Singer," *The Jewish Daily Forward*, May 4, 2012, accessed February 9, 2014, <http://forward.com/articles/155296/living-with-isaac-bashevis-singer/?p=all>.

However, they chose to escape from the fragmented Europe to the West, as it had already happened before, to the mythical City Upon the Hill. Apparently, it was the unshakable post, which America was able to maintain during the years, all the centuries and war conflicts. "Every politician, Democrat or Republican, seems duty bound to pander to this idea of American exceptionalism and woe unto him who hints otherwise. This country is "the last, best hope of mankind," or "the shining city on the hill."⁶³ Some of them emigrated because of the pre-war crisis' consequences, others only after its termination. But the main fact remains that in the after World War II American literature one of the strongest immigration groups of its entire history was formed and influenced and also pushed the boundaries of perception of sex until today.

⁶³ Newt Gingrich and Vince Haley, *A Nation Like No Other* (New York: Regnery publishing, 2011), 8.

4 SELECTED IMMIGRANT AUTHORS

4.1 Vladimir Nabokov

The inclusion of Vladimir Nabokov among the immigrant writers is legitimate. His native country, Russia, still claims his classification as its writer and in some publications he is recognized as a Russian writer who just wrote several of his works in English.

European definition corresponds to the fact that the author uses in his works numerous references to his native continent, whether in works written originally in English or in Russian language - for example the main male character in the novel *Lolita* (1955) is a professor of the French origin and his work *King, Queen, Knave* (1928) is taking place in Berlin. His books refer also to the Revolution of 1917 in Russia that provoked the emigration of the whole Nabokov's family.⁶⁴ The whole family emigrated in 1919. His first novels were written in Russian language, such as *The real life of Sebastian Knight* (1941), a book, which is considered to be his autobiography, a book, which uncovers author's problems with integration and identity.⁶⁵ The bond of Vladimir Nabokov to the European continent is thus obvious.

Vladimir Nabokov, more profound experimentalist,⁶⁶ was born in Russia in 1899. He came from high society; his father occupied a significant position in the Russian Parliament. The family moved frequently, lived in both London and Berlin, and he worked as an English and Russian teacher, which certainly provided an inspiration for his most famous novel. Nabokov moved to America in 1940 after a stay in Paris. He died in Switzerland in 1899.⁶⁷

Works of Vladimir Nabokov are not only novels, but also collections of poems such as *An Almanac: Two Paths* (1918) or *The Cluster* (1922). However, he is best known especially for his novels, whether it was *Mary* (translated in 1970), a novel about refugees from Russia, *King, Queen, Knave* (translated in 1968) set in pre-war Berlin, or *Lolita*, a novel about relationship of a French professor with an underage American girl from a lower class.

⁶⁴ See Malcolm Bradbury and Richard Ruland, *From Puritanism To Postmodernism: A History Of American Literature* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 387.

⁶⁵ See Bradbury and Ruland, *From Puritanism To Postmodernism: A History Of American Literature*, 388.

⁶⁶ See Gennadij Nikolajevič Pospelov et al., *D jiny Ruské Literatury*, trans. Miroslav Kárný, Jaroslav Kohout and Eva Outratová (Praha: Svoboda, 1947), 509.

⁶⁷ See Pospelov et al., *D jiny Ruské Literatury*, 509.

4.1.1 Lolita

The most popular novel by this Russian author caused such uproar that it had to be published in sexually conciliatory Europe and then come back to readers in the USA. After the novel was finished in 1954, it was rejected by four American publishing houses, so *Lolita* was for the first time published in France in 1955. The American publishers were too afraid of the rage of the censorship. Then, Graham Greene praised *Lolita* in *The Times of London*. Four years after the book was finished, in 1958, it was published in the United States.⁶⁸ The reason is simple - theme of pedophilia, especially when manifested in a person recognized as a university professor was in post-war America too big to bite.

This postmodern work was too controversial - a university professor from France, Humbert Humbert, suffers from an obsessive desire for underage girls who he called nymphets - according to his words, they are the girls at the beginning of their puberty, in terms of law, long before the legally stated limit for sexual intercourse, namely between nine and fourteen years old. Every juvenile girl is not a nymphet; they have something special and author boasts of the ability to discern - a sort of alluring beauty that cannot remain hidden to his eye.

This vice for the juvenile girls, by his own words, stems from the shock when his first childhood love, Annabel Lee, died of typhoid fever before they could copulate. However, these child lovers do not get beyond the oral satisfaction. His first physical contact with the woman and the fact he did not reach the physical satisfaction caused that Humbert Humbert got frozen at this stage of sexual maturation and then for his whole life he focused only on one kind of girls, like Annabel, - in his words the first nymphet.

Since he was not legally able to meet his specific needs in early adulthood, he was resorting to the paid sex. However, due to one experience when a prostitute was only styled to young girl, he was deeply disappointed. Thus he decided for matrimony, but his first marriage ended in fiasco and Humbert went to America, where his first meeting, by the author's description as contradictory as possible, with Haze women, mother and daughter, takes place.

Humbert is highly critical to Charlotte Haze, *Lolita's* mother - criticizing her appearance, speech, social conventions. He describes her quite bluntly, and when mother

⁶⁸ See Erica Jong, "Summer Reading: Time Has Been Kind to the Nymphet: -Lolita 30 Years Later," *The New York Times*, June 5, 1988, accessed January 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/books/97/07/20/reviews/16009.html>.

Haze offers her heart to him and wants to become his wife, he does not hide his distaste for her in front of the reader. Marriage is taken as a necessary evil, the way how to seize her daughter in the future. When Charlotte Haze finds his diary, shortly before her death, she learns about Humbert's loathe. He does everything possible to avoid physical contact with her, let her prescribe strong sleeping pills and when the sexual act is inevitable, trying to take her into Lolita's room or pretend with his eyes closed that she is her daughter. His resistance to Charlotte and desire for Lolita are so strong that he plays a variety of scenarios in his head, for example how his new wife could be killed and the orphan would be left to the mercy of him and his lust.

On the other hand, the description of Lolita, a twelve-year-old girl, the daughter of his new American landlady and later wife, is completely opposite. Although a significant part of this book is dedicated to her description, the vast majority is a description of her juvenile body, which corresponds to the author's desire for physical contact. Almost until the end, Lolita is described as a nymphet and despite the author's claim of loving her; he actually seems to love only what she represents - a desirable preteen girl who corresponds to the peculiar needs of Humbert Humbert.

If we want to focus on her character, it would be very difficult. Humbert, in a position of convict, cannot provide a description on which we can rely. Although Lolita is presented as a provocative girl who already had had some sexual experience before Humbert, she left him to pay for sex and became his mistress voluntarily, in fact she was a scared orphan girl who acted consistently with her age - delighted in comics, full of children's curiosity; everything seems to indicate that she was not ready to become his mistress. The protagonist himself admits that his desire destroyed her childhood and that he also tried to win her by buying gifts of poor value - the way how to attract a small child. But even before he had a chance to take over Lolita as her custodian, he tried a few physical encounters. In the house, which belonged to Charlotte Haze, rubbing on Lolita's body he came to a climax. He used pieces of her underwear for masturbation - 'I deceived her with one of Lolita's anklets.'⁶⁹

Then after Charlotte's death they have the sexual intercourse together in a hotel and she becomes his mistress. How tragically inexperienced as a child she was, is shown in a few examples - she considers everything, except of kissing and physical act, any physical

⁶⁹ Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 81.

manifestation of rapprochement as a perversion. "It was very curious the way she considered-and kept doing for a long time-all caresses except kisses on the mouth or the stark act of love either "romantic sloshö or "abnormalö."⁷⁰ Later, she begins to dislike sex with her stepfather and he must pay for it, but she wants to use the money to escape. Lolita is caught in the sex trap and has no other recourse but to follow. Even the physical pain she feels after the first night with Humbert suggests that a child's body is not physiologically adapted to sexual intercourse with an adult male. How mentally unprepared for the role of mistress she was, is demonstrated by the complete lack of interest when sex is concerned, how the teacher from girls' school, which Lolita attends in the second part of the book, pointed out. "The general impression is that fifteen-year-old Dolly remains morbidly uninterested in sexual matters, or to be exact, represses her curiosity in order to safe her ignorance and self-dignity."⁷¹ All her lack of preparation could stem from the simple fact that prior to the sexual intercourse with Humbert she was still a virgin. This argument stems from unreliable narrator-position, which the main character holds. Also, the physical pain she had after the fist sex and her disgust with anything but kissing suggests she was a virgin.

Lolita desperately longs for home and therefore she succumbs to the sexual demands of the protagonist. As stated in the book, even the relationship with her deceased mother had improved because even the hint of emotion is better than this relationship based on physical contact with Humbert. Several times he mentions that she feels to be raped and later expresses resistance to any physical act with him.

However, Humbert does not see her motives and his behavior and allusions are unaware of the fragile vulnerability of the young mistress. He is trying to persuade himself that Lolita is a more mature for her age than other girls and although he is trying to pretend that it is done unconsciously, she is seen just as a sexual object. He makes a lot of ambiguous cues on her and has a little patience for her mental motives, such as annoyance. He often justifies the behavior and actions by examples from history - "Among Sicilians sexual relations between a father and his daughter are accepted as a matter of course,"⁷² - where the child mistresses are not in fact uncommon, and also Professor Gaston Godin, his friend, shows sympathy for underage boys. Subconsciously, therefore, it seems that

⁷⁰ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 133.

⁷¹ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 195.

⁷² Nabokov, *Lolita*, 150.

Humbert does not feel like he is doing something monstrous. If, however, he feels that Lolita could tell anyone - he resorts to threats.

Lolita lives in constant uncertainty and fear. Humbert threatens that she could end up in a correctional facility and the knowledge that she does not have anyone else in her life and the fact that if she lost her stepfather she would remain all alone, do not give her other choice but to follow. He himself speaks of terrorizing tactics and he is pleased that she is essentially his prisoner so he has no choice - "I succeeded in terrorizing Lolita."⁷³

Humbert knows that he cannot hold her as a prisoner for the whole life and thinks about future. In this part, the author refuted all rooted principles of marriage. Not only his previous marriages have always been based on his perverted desires, but also when he talks about marriage with Lolita, he has only one goal in mind - to make her a baby, another Lolita, nymphet that could be abused as a minor. The image that he is trying to impose, a picture that perverted girl seduced an older man, is blindsided. Humbert lacks any feelings towards her; he is, in terms of Lolita, very possessive. Although her mental motives are commented rather briefly than with some empathy; in case of her body he finds the ownership clear and fundamental. He is trying to avoid any Lolita's contact with another man or boy.

Therefore Lolita chooses the only possible way to escape - running away. When they get on the road again, there is a visible change in Lolita's behavior. She begins to lie and Humbert notices that they are followed any car. Then one day she disappears with a stranger. Humbert drives behind her, looking for clues which might lead to his nymphet. The fact that he still uses this addressing and sometimes talks about her vulgarly contradicts the constant buzz of his love to her. He was deprived of a lover, not of the love of his life.

The fact that Lolita was hardly more than his mistress proves the sentence - "I would be a knave to say, and the reader fool to believe, that the shock of losing Lolita cured me of pederosis."⁷⁴ In addition, he will find Lolita's substitute, alcoholic Rita who is able, at least partially, to satisfy his physical needs.

But Humbert leaves her at the very moment when he finds out where Lolita is currently living. When he finds her, begs her to leave her current husband and go with him, she understands it as a request to go with him to the hotel. Also the fact that she left him for a

⁷³ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 15.

⁷⁴ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 257.

man who was more pervert than Humbert shows the huge dislike Lolita was feeling for him. Humbert himself expressed disenchantment with the image of Lolita having a sexual intercourse with her current husband and loses his temper when he learns the name of the person who had stolen his young mistress. When he is leaving her, he feels rather regret about what he did to the child, than a really deep emotion. Besides, he is still able to think of other nymphets. 'I wonder sometimes what has become of the little McCoo girl, did she ever get better?'⁷⁵ At this point the reader can assume that Lolita did not mean love for Humbert; she was more the sexual object, a thing which was stolen.

Quilty's character is seen as the hero's alter ego or conscience; he kidnapped the girl to become his lover. He had a soft spot for young girls and he was a pervert. Humbert is reproaching Quilty for destroying Lolita and her 'love' to him, nevertheless, he might also reproach Humbert for calling him a pervert. His sexual desires are, however, still more perverse and his coolness goes beyond Humbert's borders.

Although in the prologue the author affirms, through the fictional character of Doctor John Ray, that he is certainly not on the side of Humbert Humbert, the whole idea of the introduction is to make readers think about the deeper ideas and motives of the novel and the role of the main character. Foreshadowing that if reader is expecting to find some lewdnesses and vulgarisms - he will be searching in vain. Vladimir Nabokov was able to deal with deep sexual overtones of the forbidden desire with implicitness that got into the Canon of not only the American literature but the literature around the entire world. He plays here with the idea of the offender-victim.

The character of Humbert is aware of the fact that what he is doing is not only unconventional but wrong at the core - he disparages himself in the eyes of the reader and he speaks of himself as a pervert and maniac. As an unreliable narrator he claims that he was actually a victim of Lolita's seducement in the Enchantment Hunters. Also by addressing the reader as a brother he is making an effort to be liked. He is pointing out several times that he is not a rapist, that he would not be able to empower a child by force - however, then he refutes his claim by putting Lolita to sleep with sleeping pills. Anyway, to his disappointment the young girl does not react the way he imagined.

The book's subject of controversy is whether the culprit is Lolita or Humbert. Probably because the American society is focused only on the aspect of pedophilia, which

⁷⁵ Nabokov, *Lolita*, 279.

created the key element for the censorship, this novel was firstly published in Europe, where the book aroused an interest for this post-modernist approach.

4.2 Charles Bukowski

Another immigrant author, Charles Bukowski, is in many aspects different from Nabokov. As one of the most controversial writers in the American literature, in his works he does not glorify love or seeks the world behind the mirror in his poetry and prose, but uses sex as a mirror of itself - what he sees is what he presents. He is an American author, whose surface vulgarity masks a deeper purpose.⁷⁶

In his poetry one moment is usually described in quite explicit way, usually in the company of a woman. In the reader's eyes it could be a raw description of the situation without poetic euphemisms. It gives the impression of pure coarse reality, so much different from the majority of the American authors. Although his work has many opponents, his considerable influence on the cultural world cannot be denied - such as the book *Hollywood* (1989) was filmed and the author himself wrote the film script, so his work could pass to the big screen. Moreover, *Barfly* (1983) was also made into a film.

Charles Bukowski was born in Germany and he is considered as a significant mystifier - claiming, for example, to be an illegitimate son, but this statement is negated by the history of his arrival to the United States, where he stayed with his mother and father, Henry. His works are in the public consciousness considered as partly autobiographical, besides, the author himself had never denied that. For instance, the character of the book *Ham on Rye* (1982), Henry Chinaski, not only the truncation of the first name, which is often used by Bukowski, but also the sheer phonetic similarities of surnames confirm that.⁷⁷

Bukowski never attended higher education, but as an author he had been very fruitful. He considered himself an author of the aforementioned prose, proven also by the collection of short stories *Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions, and General Tales of Ordinary Madness* (1972).⁷⁸ Also his poems were often ranked upon the works of the Beat Generation writers, although in the most of publications and anthologies, he is not sorted

⁷⁶ David Charlson, *Charles Bukowski: Autobiographer, Gender Critic, Iconoclast* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2006), 9.

⁷⁷ See Charlson, *Charles Bukowski: Autobiographer, Gender Critic, Iconoclast*, 9.

⁷⁸ See "Charles Bukowski," Biography, last modified 2010, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/charles-bukowski>.

among these authors - his work began to be successful a decade later than was the case of Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac.

He was also a poet and tried to send his debut works to various magazines. His best-known poetry collections are *Mockingbird Wish Me Luck* (1972), *You Get So Alone at Times That It Just Makes Sense* (1986) and *Love is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977* (1977). However, when his poetry was judged, it was included in the canon of the American literature and it was also published in the third edition of *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*.⁷⁹ Writers like Jean-Paul Sartre or Jean Genet appreciated his works and called him the greatest poet of America.⁸⁰

4.2.1 Love is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 -1977

The poetry of Charles Bukowski is certainly not appealing to readers stemmed from the classical Shakespearian poetry. His poems usually depict particular moments and describe the sexual scenes and especially women who are often seen only as tools of the author's satisfaction. They are also written in the form of the first person narration and with the autobiographical style of writing, therefore may the reader assume that it is the narrative of the author.

Language used by the author is certainly not poetic but rather very explicit in expressions. In the poem "the 6 foot goddess" he describes a sexual act with a girl from Texas by using these words:

I'm going to shoot white hot
juice into you. I didn't fly all the
way to Galveston to play
chess⁸¹

The whole of Bukowski's work is characterized by similar descriptions of sex; it is the author's manuscript in a way. Even though it may appear just like an obscene description of sexual activities, further the poem follows:

and her blessed eyes
run deep into her head

⁷⁹See Adam Kirsch, "Smashed: The Pulp Poetry of Charles Bukowski," *The New Yorker*, March 14, 2009, accessed January 30, 2014,

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2005/03/14/050314crbo_books?currentPage=all.

⁸⁰ See Charles Bukowski, *Tvrdí Ho-i Pí-ou Básn : T i Rozhovory*, trans. Du-an Krej í (Olomouc: Votobia, 1996), 124.

⁸¹ Charles Bukowski, *Love Is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977* (Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1977), 18.

like mountain springs
far in
and
cool and good⁸²

Obviously, there are two diametrically different types of expression in one poem. The first part uses direct speech; sounds like a macho, but the second part enables reader to reveal the romantic hero by the usage of the metaphor that describes the amorousness. Bukowski therefore cannot be seen only as a cad but it must be taken in account that the vulgarity in his poems has a clear goal - it helps his poetry to be straight but what the author is trying to tell is often not openly described sexual act, but rather the meaning under the surface.

ōshe has saved me
from everything that is
not here⁸³

If we, the readers, sense from the poem, that the described situation is just about the author coming to Texas to spend time with his mistress, we gradually learn that after all the harsh words, the narrator has at least a weakness for the girl. He describes her kindly but still in his own way.

The theme of sexual intercourse appears widely in many Bukowski's poems. Author often teeters on the edge, for instance, when he describes a fifteen years old girl as a sex symbol in the poem "sex." Paradoxically, the sexual intercourse does not occur in this particular poem, the girl leaves the sight of the author and she becomes just the object of admiration, which after disappears and the author remains lonely.

In the poem "one for the shoeshine man" the author is describing how nice it is when a man has five women who love him. Promiscuity and infidelity also take place in Bukowski poems. However, only in this passage he points out that he loves the only one, the one who gave him daughter. In his works, Bukowski is capable of separating sex from love, each of them described in a completely different way. When he is interested only in the intercourse with a woman, his expressive style is full of vulgarity and he has no scruples with using vulgar words. In this case, reader is afterwards rather surprised when the passage, where author expresses his true feelings, appears.

⁸² Bukowski, *Love Is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977*, 19.

⁸³ Bukowski, *Love Is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977*, 19.

We are able to suspect from the title, what is his poetry like. Bukowski replaces the word sex by word love, because, based on the previous evidence, this is how it is viewed in the American consciousness. Love itself, in the true meaning, involves sex, but sex itself does not need to involve love - that is actually Bukowski's point of view. Bukowski can glorify women, but due to the fact that in his raw poetry alcohol and violence has its own place, he is showing other sides of women - when they sell their bodies or when they are under the influence of alcohol.

For Bukowski, sex is the natural part of the everyday life and everyday situations that he writes about. He describes his surroundings with raw precision and no hard feelings; his sex life receives no euphony. "Praying for bad weather" describes how he gets a hand job from vague girls, and the whole poem starts with: "God I do not know what to do."⁸⁴

Bukowski's controversy can be too much to digest for the American society and for many other authors. Sexual openness, combination of violence against women, religion, teenage girls, alcohol and sex does not correspond in any way with the typical American vision of sex. As Mary Austin commented that too much openness in sexual matters can hardly create a good class literature. However, Charles Bukowski is one of the most successful poets of the 20th century, his poems have been translated into more than 12 languages and he has sold a total of 120 million copies. *Love is a Dog From Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977* and its inclusion in one of the world's most respected anthologies suggests that we have to reckon with the fact that Bukowski as an author and as his group of readers is wide.⁸⁵

He also has a very solid fan base in Europe, for example, in Germany or in the Czech Republic,⁸⁶ where he is tremendously popular thanks to his European style of writing. Though vulgar, his works are accepted in a much warmer way by the European audience than in America.

⁸⁴ Bukowski, *Love Is a Dog from Hell: Poems, 1974 - 1977*, 184.

⁸⁵ See Kirsch, "Smashed: The Pulp Poetry of Charles Bukowski."

⁸⁶ See Kirsch, "Smashed: The Pulp Poetry of Charles Bukowski."

5 EUROPEAN VERSUS AMERICAN PERCEPTION OF SEXUALITY

The perception of sex is for those authors diametrically different. While the authors of the European origin more or less follow European standard of the perception of sex, American authors hold a sufficient distance from the open sex descriptions. Immigrants, as it seems to be, follow the idea that sexuality is natural and can be described openly. The European approach does not move sex into double beds, but is able to share it as a natural act, which is also used for pleasure, not just for procreation.

In the American environment it is not customary to discuss or to display sex more than it is necessary. The ones who comment it with certain openness are young, teenage Americans. They have, according to some sources, increased interest in the sexual issues due to the influence of popular culture.⁸⁷ This is also the case of Salinger's Holden - surrounded by peers who have a certain impact on him, whether it is the case of theater, music or sexual point of view.

Charles Bukowski and J. D. Salinger express sex explicitly in their works. In case of Bukowski, profanity is used to help illustrating the sexual act. Women are often described indiscriminately and they are perceived as sexual objects. Bukowski uses them as the instruments of the sexual satisfaction. He himself, in an interview with an actor Sean Penn, expressed his opinion on them unflatteringly, for him they are almost unbearable human beings;⁸⁸ this attitude corresponds to the autobiographical nature of his poems - he is usually displaying women the same way. He also uses vulgar expressions and the way he answered the questions during the interview is in principle not different from the style of expression used in his poetry, the sex is expressed as a natural act. He is an advocate of promiscuity and in matters relating to deeper commitment he claimed - even women themselves are inclined to noncommittal sex.⁸⁹

Salinger's protagonist Holden also uses the vulgar language. Anyway, during the sex scenes he is rather reserved and his behavior suggests that he is rather looking for dating or love and that he is not ready for sex as a physical act. This is captured the best in the scene where he orders a prostitute to the hotel room and when it comes to the act itself, he asks

⁸⁷ See Damon Duncan et al., "Perceptions of Sexuality in American Culture" (essay presented at the Future Leaders Summit on HIV/ AIDS, Windhoek, Namibia, January, 2006), accessed February 12, 2014, <http://org.elon.edu/summit/essays/essay9.pdf>.

⁸⁸ See Bukowski, *Tvrdí Ho-i Pí-ou Básn : T i Rozhovory*, 132-133.

⁸⁹ See Bukowski, *Tvrdí Ho-i Pí-ou Básn : T i Rozhovory*, 136-137.

her to just talk with him. Holden is simply provoked by the excessive curiosity, which is caused by his age.

The fuss that Holden's behavior provoked in America, although chivalric at the core, was caused by the fact that Americans are hardly able to see his attitude and expressions positively. Young people are constantly instructed to not perceive sex as something normal and to not be focused on it that much. Distant relationship is being built inside of them. Due to the massive number of believers, the view that non-marital sex is in contrary to the Bible and, as it is mentioned in the Bible, most of its actors are doomed to hell, is still prevalent.⁹⁰

The difference between the two authors is thus obvious. While Bukowski used vulgarisms for the descriptions of sex, Salinger used them to approach the young generation driven by curiosity and plunged in inexperience. The aim of Bukowski's poetry is to provoke, maybe even disgust, but Salinger was probably trying to penetrate the young souls, to illustrate the confusion and indecision, as represented by the character of Holden.

Also their perception of women is essentially different. Although Bukowski is trying to describe them, mostly by shallow indications, while having sex with them he is far more talkative. Although Salinger lets Holden peers to talk about their first sexual experiences without sufficient respect for women, his real intention is presented by Jane Gallagher, a really important person for the protagonist. There is a description of what she likes and that Holden goes to the cinema with her, therefore he is enjoying those common activities more than a potential intercourse and in plus he does not show the slightest hint of vulgar behavior towards her.

On the contrary, works of Tennessee Williams and Vladimir Nabokov can be seen in a different way. Both authors are characterized by considerable implicitness and almost zero use of vulgarities. Although sexual themes that have both chosen are very controversial - incestuous pedophilia on the line of rape in case of Nabokov and rape in the full sense of the word in case of Williams - these authors let their readers fumble. In his play Williams does not indicate that the main character Stanley actually raped the sister of his wife, but from the description of the situation and the subsequent collapse of her character plus his

⁹⁰ See Darrell D. Kelly. "Love, Sex, & Teenagers: A Youth Ministry Resource for Addressing the Tough Issues Concerning Love, Sex, & Teenagers!" (Bloomington: Booktango, 2005), 10-22.

animal behavior, those are the hints which help reader to get an idea throughout the play and finally to understand that it did result in rape.

On the other hand, Nabokov plays more artfully with the reader. While the protagonist is condemning himself, tries to manipulate the reader that Lolita is not an innocent little girl, but seductive one who has had the sexual experience even before the first contact with him. Author claims that the sex scenes are "dismissed" - as the first masturbation, which was given to him by his first children's mistress, is hidden beneath metaphors. His manipulation with the reader is so precise that in the Cambridge dictionary under the definition of term Lolita can be found following - "a young girl who has a very sexual appearance or behaves very sexual way."⁹¹

The reader, however, gets a one-sided view of the situation through the eyes of the protagonist, even though a university professor, but at the time of narration also a criminal and murderer. The author is giving a free space to the reader for his own imagination about what is happening to Humbert and Lolita in the bed, but also what proportion of guilt the immature orphan child has in the whole situation.

Nabokov himself, however, makes the topic of sex clear in his novel. In an interview about his novel he mentions that there are people who perceive his work as a sex novel, and those do not know the boundary between sex and love. "For them sex is so well-defined there's a gap between it and love."⁹² Therefore, he admits a sort of dual perception of sex, which causes the controversy around the novel.

In case of Williams, the implicitness is suggested by the name of the play, where it denotes the desire to tram stop and also to human/animal instinct. Throughout the play, he is playing with deep symbolism and his main character is an immigrant, whose origin and sexually based behavior is reminded very often. While Blanche also used to be sexually open, she manifests later regret and feels dirty, which is in the book symbolized in her long baths. She, as a truly American woman, for her unrestrained sexual history gets rejection of the whole society and on the other hand the animal sexual manifestations of the Polish immigrant Stanley are tolerated, in case of his wife Stella almost demanded. Thus the

⁹¹ "English Definition of 'Lolita'" accessed March 12, 2014, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/lolita>.

⁹² Cynthia Haven, "Nabokov on Lolita: I Leave the Field of Ideas to Dr. Schweitzer and Dr. Zhivago" *Stanford University*, February 27, 2012, accessed March 2, 2014, <http://bookhaven.stanford.edu/2012/02/nabokov-on-lolita-humbert-doesnt-know-a-hawk-from-a-handbag-i-do/>.

double standard and another demonstration of the difference between European and American thinking of sex can be well seen. Even Brook Atkinson, critic who published a review of the play in the *New York Times* in 1947, followed this double standard. Although immigrant Stanley is mentioned as a thorough-and-ready, Blanche earned much harder criticism from him - he speaks of her as liar.⁹³ But the sex accompanying the play is not mentioned at all in the review by this American critic.

The contrast between those two principles is obvious. Even though the post-war United States were flooded by sexuality, it is necessary to admit that the contribution of immigrants from Europe, who highlighted the difference between love and sex, is apparent.

⁹³See Brooks Atkinson, "Original Review: 'A Streetcar Named Desire'" *The New York Times*, April 22, 2012, Accessed January 24, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2012/04/23/theater/20120423-streetcar.html?ref=reviews&_r=0.

CONCLUSION

“Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it.”⁹⁴ This opinion of C. S. Lewis is perfectly consistent with the spirit of this thesis, which intention is not to generalize the European and American thinking about sex but to highlight the differences in works of selected authors. Their selection was deliberate, not just to cover the broadest spectrum of literature but also to show differences in their sexual perception.

The first part is dedicated to the search of the cause of interests of the Americans in sexual issues, which stemmed both from the lack of really relevant information of that time and the undeniable influence of the Bible. Thus, it is possible to find two different views on sex - the European, which is, based on the evidence, more benevolent to the interpretation of the basic sexual instinct and defines it only as the physical contact, and on the other hand, the American, at least based on the examples given in this work, where sex is often seen as a part of a deeper feeling or as it gives way to deeper feelings.

Another part analyses the selected works and should confirm this cultural paradox. Vladimir Nabokov demonstrates how far a person can go for sexual gratification through his European character, Charles Bukowski on the other hand, as a European himself, uses vulgarities, open description of sexual intercourse and shows positive attitude towards casual sex by which he confirms the opinion that sex can be defined individually, as a human instinct and nature without being able to call it love.

On the other hand, authors born in America are showing the different point of view. Even though J.D. Salinger writes about sex, his main character is a young boy driven by curiosity and interest in sex but despite his age, Holden is not capable of sex without any commitments. He values deeper feelings and when it comes to the intercourse with the prostitute, he refuses. Tennessee Williams brings these two opposite poles together - the immigrant in his play is even able to rape to achieve satisfaction, but an American born woman is doomed for sex outside of her marriage much more than her sexually obsessed brother-in-law.

While the narrative style of some authors is interconnected - Charles Bukowski and J.D. Salinger expresses their thoughts explicitly but Vladimir Nabokov and Tennessee Williams prefer rather implicit indications, they are ultimately forming two groups with a

⁹⁴ C.S Lewis, “Quote,” accessed January 4, 2014, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/30083-literature-adds-to-reality-it-does-not-simply-describe-it>.

different perception of sex and with different sexual ideology, which is related to their origin.

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