

Coming of Age in Selected Short Stories by Ernest Hemingway and John Barth

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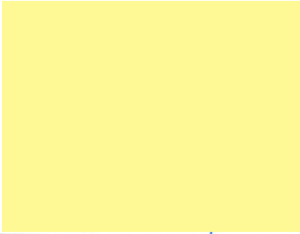
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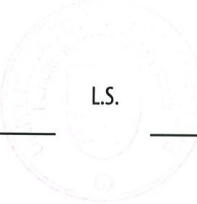
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce pojednává o tématu dospívání ve vybraných povídkách spisovatelů Ernesta Hemingwaye a Johna Bartha. S ohledem na původ obou autorů je tato práce zaměřena převážně na Americké povídky, jejich vývoj a historii. Téma dospívání je popsáno zejména z literárního hlediska a je soustředěno především na dospívání hlavní postavy a její prožitky, které ji přibližují k dospělosti. V návaznosti k autorům povídek nechybí ani kratší biografická část. Analytická část této práce je zaměřena na analýzu dospívání ve čtyřech povídkách rozdělených do dvojic. Každá dvojice obsahuje jednu povídku od každého z autorů. Cílem této analýzy je porovnat jednotlivé dvojice povídek a analyzovat téma dospívání v každé z nich.

Klíčová slova: povídky, dospívání, Ernest Hemingway, John Barth

ABSTRACT

This bachelor thesis deals with the coming-of-age theme in selected short stories by writers Ernest Hemingway and John Barth. Since both Hemingway and Barth are American authors, this thesis focuses mainly on American short stories, their development and history. The theme of adolescence is described primarily from a literary point of view and focuses mainly on the main character's coming of age and her experiences that lead her to adulthood. In connection with the authors, there is also a biographical section. The analytical part of this thesis focuses on the analysis of coming of age in four short stories divided into pairs. Each pair contains one short story by Hemingway and one by Barth. The aim of this analysis is to compare each pair of short stories and analyze the theme of adolescence in each of them.

Keywords: short story, coming of age, Ernest Hemingway, John Barth

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

Coming of age is a topic one can see on every corner today. During adolescence, many changes take place in an individual, not only physical but also mental, which can affect later life decisions. What a person will be like as an adult affects adolescence and the experiences during it. The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyze the theme of adolescence in selected short stories by Ernest Hemingway and John Barth. It also aims to compare these short stories and describe the initiations into the adult world that took place for the main characters. First of all, the concepts of coming of age and short stories need to be introduced for further analysis.

The topic of the first chapter is short stories and their definitions. Most of this chapter focuses on the history of short stories as such. American short stories are then described in detail, considering the nationality of the two writers. As far as American short stories are concerned, the history of the development of the short story in America is covered, as well as most of the major authors and introductions to their works. For this part, I gathered information largely from two books. The first of them is *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story* by Martin Scofield and the other one is called *A Companion to the American Short Story* by Alfred Bendixen and Jamel Nagel.

The second chapter of this thesis deals with adolescence. This is first described in general terms; what adolescence is and how such adolescence differs in different parts of the world. However, the main part of this chapter deals with adolescence from a literary point of view. The protagonist of the coming-of-age stories is described, especially his experiences that lead him to adulthood. American works in particular are described and it is explained why coming-of-age stories are a popular genre.

The third chapter briefly describes the lives and works of authors Ernest Hemingway and John Barth.

The analytical part of this bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of the theme of adolescence in selected short stories by Ernest Hemingway and John Barth. Four short stories were chosen for this analysis and transformed into pairs. Each pair then contains one short story by Ernest Hemingway and one by John Barth. The first pair consists of the short stories "Indian Camp" and "Water Message", while the second pair consists of the short stories "The End of Something" and "Lost in the Funhouse". Each short story is followed by an analysis and then a comparison of both short stories.

1 SHORT STORIES

Defining a short story is rather arduous as no precise or steady definition exists. Britannica states that a short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that is shorter than a novel and that usually deals with only a few characters.¹ On the other hand, Allan H. Pasco in his journal claims that there is no exact definition and he compares the definition to an archetype – short stories have their typical detectable characteristics that are displayed differently depending on the period of time and also on the writer.² Pasco also points out that in order to create a precise definition of short stories that can be used eternally, it is necessary for the genre to cease to exist.³

According to Susanne C. Ferguson, short stories can be characterized with reference to unity, a technique of plot compression, change or revelation of character, tone, lyricism, nevertheless, no other feature that would discern short stories from other fiction exists.⁴ According to Pratt a short story captures a single moment, a fraction of a lifetime⁵, a common theme is a moment of truth when something happens in the main character's life that affects his or her life. The short story is used for experimentation, often introducing new themes to literature.⁶

With regard to length, several sources define the length of a short story differently. The book *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story* states that the length of a short story ranges from five hundred to fifteen thousand words, which is approximately one to forty pages.⁷ According to Edgar Allan Poe, short stories are stories that people are able to read in one sitting.⁸ On the other hand, the length as such is arguable and subjective as one person is able to read one hundred pages a day and the other can hardly read a short story in one sitting. It is quite hard to define the correct length of a short story as it is compared in relation to the novel, which is a longer form and also to a so-called long story or novella. The length of a long story ranges from twenty thousand to forty thousand words,

¹ Arlen J. Hansen, "short story," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified September 1, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story>. Accessed 24 Jan. 2023.

² Allan H. Pasco, "On Defining Short Stories," *New Literary History* 22, no.2 (1991): 407, <https://doi.org/10.2307/469046>.

³ Pasco, "On Defining Short Stories," 409.

⁴ Suzanne C. Ferguson, "DEFINING THE SHORT STORY: IMPRESSIONISM AND FORM," *Modern Fiction Studies* 28, no.1 (1982): 13, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26281275>. Accessed 1 February 2023.

⁵ Charles E. May, *The New Short Story Theories* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994), 99, <https://archive.org/details/newshortstorythe0000unse/mode/2up?view=theater>.

⁶ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 104.

⁷ Martin Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, introduction 4.

⁸ Pasco, "On Defining Short Stories," 416.

while on the other hand, the length of a novel ranges from fifty thousand to one hundred and ten thousand words.⁹

One of the main features of the short stories described by Kingsley Amis is the idea as hero. The meaning behind the idea as hero is that the concept of an idea, rather than a character or plot, is central to the concept of the story.¹⁰ The point is also important as there is the main plot or so-called point in a story when something huge happens.¹¹ Another typical feature of short stories is the concept of a moment. This moment captures one or more upheavals either to the main character, group, or whole society.¹² Short story as opposed to the novel includes more of an uncomplicated purpose of the story, usually one which focuses on portraying the main features of characters.¹³ It is typical for a short story that it usually takes place in one setting, the plot generally revolves around one main character and one main event or situation the short story is about.¹⁴

A short story cycle could be defined as a collection of short stories that have the same or at least a similar setting and some characters appear repeatedly in the stories.¹⁵ One example of a short story cycle is Sherwood Anderson and his Winesburg, Ohio cycle. As far as the American short story cycle is concerned, a fairly common element in the stories is a person who either wants to leave the community, is considered a local, or conversely is new to the community, i.e. a stranger. For example, in the aforementioned Winesburg, Ohio cycle, one of the main characters wants to leave the small town and go to the city.¹⁶

1.1 History of short stories

The short stories presumably originate from the times of the first civilizations.¹⁷ The origins of concepts similar to short stories originate from old myths and oral stories (such as legends, fairy tales, and mythic tales) and storytelling may be considered a predecessor to short stories as they are now known.¹⁸ Short fiction was narrated by way of fables, tales, and fairy tales, for instance *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which was an old Babylonian tale, Egypt's tale *The*

⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 4.

¹⁰ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 5.

¹¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 6.

¹² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 10.

¹³ Ross C. Murfin, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* (Boston: Bedford, 2003), 445 https://archive.org/details/bedfordglossaryo00murf_2/page/4/mode/2up.

¹⁴ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 73.

¹⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 91.

¹⁶ Alfred Bendixen and James Nagel, *A Companion to the American Short Story* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 487.

¹⁷ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 115.

¹⁸ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 3.

Shipwrecked Sailor, *The Thousand and One Nights*, to the Greeks and their form of fable including animals, to Homer, medieval French fabliaux arising between the twelfth to the fourteenth century, continuing to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* so-called short story cycle.

Concerning history and the genre of short stories, it is crucial to deal with two terms. One of them being a tale and the other a sketch.¹⁹ As it is described in *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, a tale is a simple narrative, either written or spoken in verse or in prose. The tale as such can be either true (based on a real event) or fictitious. It often portrays events that can be strange along with someone or something either supernatural, wondrous/extraordinary (marvelous), or exotic.²⁰ Tales were important for the culture of a given country, they were seen as a description of the motherland, as a way of expressing ideas about the ancestors and their customs, and they formed the identity of a given culture. Therefore, short stories are more likely to be understood by the members of that culture who live there.²¹ On the other hand, a sketch, according to Britannica is a short narrative describing some features of a certain culture for people who are outside of this culture, as well as a character sketch, which usually describes the biography of a real or fictional character.²² Tales and sketches can be understood as rather young predecessors to short stories.²³ Even Charles May in his book *The New Short Story Theories* affirms that tales are supposed to be the earliest genre of a story²⁴ and that they were used before the first usage of the genre short story, later in the nineteenth century.²⁵

Short fiction became popular during Middle Ages, containing romances and exempla. Most of the romances were usually longer, for example stories about King Arthur in Britain. Exemplum is a short tale depicting the life of famous people and provides a moral lesson that relates to the characteristics of the personality being described. The common folk was fond of the fabliau, which was a short tale with simple humor, often cynical, usually with erotic overtones.²⁶

¹⁹ Hansen, "short story." <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story/History>.

²⁰ Murfin, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 475.

²¹ Hansen, "short story." <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story#ref51040>.

²² The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "literary sketch," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/art/literary-sketch>.

²³ Ferguson, "DEFINING THE SHORT STORY," 14.

²⁴ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 54.

²⁵ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 148.

²⁶ Hansen, "short story." <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story#ref51040>.

Short fiction was popular mainly in Europe due to Giovanni Boccaccio and Geoffrey Chaucer. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* incorporates most of the aforementioned genres of short fiction – fabliaux, exemplum, and also a beast fable same as Boccaccio in *Decameron*. In the 17th century, one of Spain's most renowned writers, Miguel de Cervantes, wrote a collection of short stories called *Novelas Ejemplares*.

By the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, short fiction, mostly in the West, was in decline, largely due to the popularity of novels. Short fiction gained renewed popularity in the nineteenth century, when the modern short story arose. It is quite hard to ascertain the time when short stories as a genre came into existence. Short stories in America emerged between 1820 and 1830, however, there was a parallel development of the short story in Europe, more specifically in Russia by Gogol – *Diary of a Madman*²⁷, just as in Germany by E. T. A. Hoffmann – *The Sandman* and France by Prosper Mérimée – *Mateo Falcone*.²⁸ In such a manner, it is not entirely clear whether a short story is an American invention as stated by Alfred Bendixen.²⁹

Some of the most acclaimed short story writers of the 19th century include Edgar Allan Poe, Washington Irving, Mark Twain, Guy de Maupassant, Nikolay Gogol, and Anton Chekov. Almost all major writers began writing short stories, but not only them. It was through short stories that new writers appeared, as short stories spread to countries where the genre was not prevalent, such as Jorge Luis Borges in Argentina or Franz Kafka in Austria-Hungary. Thus, the United States, France, and Russia lost the dominance of the genre. It was newspapers and magazines that helped spread the short story genre.³⁰ The change in the short story in the twentieth century was in terms of structure.

The basis of the story was usually the moment when some great change happened³¹, but twentieth-century short story writers tended to focus on inconspicuous events. Another change from the nineteenth-century short story is that the emphasis was no longer on the plot but rather on form, at least according to Sherwood, who argued that plot is like poison to stories.³² Therefore it could be said that writers started to experiment more with the form. Some of the most acclaimed short story writers of the twentieth century include Ernest

²⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 1.

²⁸ Hansen, "short story." <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story/History>.

²⁹ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 3.

³⁰ Hansen, "short story," <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story/The-20th-century>.

³¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 6.

³² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 128.

Hemingway, James Joyce, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, O. Henry, Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner.

The second half of the twentieth century takes identity into account, both cultural and social - stories of American Jews, African Americans, and feminism, for example.³³ The science fiction genre has also developed, with Ray Bradbury and Stephen King among its most famous writers.³⁴ The postmodernist short story emerged, whose founders include John Barth.³⁵

1.2 American Short Stories

As far as American short stories are concerned, the commencement (beginning) of short stories as such originates from oral stories told by Natives including animals and nature.³⁶ It might be said that the short story is an invention of the United States, but it must not be forgotten that there is a parallel development of the short story in Europe. In any case, it is a certainty that the short story is very important to the United States. The concept of democracy is closely linked to the American story. The historian Alexis de Tocqueville addressed the question of what literature would look like in a new democratic America, and he takes cultural conditions into account here, dealing in particular with the social classes, which he argues are intermingled.³⁷

According to Henry James, the novel needs a society with a long tradition, which is why the short story is so important to the United States, as its society was new and had almost no tradition.³⁸ The early half of the nineteenth century favored short fiction, yet American works were at a great disadvantage, primarily due to copyright laws that allowed publishers to copy British works, pirate them, and print them at a relatively low price. In terms of publication and market, the beginnings were difficult for short stories. This was mainly due to the failure to establish a magazine that would arouse interest in literature and that would become recognized. Similarly, with books, publishers were reluctant to publish short story collections because they considered them not profitable.³⁹ However, things changed in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine was founded, and Harper's magazine stopped publishing British works and started publishing American works.

³³ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 208.

³⁴ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 422.

³⁵ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 217.

³⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 3.

³⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 7.

³⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 9.

³⁹ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 8.

The situation with books was still the same; publishers were unwilling to publish collections of short stories, and a writer had to achieve fame first to get his stories published. A change came during the 1880s when Charles Scribner's Sons began publishing collections of short stories that described events and life in different regions of the United States. This led to the creation of a literary trend called local color. The late nineteenth century was an important time for American authors as the market became available for short stories.⁴⁰ Various traditions and nations were intermingled, each region was different, and had different customs. So short story writers described the way of life in other regions.⁴¹

Some of the first known writers of American short stories can be considered Washington Irving and William Austin and their short stories “Rip Van Winkle” and “Peter Rugg, the Missing Man”. From the time of Washington Irving, who is considered to be a founding father of American literature⁴², short stories became significant in American literature as they formed American culture.⁴³

Washington Irving was born in 1783 in New York. He is not only considered the first author of the American short story but also one of the early American literature pioneers.⁴⁴ Among his best-known stories are “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”, which he published in a collection of short stories, sketches and essays titled *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon*, abbreviated as *The Sketch Book*. The majority of the collection is set in Britain, where Irving travelled, but the two aforementioned stories describe the American landscape. According to Martin Scofield, in the short story "Rip Van Winkle," Irving described the myth of the ordinary American who does not behave heroically. The main character is Rip, an ordinary man avoiding work, who goes hunting with his dog to escape the presence of his wife. In the mountains, he meets a man who is dressed in old-fashioned clothes, who leads Rip to the rest of his group. Rip drinks the alcohol and falls asleep. He wakes up twenty years later to a new life. The new life represents the myth about the American Revolution, which Rip slept through.⁴⁵

The second short story, ‘The Legend of Sleepy Hollow’, deals with supernatural matters such as the Headless Horseman. One could say that this short story grotesquely criticizes the

⁴⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 13.

⁴¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 8.

⁴² Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 483.

⁴³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 20.

⁴⁴ Edwin W. Bowen, “Washington Irving’s Place in American Literature,” *The Sewanee Review* 14, no.2 (1906): 171, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27530762>. Accessed 15 February 2023.

⁴⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 10-11.

Puritan belief in the supernatural.⁴⁶ The third story, *The Spectre Bridegroom* is less well known, inspired by German legends.⁴⁷ Irving was accused of drawing inspiration from European tales, especially German ones. In his short stories, Irving depicted the American landscape richly, bringing it to life, and characters memorably, which makes him the first to describe it.⁴⁸ One of the successors of Irving might be considered William Austin.

William Austin, born in 1778, was a follower of Irving. In his stories, Austin portrayed the American landscape and also used elements of the supernatural. His most famous short story “Peter Rugg, The Missing Man” focuses on a mysterious man named Peter Rugg who travels in a post carriage with his daughter in a storm. The reader gradually learns that this is Peter’s punishment, as despite being warned to stay overnight and not drive in a storm, Peter decides to continue his journey. He travelled like this for over fifty years. And just as in the story “Rip Van Winkle”, the main character misses the American Revolution and returns to a world he does not recognize.⁴⁹ Writing short stories in America in the time of Irving and Austin was not much popular. There was no market for it and therefore it was not profitable.⁵⁰

Nathaniel Hawthorne was noted for the variety of his stories, both comic and tragic, but above all he was involved in and is credited as one of the founders of the genre now known as science fiction⁵¹- writing stories about mad scientists, but also about apocalyptic visions.⁵² His best-known works are his collections of *Twice-Told Tales*, published in two series in 1837 and 1842, and *Mosses from an Old Manse*.⁵³ His stories often dealt with sin and evil and these themes are represented in the story 'Young Goodman Brown'.⁵⁴ In the short story “The Gentle Boy”, Hawthorne used the burden of guilt as a theme, as he did in more of his works.⁵⁵ In *Grandfather's Chair*, a collection of stories for children, he describes the history of America.⁵⁶

Edgar Allan Poe was not only an author of short stories but also became the first theoretician of the short story as a literary genre,⁵⁷ so it can be argued that he was one of the

⁴⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 14.

⁴⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 13.

⁴⁸ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 4.

⁴⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 15-16.

⁵⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 8.

⁵¹ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 50.

⁵² Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 54.

⁵³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 54.

⁵⁴ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 24.

⁵⁵ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 60.

⁵⁶ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 56.

⁵⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 31.

first to establish some sort of rules that should be applied to short stories.⁵⁸ Like Hawthorne, he was credited for developing science fiction.⁵⁹ E. A. Poe is considered to be an inventor of detective stories and he also mastered horror stories.⁶⁰ Horror is the theme of nearly all his works.⁶¹ Poe's most notable short stories include "The Black Cat", "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue". In stories like "The Black Cat" and "Hop-Frog", one can see animal characters with human emotions.⁶²

According to Poe, short stories are defined in terms of unity and single effect as it is stated in *The New Short Story Theories*.⁶³ The single effect is what distinguishes a short story from a novel.⁶⁴ A short story is meant to produce a singular effect, and in order to produce that, it combines various events to help form that. The very first sentence of a short story should direct the reader to produce that effect, Poe argues. This is what Poe meant by the unity of effect and impression. This could be considered the first stage of the development of the American short story, which involved Irving, Austin, Poe, and Hawthorne.⁶⁵

The nineteenth-century short story underwent a change after Poe. Marler argues that such a process occurs between Poe's and Melville's stories when the story is freed from the supernatural, and the characters take on a consciousness of their own.⁶⁶ It can be argued that the first stage of the development of short stories in America contains rather supernatural themes and motifs that could be used to form myths, although most of them were adopted from Europe.

Herman Melville's most famous short story is "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street", which is included in a collection of short stories called *The Piazza*. The main character in the short story is the eponymous hero, who makes his living as an articulated scribe who loses his appetite for work over time. The narrator (Bartleby's employer) discovers that Bartleby lives in the office and decides to move his business. Bartleby still lives in the office, later in the building on the stairs. Although the narrator tries to help him, Bartleby is arrested

⁵⁸ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Edgar Allan Poe," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified January 15, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edgar-Allan-Poe#ref5803>.

⁵⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 37.

⁶⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 10.

⁶¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 32.

⁶² Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 23.

⁶³ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 303.

⁶⁴ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 73.

⁶⁵ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 61.

⁶⁶ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, introduction xxiii.

as a vagrant and starves to death in the Tombs.⁶⁷ Bartleby is considered to be one of the greatest short stories.⁶⁸ Melville deals with the motif of isolation in his works.⁶⁹ By the late nineteenth century, the short story had become a recognized and established genre in America.⁷⁰ This period is characterized by a change, a transition from the East Coast, where most literary figures such as Irving and Poe lived and wrote, to the West Coast, where Native Americans lived. This was due to the discovery of gold, which caused a population increase in California. Bret Harte published one of his most famous short stories, “The Luck of Roaring Camp”, which is about miners raising a child whose mother, also a miner, has died.⁷¹

Local colour literature is becoming increasingly popular, as we can see in the story “The Luck of Roaring Camp”. This genre became popular as it described other regions and their customs and traditions.⁷² Charles Chesnutt was one of the first American authors to write about American life after the Civil War, and he placed African Americans as main characters in his works, describing such things as slavery and plantation life. Thus, with Chesnutt, there emerged literature that already described real America.⁷³ In his works, he described both the North and the South, as well as the white and black inhabitants.⁷⁴ Among his most famous works is the collection of stories *The Conjuree Woman* and *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color-Line*.

With Mark Twain, the so-called humorous or comic American short story was created.⁷⁵ Twain is considered one of the most eminent American humorists.⁷⁶ As well as Chesnutt, Twain makes extensive use of dialect in his works⁷⁷, and his typical style of writing short stories is colloquial.⁷⁸ “The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg” is considered to be one of his most important stories, reflecting Twain's ability to form a sophisticated plot, but also his pessimism reflected in the weaknesses of people.⁷⁹

⁶⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 44-45.

⁶⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 47.

⁶⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 44.

⁷⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 68.

⁷¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 53.

⁷² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, introduction 8.

⁷³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 68.

⁷⁴ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 69.

⁷⁵ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 86.

⁷⁶ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 78.

⁷⁷ Kevin J. Hayes, *A Journey Through American Literature*, (New York : Oxford University Press, 2012), 81, <https://archive.org/details/journeythrougham0000haye/page/194/mode/2up>.

⁷⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 58.

⁷⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 63.

One of the most important authors, not only of short stories but also of novels, writing at the turn of the century was Stephen Crane. Crane's writing style was characterized by irony, limited perspective, the blending of fiction and reality, and his response to reality through impressionism was also significant. He wrote mostly about the war, but also included such subjects as urbanization, the western frontier⁸⁰, as well as cowboys.⁸¹ Although Crane is best known for his novel *The Red Badge of Courage*, he was more attracted to short stories, and this was mainly due to his finances, as he was often in debt. Short stories were better for him than novels since he received payment for them more quickly.⁸² Some of Crane's best-known short stories include "The Blue Hotel", "The Open Boat" and "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky". The main theme of his stories is the west and also disappearance of the western frontier in a comical way, in 'The Blue Hotel' on the other hand he emphasizes the negative impact of maintaining it.⁸³

According to Charles May, Stephen Crane and Henry James are considered among the first impressionistic American writers.⁸⁴ Unlike Stephen Crane, who chose to write short stories because of financial problems, Henry James chose to write short fiction because it allowed him to write about more subjects, places and things, in short there was a wider range of themes to develop. James was a member of the upper class and this was also the content of his works, as was the affluent society, both in America and in Europe where he lived. He often went overboard with the lengths of his short stories and therefore preferred the term novella.⁸⁵ Women and their position in society, both young and old, were frequent themes in his works, such as in the short story "The Special Type" and the novella "Daisy Miller".⁸⁶ Another theme of his short stories is artists and writers who face danger through social success.⁸⁷ In the short story "The Middle Years" he writes about an older writer who meets his fan.⁸⁸

In the United States, the short story has evolved in two forms. The first is the realistic short story, which attempted to describe characters, things, places, and events in a realistic

⁸⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 135.

⁸¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 73.

⁸² Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 135.

⁸³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 139.

⁸⁴ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 227.

⁸⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 79.

⁸⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 80.

⁸⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 82.

⁸⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 83.

manner. The second is the impressionistic short story, which is less realistic and describes events and places from the perspective of the character's thoughts (minds).⁸⁹

As far as female short story writers are concerned, it is necessary to mention the writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman and her short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", which was rejected by the famous Atlantic Monthly magazine.⁹⁰ Women writers portrayed women in two forms – 'the True Woman' and the 'New Woman'. While True Woman portrayed a woman as a pure being in the household (housewife) who was devout and quiet, the New Woman portrayed a woman as an independent being when it came to men and money and also fearless. Women writers writing at the turn of the century include Mary Wilkins Freeman and her short story "The Revolt of 'Mother'" which is about 'a True Woman' who stands up against her husband.⁹¹ Rebecca Harding Davis wrote the short story "Life in the Iron Mills", where the main character is a man.⁹² Sarah Orne Jewett is the author of the short story "The Country of the Pointed Firs", which is noteworthy as it is taken as the first example of the short story cycle as far as the American short story is concerned.⁹³ In stories such as "Desirée's Baby" and "The Storm", Kate Chopin's descriptions of the body and sex are quite daring considering the era in which she wrote these stories.⁹⁴

The beginning of the twentieth century can be considered successful as far as short stories are concerned, as their popularity grew and so did the number of new magazines that published them. Within twenty years, the number of magazines increased by almost seven thousand.⁹⁵ The beginning of the twentieth century is influenced by events such as the First World War and the Wall Street Crash.⁹⁶ The first half of the twentieth century was very favourable for the publication of short stories in magazines. The New Yorker, Atlantic Monthly, Saturday Evening Post and Harper's Magazine were among the most important magazines.⁹⁷

Recognized writers of the early twentieth century include Jack London and O. Henry.⁹⁸ O. Henry wrote stories about ordinary people, both poor and rich.⁹⁹ His most famous short

⁸⁹ Hansen, "short story," <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story/Middle-Ages-Renaissance-and-after>.

⁹⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 105.

⁹¹ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 106.

⁹² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 89.

⁹³ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 91.

⁹⁴ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 99.

⁹⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 107.

⁹⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 108.

⁹⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 195.

⁹⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 115.

⁹⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 117.

story is 'The Gifts of the Magi', where the main characters are a young couple who are not very well off. Each decides to sell his most valuable possession in order to buy the other a gift. Jim sells his watch to buy Della a hairbrush and Della sells her hair to buy Jim a watchband.¹⁰⁰ Jack London was best known for his novels *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild*. However, he began his career by publishing a collection of short stories, *The Sons of the Wolf*.¹⁰¹ London's main themes were nature, human life, and survival. He also wrote about new territories including Alaska or the Pacific His well-known stories include "To Build a Fire" and "Story of a Typhoon off the Coast of Japan" and collection of stories *Northland Stories*.¹⁰² London is regarded as a representative of naturalism.¹⁰³

Sherwood Anderson experimented with short stories. Unlike others, he despised the plot, even calling it the poison of short stories¹⁰⁴; instead, a form was more important to him. In his stories, Sherwood concentrates on a single event, a kind of climax or turning point.¹⁰⁵ His best-known work is the short story cycle *Winesburg, Ohio*. He describes his own experiences, small-town life, but also sexuality, which was shocking in his time. Although this book has been widely criticized, Anderson himself said that he described life in America as it is.¹⁰⁶ Some of Anderson's other works include *Death in the Woods*, *The Triumph of the Egg*, or *Horses and Men*. American literature changed after World War I. The main change was the economy of literature - writing in simple language and shorter sentences and direct descriptions of feelings. Writers so influenced, adherents of the Imagists, moved to Paris and were later joined by Ernest Hemingway, who was most influenced by this movement.¹⁰⁷ Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner are considered modernist short story writers who write realistically.¹⁰⁸

One of the most important short story writers of the twentieth century in America is considered to be Ernest Hemingway.¹⁰⁹ His writing style was simple, often using a form of repetition (words and phrases) and short sentences in his stories.¹¹⁰ Hemingway's first collection of short stories is *In Our Time*, soon followed by another collection of short

¹⁰⁰ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 118.

¹⁰¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 121.

¹⁰² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 122.

¹⁰³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 171.

¹⁰⁴ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 128.

¹⁰⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 129.

¹⁰⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 130.

¹⁰⁷ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 219.

¹⁰⁸ James Plath, "The American Short Story: A Selective Chronology"

<https://sun.iwu.edu/~jplath/sschron.html#realistic>.

¹⁰⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 139.

¹¹⁰ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 227.

stories, *Men Without Women*, *Winner Take Nothing* and *The Fifth Column* and *The First Forty-Nine Stories*, are considered his most famous.¹¹¹ He was a lover of outdoor, hunting and travelling, which is greatly reflected in his short stories, e.g. “Hills Like White Elephants”, and he loved Spanish bullfighting as described in his short story “The Capital of the World”. War was also another major theme in many of his stories, the characters were often soldiers, for example in the short story “Soldier's Home”.¹¹² The short story collection *In Our Time* features the character of Nick Adams in seven short stories. It chronicles his adolescence to adulthood.¹¹³

Francis Scott Fitzgerald is one of the writers who became more famous for his novels, in which case it was *The Great Gatsby*, but on the other hand publishing short stories brought him much more money than publishing novels.¹¹⁴ During 1920 and 1935 he published collections of short stories *Flappers and Philosophers*, *Tales of the Jazz Age*, *All the Sad Young Men* and *Taps at Reveille*. In his works, Fitzgerald often wrote about people of the upper social class.¹¹⁵

William Faulkner published three collections of short stories in his lifetime, *Collected Stories*, *Uncollected Stories*, and *Go Down, Moses*. The last of these is more of a novel but is considered a cycle of short stories.¹¹⁶ The most renowned short story of Faulkner is “A Rose for Emily”. Flannery O'Connor, the major female writer of the twentieth century, explored religion and spirituality in her works. Her best-known short story is “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”, which is published in the collection *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories*. Other important women writers of the twentieth century include Katherine Anne Porter and Eudora Welty.¹¹⁷ John Steinbeck has published two collections of short stories, *The Pastures of Heaven* and *The Long Valley*. The stories explore themes of isolation and violence in country life in California.¹¹⁸

The second half of the twentieth century was characterized by a type of story that embodied fear and unease, on the other hand, was humorous and elegant, and aptly described the suburbs and towns of the East Coast.¹¹⁹ John Updike and his stories “Ace in the Hole”,

¹¹¹ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 225.

¹¹² Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 227.

¹¹³ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 228.

¹¹⁴ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 150.

¹¹⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 151.

¹¹⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 160.

¹¹⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 177.

¹¹⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 197.

¹¹⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 201.

“Sunday Teasing”, and “Friends From Philadelphia” can be considered representatives of this type of short story. *The Early Stories* is a collection of stories about the middle class, where Updike arranged his stories chronologically, thus depicting the lives of the main characters in this society.¹²⁰

Although the short story shaped America's culture and identity, it also served to explore and understand other cultures and communities within the United States. This was furthered by the short stories of American Jewish writers who, although writing in Jewish cultures, mostly European, stopped writing in Yiddish and became part of American culture and helped create it. These included Grace Paley and Saul Bellow.¹²¹ Similarly with African American writers, whose lives and traditions were explored by writers such as Chesnutt, Baldwin, and Langston Hughes.¹²²

The mid-twentieth century, as far as the American short story is concerned, still documents the conflict between realism and romanticism, the boundary between reality and fantasy. And so, the postmodernist short story emerges, which focuses on the relationship between language and reality, how language shapes that reality, articulating different forms of language use, often paradoxical. It is meant to make the reader unsure of what is to come.¹²³ Representatives of the postmodernist short story include John Barth, William Gass, and Donald Barthelme.¹²⁴ These writers have discussed the question of reality and art, especially that if reality is fiction, and in order to experience this reality, the only way to do so is through art.¹²⁵ In Barth's most famous story 'Lost in Funhouse', which depicts a family trip to an amusement park, you can see how he works with language, for instance, the use of italics or sentence breaks.¹²⁶

Barthelme's most famous short story is "The Baloon".¹²⁷ Although Barthelme wrote about war, marriage, childhood and religion in his stories, he always focused on language and how language shapes thoughts.¹²⁸

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a resurgence of interest in short stories in America. One of the writers composing during this time is Raymond Carver. He returns to

¹²⁰ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 205.

¹²¹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 208.

¹²² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 213.

¹²³ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 218.

¹²⁴ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 217.

¹²⁵ May, *The New Short Story Theories*, 208.

¹²⁶ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 218.

¹²⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 219.

¹²⁸ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 20.

realistic short stories in his collection of short stories *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*.¹²⁹ This collection of stories deals with working class life in America. The short story shaped the American tradition, and its identity, because America as such carries no early literature; among the native peoples, stories were passed down verbally. The short story became popular; authors could experiment, describing to others other social groups, the lives of other ethnic groups, or just and only describing stories from life.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 226.

¹³⁰ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 237.

2 COMING OF AGE

Coming of age is seen as reaching a certain age when an individual changes into an adult. The age of adulthood varies based on different countries or cultures.¹³¹ In some religions or cultures, coming of age is crowned with rituals or ceremonies after which the individual is considered an adult.¹³² In many countries, the age of eighteen or twenty-one is taken as the age of majority.

For example, Jews undergo a Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremony, which is considered the beginning of adulthood. This ceremony is performed around the age of thirteen.¹³³ Similarly, in Australia, puberty rituals are common among the Aborigines, taking place between the ages of eleven and thirteen.¹³⁴ The most crucial element of the ritual is circumcision, a sign of the end of childhood.¹³⁵ Coming-of-age day is held annually in Japan and is celebrated by all those who have become twenty years old that year.¹³⁶

The act of coming of age, however, does not only mean reaching a certain age. It is about the development of the individual not only physically but also mentally.¹³⁷ An individual's coming of age his development has become a popular theme not only in literature but also in film. Thus, the genre of coming-of-age came into being.

2.1 Coming of Age in Literature

Kenneth Millard addresses the question of what is the accurate name for a genre that deals with the coming of age of an individual.¹³⁸ In addition to the coming-of-age story, he also mentions the Bildungsroman, as well as the memoir or autobiography. The difference, however, is that in the case of memoir or autobiography, these are works of nonfiction, while coming-of-age story or Bildungsroman fall under fiction.¹³⁹ In an autobiography, the author describes his or her life and development mostly from childhood to the present,¹⁴⁰ while a

¹³¹ Mandy Ross, *Coming of Age* (Chicago: Heinemann Library, 2004), 4, <https://archive.org/details/comingofage000ross/page/4/mode/2up>

¹³² Ross, *Coming of Age*, 5.

¹³³ Ross, *Coming of Age*, 18.

¹³⁴ Ross, *Coming of Age*, 16.

¹³⁵ Ross, *Coming of Age*, 17.

¹³⁶ Ross, *Coming of Age*, 24.

¹³⁷ Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, "adolescence," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified March 28, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/science/adolescence>.

¹³⁸ Kenneth Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), introduction 2.

¹³⁹ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, introduction 3.

¹⁴⁰ Murfin, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 32.

memoir contains personal memories and is more of a narrative of what the author has experienced and witnessed.¹⁴¹

It could be argued that the coming-of-age genre was preceded by the German Bildungsroman.¹⁴² The Bildungsroman originated in Germany as a literary genre that depicts the development of the protagonist from childhood to maturity, especially the development of emotions and morals.¹⁴³ As it can already be seen from the construction of the word, the word 'roman' indicates that it refers to a novel in which the development of the protagonist is depicted.

As far as literature is concerned, the term coming-of-age does not exactly mean reaching adulthood in age, but rather to growing up and the experience while growing up.¹⁴⁴

The main protagonist in coming-of-age stories is usually an adolescent who is going through life changes, and who experiences a certain turning point event that causes the loss of innocence and the transformation from a child.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, the protagonist is introduced to the opposite sex, and develops his identity and sexuality.¹⁴⁶

A coming of age story can also be referred to as an initiation story. In an initiation short story, the protagonist makes a transition from ignorance to knowledge of the world that is important to the protagonist. On the other hand, an initiation short story is understood as a kind of self-knowledge through which the protagonist adapts to life and experiences a major shift that involves understanding of oneself or the world around them that moves them toward adulthood.¹⁴⁷

As far as the American myth is concerned, the symbol of innocence and adolescence is associated with America as the New World, in which America acts as an adolescent who wants to have his own identity and be completely different from the Old World.¹⁴⁸ R. W. Lewis portrays this myth in his work *The American Adam*. The main protagonist in this work

¹⁴¹ Bedford, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 258.

¹⁴² Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, introduction 2.

¹⁴³ Murfin, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, 30.

¹⁴⁴ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, introduction 4.

¹⁴⁵ "Coming of Age Short Stories About Growing Up: Bildungsroman Examples," Short Story Guide, accessed March 27, 2023, https://www.shortstoryguide.com/short-stories-about-coming-of-age/?utm_content=cmp-true.

¹⁴⁶ Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 64, <https://archive.org/details/oxforddictionary0000bald/page/20/mode/2up>.

¹⁴⁷ Marcus Mordecai, "What Is an Initiation Story?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 19, no. 2 (1960): 222, <https://doi.org/10.2307/428289>. Accessed 27 Mar. 2023.

¹⁴⁸ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, 5.

is a teenage boy who is supposed to represent Adam as an innocent and uncorrupted who is sent to the new world.¹⁴⁹

A similar myth is described by Leslie Fiedler, who used the Garden of Eden myth in defining the initiation story, the assumption that through the knowledge of good and evil, innocence disappears and the burden of work or death arises.¹⁵⁰

In America, the theme of coming of age is associated with innocence and the American Dream, which represented hope, youth, and freedom.¹⁵¹ America was seen as a nation that was unblemished, but all this was disrupted by the Civil War, which eroded this ideal.¹⁵² The process of the development of American culture is compared to the process of coming of age.¹⁵³

According to Marcus Mordecai, there are three types of initiation in coming-of-age stories. The first one contains understanding and a kind of an approach to the threshold of adulthood, but the protagonist is usually very young, this type is called tentative. An example of tentative initiation can be found in the short story "The Circus" by Katherine Anne Porter or Hemingway's "The Killers".¹⁵⁴ In the short story "The Killers", the protagonist is Nick Adams. He works in a diner where two hitmen come to kill Ole, a former wrestler who often dines at the restaurant. They handcuff Nick and the cook in the kitchen, but Ole does not come. The hired killers leave and the diner owner sends Nick to warn Ole. However, he does not react to Nick's warning and doesn't care. Nick is exposed to behavior and violence he has never experienced before and is also surprised by the behavior of Ole, who doesn't care. Nick tries to cope with these events by leaving the town.¹⁵⁵

The second type, uncompleted, leaves the protagonists battling for certainty, such as in Sherwood Anderson's short story "I Want to Know Why".¹⁵⁶ In this short story, the protagonist is a boy who loves horses and racing and also admires the trainer, seeing the good in him, noticing that they are of the same opinion regarding the horse, thus forming a bond with the trainer. But when he watches him after the races and sees him in the brothel, he sees evil in him, he cannot understand what is going on, he does not know how male-

¹⁴⁹ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Mordecai, "What Is an Initiation Story?," 222.

¹⁵¹ Ihab H. Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," *American Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1958): 313, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2710345>. Accessed 28 Mar. 2023.

¹⁵² Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," 315.

¹⁵³ Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," 314.

¹⁵⁴ Mordecai, "What Is an Initiation Story?," 223.

¹⁵⁵ Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribners, 1998), 215-222.

¹⁵⁶ Mordecai, "What Is an Initiation Story?," 224.

female relationships work. But he is curious, so the reader sees in him that he will try to understand what happened.

The third type is called decisive, where the initiation moves the protagonists toward adulthood or shows them they are ready for adulthood. Often, self-knowledge occurs here.¹⁵⁷ The short story by John Steinbeck called 'The Flight' describes young Pepe, whose mother sends him to town to shop and spend the night. Pepe wants to go alone, he keeps telling his mother that he is already a man. When he comes back the next morning, he runs away to hide in the mountains because he killed a man in town. He keeps telling his mother that he is already a man, and she gives him a rifle and clothes. Pepe hides in the mountains but is shot, and gets inflammation in his wound. He cannot handle this battle, so he leaves himself to be shot by a man who is looking for him. It turns out that Pepe was not the man he claimed to be. He wasn't ready for adult life.

Regarding American literature, the theme of coming of age in fiction began to emerge after the Civil War. Despite Ihab Hassan's assertion in his article that the theme of coming of age and the depiction of the American adolescent began to appear in literature mostly after the Civil War,¹⁵⁸ an example of this is Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "My Kinsman, Major Molineux", published in 1832, in which the main character is a young man named Robin who changes and moves from the world of childhood to the world of adulthood as the story progresses.¹⁵⁹ Robin goes in search of his relative in a town where no one understands him and the only one he gets along with and who understands him is a prostitute he thinks is the Major's housekeeper. Thus, it might be argued that this is a coming-of-age story, published before the Civil War when such themes were apparently not commonplace.

In his journal article, Hassan states that in Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the protagonist grows up through life experiences, and thus grows up morally. While the theme of growing up changed after the First World War, there was often a sense of failure, the experience of violence, or other experiences resulting in, for example, the disillusionment that the young protagonists experienced as they reached adolescence. One can see here the change that began to take place in literature after the First World War in terms of the theme of coming of age, where initiation was based on harsh experiences.¹⁶⁰ Some of the prominent writers who wrote about coming of age in the post-World War I era

¹⁵⁷ Mordecai, "What Is an Initiation Story?," 223.

¹⁵⁸ Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," 312.

¹⁵⁹ Janet Carey Eldred, "Narratives of Socialization: Literacy in the Short Story," *College English* 53, no. 6 (1991): 686, <https://doi.org/10.2307/377894>.

¹⁶⁰ Hassan, "The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction," 312.

include Sherwood Anderson and his work *Winesburg, Ohio*, Ernest Hemingway and his short story collection *In Our Time*, William Faulkner and “The Bear”, Francis Scott Fitzgerald and his novel *This Side of Paradise* and John Steinbeck.¹⁶¹ Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* stories describe first sexual experiences, as well as relationships with certain people such as teachers or the mother.¹⁶²

After World War II, the theme of growing up became nostalgic, with worries about old age, as well as guilt and its expression.¹⁶³ Novelists writing about coming of age after World War II include Jerome David Salinger and his novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, Jean Stafford and Truman Capote.¹⁶⁴

Despite the fact that Kenneth Millard in his book *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, describes the theme of coming of age primarily in novels, these elements can also be applied to the theme of coming of age in short stories.

An element that seems to be common in the theme of coming of age is considered to be the role of the father. The role of the father is important for male protagonists for whom the father is a role model but also a symbol of values, young protagonists often want to be like their fathers, act in a similar way, and they worship him. However, the father does not always have to mean a role model, it can be a father's departure from the family.¹⁶⁵ An example where the father is a role model for the son and the son prefers his father's company can be seen in the short story “The Doctor and the Doctor's wife” by Ernest Hemingway. This story is about the conflict between Nick's parents. The Indians from the camp come to Dr. Adams, Nick's father, to cut the wood he found washed up on the shore. Nick's father is accused of stealing the wood and has an argument with one of the Indians. Mr. Adams' wife wants to send Nick to do something. Nick sits by a tree and tells his father that he would rather go into the woods with him. Nick's relationship with his father is evident here; Nick respects his father, whose presence he prefers to his mother's.¹⁶⁶

At the same time Ernest Hemingway's short story “My Old Man” also shows a father and son relationship where the son admires the father and at the moment when the father

¹⁶¹ Hassan, “The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction,” 313.

¹⁶² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 130.

¹⁶³ Hassan, “The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction,” 316.

¹⁶⁴ Hassan, “The Idea of Adolescence in American Fiction,” 313.

¹⁶⁵ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, 15.

¹⁶⁶ Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribners, 1998), 73-76.

dies the boy hears that his father was not as good as he thought. At that moment he loses his childlike innocence, he experiences a shock that leaves a mark on him.

If one considers Mark Twain's novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one also finds a relationship between father and son, but this time it is not idyllic; on the contrary, the protagonist does not have a positive relationship with his alcoholic father.¹⁶⁷ On the other hand, it is not always just about the relationship between the child and the father, Sherwood Anderson in the short story 'Mother' describes the relationship between the child and the mother.

The theme of coming of age is closely linked to innocence in literature, and this is probably the reason why this theme is popular in American literature, since the issue of innocence is typical of America, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, 17.

¹⁶⁸ Millard, *Coming of Age in Contemporary American Fiction*, 18.

3 ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND JOHN BARTH

3.1 Ernest Hemingway

Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on the 21st of July 1899 in a Chicago suburb in Oak Park, Illinois as the second of six children.¹⁶⁹ Hemingway's father Clarence Hemingway worked as a doctor in Oak Park¹⁷⁰ as opposed to his mother Grace Hemingway who was a voice teacher.¹⁷¹ The beginning of Hemingway's writing goes back to his high school days as he wrote for student newspapers called *The Trapeze*.¹⁷² After his high school graduation, Hemingway started to work as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star* newspaper.¹⁷³

As World War I broke out in 1918, Hemingway was sent to Italy to serve as an ambulance driver for American Red Cross. After less than two months of service, Hemingway suffered an injury and was taken to Milan where he was hospitalized. Hemingway later used these experiences as themes for his two novels *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*.¹⁷⁴ He got married to Hadley Richardson, the first of his four wives, and together, they moved to France, precisely speaking to Paris. Here Hemingway began to write fiction more extensively.¹⁷⁵ Due to the presence and influence of other writers Hemingway had in his milieu, such as Ezra Pound or Gertrude Stein, Hemingway commenced issuing short stories. He thus published one of his first books in 1924 called *In Our Time*, which was a collection of short stories.¹⁷⁶ In 1926, he published his first novel *The Sun Also Rises*. *Men Without Women* was his next collection of short stories published in 1927. *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel describing his experiences in Italy, was published in 1929. Hemingway was fond of hunting, fishing, and especially traveling. Most of his aforementioned hobbies became the subjects of his works.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁹ Young, "Ernest Hemingway," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ernest-Hemingway>.

¹⁷⁰ Charles M. Oliver, *Ernest Hemingway A to Z: The Essential Reference to the Life and Work* (New York: Checkmark Books, 1999), 139, <https://archive.org/details/ernesthemingwayt0000oliv/mode/2up>.

¹⁷¹ Oliver, *Ernest Hemingway A to Z*, 144.

¹⁷² Scott Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 17, https://archive.org/details/cambridgecompani0000unse_c5d2/mode/2up.

¹⁷³ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 19.

¹⁷⁴ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 88.

¹⁷⁵ Young, "Ernest Hemingway," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ernest-Hemingway>.

¹⁷⁶ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 89.

¹⁷⁷ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 10.

He left for Spain in 1937, as a correspondent and later ¹⁷⁸ drew on his experiences in Spain, however, this time the main theme was not bullfighting, as in *Death in the Afternoon*, but the Spanish Civil War. The novel *For Whom the Bells Tolls* was published in 1940. ¹⁷⁹

As far as World War II is concerned, Hemingway headed to France and to England to be a war correspondent for Collier's magazine. ¹⁸⁰ In 1953 Hemingway received the Pulitzer Prize for his novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, which was published in 1952. In 1954, Hemingway became the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature. ¹⁸¹ He began to suffer from depression. ¹⁸² Hemingway died on the 2nd of July in 1961 in Idaho, as a result of gunshot suicide. ¹⁸³

3.2 John Barth

John Simmons Barth was born on May 27th, 1930, in the state of Maryland, specifically in the city of Cambridge in the United States. He grew up there and Maryland appears as a setting in most of his works. After graduating from Cambridge High School in 1947, Barth entered the prestigious Juilliard School in New York City the same year. There he devoted himself to musical studies. Subsequently, he attended Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Since 1953, Barth has lectured at Pennsylvania State University, Boston University, and the State University of New York. ¹⁸⁴ In the 1970s, he became a professor at Johns Hopkins University, where he remained until 1995.

Barth's first novel was *The Floating Opera*, published in 1955 and revised in 1967. ¹⁸⁵ The main character is Todd Anderson, a lawyer who suffers from a rare heart condition and could die at any moment - for this reason, he lives in a hotel room that he rents every day. Todd decides to commit suicide, but his attempt fails. The novel also depicts the relationship between father and son. ¹⁸⁶

¹⁷⁸ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 28.

¹⁷⁹ Young, "Ernest Hemingway," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ernest-Hemingway>.

¹⁸⁰ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 16.

¹⁸¹ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 192.

¹⁸² Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 226.

¹⁸³ Donaldson, *The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway*, 227.

¹⁸⁴ Heide Ziegler, *John Barth* (London: Routledge, 1987), 12.

¹⁸⁵ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "John Barth," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified May 23, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Barth>.

¹⁸⁶ Orville Prescott, "The Floating Opera," NY Times, last modified April 8, 2018,

<https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/06/21/specials/barth-opera.html>.

Barth wrote his second novel, *The End of the Road*, in the same year as *The Floating Opera*. However, it was not published until 1958. The main character of the ironic novel is Jacob Horner, who suffers from indecision and if he has too many choices and cannot make a decision he remains paralyzed.¹⁸⁷ Jacob finds himself in a love triangle with the wife of his work colleague. The woman becomes pregnant and has an abortion because she does not know who the father of the child is.¹⁸⁸

Barth's first two novels, *The Floating Opera* and *The End of the Road*, were written under the existentialist influence that was popular during the 1950s in the United States.¹⁸⁹ The third novel is *The Sot-Weed Factor*, which was published in 1960 but was revised again in 1966.¹⁹⁰ This novel is considered a Bildungsroman because it depicts the development of the main character, in this case, Ebenezer Cooke. It is a satirical story of a young poet who decides to remain a virgin. However, he falls in love with a girl who insists that they marry. Ebenezer thus loses his innocence, and his wife dies.¹⁹¹

The fourth work is a mythical novel called *Giles Goat-Boy* and, like *The Sot-Weed Factor*, is considered a Bildungsroman because the main character is a boy named Giles.¹⁹² It is a parody, where the boy is transformed from a goat into a man and is considered a contemporary Jesus Christ.¹⁹³ He thinks of himself as a Tutor and therefore everything he does is right, but at the same time he doesn't know if it is.¹⁹⁴

In 1968 Barth published *Lost in the Funhouse*.¹⁹⁵ This is a series of fourteen stories.¹⁹⁶ The book begins with the "Frame-Tale", the shortest short story in the English language, but also infinite according to Barth.¹⁹⁷ It is in fact a Möbius strip, which is typical of Barth's writing style. In fact, the book *Lost in the Funhouse*, like the Möbius strip, is on two levels, namely reality and fiction. At the same time, there are also two temporal planes, past and present.¹⁹⁸ After *Lost in the Funhouse* comes another book, this time called *Chimera*. It is a

¹⁸⁷ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 25.

¹⁸⁸ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 26-27.

¹⁸⁹ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 13.

¹⁹⁰ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 31.

¹⁹¹ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 33-34.

¹⁹² Ziegler, *John Barth*, 13-14.

¹⁹³ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 39-40.

¹⁹⁴ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 42.

¹⁹⁵ John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), vii.

¹⁹⁶ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, xi.

¹⁹⁷ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, vii.

¹⁹⁸ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 51.

collection of three novellas that have a mythical basis.¹⁹⁹ In 1979, the experimental novel *Letters* was published, followed by the realistic novel *Sabbatical* in 1982.²⁰⁰ *Sabbatical* and *The Tidewater Tales* are among Barth's more traditional works. Other acclaimed works include the novel *Coming Soon!!!*. Barth also published two other collections of short stories, *The Book of Ten Nights and a Night* and *The Development*, in which the stories are linked.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 56.

²⁰⁰ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 16.

²⁰¹ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "John Barth," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Barth>.

4 THE THEME OF COMING OF AGE IN HEMINGWAY AND BARTH'S SHORT STORIES

In order to analyze the theme of coming of age in the short stories of Ernest Hemingway and John Barth, four short stories that contain this theme were selected. Ernest Hemingway is considered to be the author of modernist short stories.²⁰² Hemingway published a total of four short story collections, namely *In Our Time*, *Men Without Women*, *Winner Take Nothing*, and *The Fifth Column and the First Forty-Nine Stories*. John Barth is considered a postmodernist short story writer.²⁰³ His best-known short story collection is *Lost in the Funhouse*, and he later published two more collections, *The Book of Ten Nights and a Night* and *The Development*.²⁰⁴

Most of Hemingway's coming-of-age short stories feature Nick Adams as the main character and describe his adolescence, from childhood, through puberty to adulthood.²⁰⁵ Whereas in Barth, the character of Ambrose only appears in three stories namely "Ambrose His Mark", "Water Message" and "Lost in the Funhouse".²⁰⁶

Hemingway set his stories in settings he was familiar with. In this case, it was the area around Michigan, which appears in both stories. Similarly, Barth's stories were set in the Maryland setting where he grew up.

4.1 "Indian Camp" and "Water Message"

The short story "Indian Camp" was published in the collection *In Our Time*, and is therefore considered one of Hemingway's earliest works.²⁰⁷ The short story "Water Message" appeared in the collection *Lost in the Funhouse*.²⁰⁸

The short story "Indian Camp" features Nick Adams, whose father is a doctor and whose mother is a strongly religious housewife.²⁰⁹ Here is a similarity to Hemingway himself, whose father was also a doctor. Thus, it could be argued that Nick Adams represents Hemingway's alter ego.

²⁰² Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 140.

²⁰³ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 217.

²⁰⁴ The Editors of Encyclopaedia, "John Barth," <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Barth>.

²⁰⁵ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 141.

²⁰⁶ Heide Ziegler, *John Barth* (London: Routledge, 1987), 51.

²⁰⁷ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 124.

²⁰⁸ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 51.

²⁰⁹ Scofield, *The Cambridge Introduction to the American Short Story*, 142.

In the short story "Water Message" the main character is a boy named Ambrose Mensch. According to Ziegler, Ambrose also represents Barth's alter ego.²¹⁰

Both Nick and Ambrose come from complete families, neither from a divorced family. While Nick is an only child, Ambrose has an older brother, Peter.

4.1.1 "Indian Camp"

The main protagonists here are Nick Adams and his father, the doctor.

Dr. Adams is called into work one evening and takes his son Nick with him. A woman from a nearby Indian camp has been in labour for quite some time, so the doctor is called in to help. They arrive at the camp by boat along with two Indians and the doctor's brother. When they arrive at the shack, the Indian woman is lying exhausted on the bed.²¹¹ In the bed above her is her husband, as he has injured his leg. Meanwhile, the doctor prepares for the birth and explains to Nick what is happening, and how the birth is going and explains to him why the woman is screaming. Nick assists the father.

The doctor eventually has to perform a C-section. Nick tries to look away so he can't see what his father is doing.²¹² After the successful procedure, the doctor is full of energy because everything went well, despite the fact that he performed the procedure with a closing knife and a fishing line. George wants to see the child's father, who is lying on top of the bed. When he uncovers him, he discovers that he has slit his throat with a razor. Although the doctor tries to keep Nick from seeing anything, it's too late. On the way back, his father apologizes to Nick for bringing him along and seeing such things. Nick asks why the man killed himself, if many men kill themselves. He asks the same questions about women.²¹³ On the way back, Nick reflects on death and is almost certain that he would never die.²¹⁴

4.1.1.1 Analysis

Nick is a young boy who accompanies his father. When they enter the hut where the Indian woman is giving birth, the father begins to explain to Nick that the lady is going to have a baby, Nick replies that he knows.

²¹⁰ Ziegler, *John Barth*, 86.

²¹¹ Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribners, 1998), 67.

²¹² Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 68.

²¹³ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 69.

²¹⁴ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 70.

*“This lady is going to have a baby, Nick,” he said. “I know,” said Nick. “You don’t know,” said his father. “Listen to me.”*²¹⁵

At this point, it is possible to observe that Nick takes himself to be knowledgeable, yet he has never seen anything like this before. Although Nick was curious at first and assisted the father (holding the basin of water), when the baby was born and the father joked about how much he enjoyed being an “interne”.²¹⁶

*“You can watch this or not, Nick, just as you like. I’m going to sew up the incision I made.” Nick did not watch. His curiosity had been gone for a long time.*²¹⁷

Nick looked the other way - here, according to Yapo, is the separation that Nick is going through.²¹⁸ It was the same with the sewing. What he had just seen was Nick's initiation into the adult world - the birth of a new life. However, moments later, Nick also saw a dead man who had killed himself. Despite the doctor asking George to take Nick out of the shack, Nick saw it all, and this time he watched.²¹⁹ Thus, he experienced both birth and demise in one day. His transformation from not knowing is interspersed with the questions Nick asks his father. These questions concern both birth and death. Nick asks his father why the Indian father killed himself. His father replies that he doesn't know, but that he apparently couldn't stand things. He then asks the same questions regarding women. Nick's last question is whether dying is hard, whereupon his father replies that it is, on the contrary, very easy.²²⁰ Nick thus learns that everything in the world is mixed together, both gain and loss, both joy and sadness, as well as birth and death.

4.1.2 “Water Message”

The short story begins with Ambrose reflecting on his friends, who are not friendly to him. For example, how Sheldon Hurley, who went to reform school, treated him. He also reminisced about Sandy Cooper, who was hard to get along with because he set the dog on

²¹⁵ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 68.

²¹⁶ Bendixen, *A Companion to the American Short Story*, 228.

²¹⁷ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 69.

²¹⁸ Jerry R. Yapo, “The Initiation Archetype in Fiction: A Reading of Hemingway’s ‘Indian Camp’ and Yuson’s ‘Voice in the Hills.’” *Philippine Studies* 49, no. 2 (2001): 267.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42634630>.

²¹⁹ Yapo, “The Initiation”, 268.

²²⁰ Yapo, “The Initiation”, 269.

you. But if you talked to him the right way, he would forget about the dog. He also mentioned a certain Wimpy James whom he mentioned that everyone knew what his mother was doing. Ramona Peters was a girl, but she was acting like a boy and the other boys were teasing her about something that Ambrose didn't understand.²²¹

Ambrose's father was the principal of the school and often complained about the behavior and bullying. Ambrose describes the alleys of the town that he is afraid of (he uses Greek mythology here), one house has a dog growling constantly, and across the street is the house of Crazy Alice, who although she never hurt anyone, Ambrose was afraid of her when he was alone. He also remembers the twins who are in the same class as Ambrose, although they are younger and bigger than him. They roam the streets picking up people's trash cans.²²² Next, Ambrose tells a story about walking down the street and being afraid of a bee and Wimpy James seeing him and taunting him with the line saying that he should go home to his mother.²²³ Ambrose's brother Peter had a secret club, The Sphinxes, which Ambrose was not admitted to because he was too young.²²⁴ Peter and his gang had a clubhouse built of driftwood and carpets. One day when they were all playing outside, including Ambrose, they saw a man in their clubhouse who was just leaving with a girl.²²⁵ The boys recognized that the girl was Peggy. Peter mentions that they will expel Peggy from medical school if they find out.²²⁶ The rest of the party goes to search the clubhouse, certain they'll find a certain item the couple left behind, and decided to invite Ramona.²²⁷ Ambrose wondered what would happen if Peggy was expelled from the nursing home. Peggy is expelled from school and Ambrose goes to the clubhouse, where he sees Peggy and someone kissing each other, making love. At the end of the story, Ambrose finds a bottle with a note and wants to find out what Peter and his gang found and did in the clubhouse. And although he is still innocent in this knowledge, nothing will upset him, because he feels there is another truth.²²⁸

²²¹ John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 40.

²²² Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 41.

²²³ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 43.

²²⁴ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 46.

²²⁵ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 49.

²²⁶ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 50.

²²⁷ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 51.

²²⁸ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 52-56.

4.1.2.1 Analysis

On the other hand, the initiation into adult life in the short story "Water Message" is not as violent as the one in "Indian Camp." Ambrose reflects on his friends; thus, his childhood imagination is visible here. In this short story, Ambrose is in fourth grade.

"Just past the alley in the second block was a place he had named Scylla and Charybdis..." ²²⁹

For example, the way he named the streets (Scylla and Charybdis) that he was afraid of. In one street there was a bad dog and in the other lived Crazy Alice. The situation in which the group was returning to the clubhouse where the man and girl were located could be considered an initiation into adulthood.²³⁰ The description of the man's clothing, the fact that his knees were dirty and the girl's coat was covered in leaves suggest that they probably had sexual intercourse. The rest of the group immediately made it clear that they knew what they would find inside, what the couple had left behind – protection. Ambrose, being still young, doesn't know what it is. When the gang recognized that the girl who came out of their clubhouse was Peggy, they immediately suggested that if word got out, Peggy would be expelled from the school. Ambrose couldn't imagine why they would expel her.

At the end of the story, Ambrose mused that he had to find out what Peter had found in the cabin and what they had been doing there. Even though he is uninformed and still innocent in this regard, he already knows somewhere in his soul that there is more to this story that he does not yet know.

4.2 "The End of Something" and "Lost in the Funhouse"

In both short stories the same characters appear as in the previous ones namely Nick Adams and Ambrose Mensch.

4.2.1 "The End of Something"

One evening Nick Adams and his girlfriend Marjorie go on a picnic. They take a boat to a bay where there used to be a sawmill. Already on the way, Nick answers Marjorie's questions briefly.²³¹ They want to go fishing before they have their picnic. Marjorie likes to fish, but

²²⁹ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 41.

²³⁰ Michael Hinden, "Lost in the Funhouse: Barth's Use of the Recent Past," *Twentieth Century Literature* 19, no. 2 (1973): 112. <https://doi.org/10.2307/440892>

²³¹ Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribners, 1998), 79.

especially with Nick. When they catch a few perch, Nick advises Marjorie on how to properly skin and cut them. When Marjorie asks Nick what's wrong, he tells her he doesn't know.²³² After setting up the picnic, Nick states that he doesn't want to eat, but eventually Marjorie talks him into it. And so, they sat side by side without touching and ate without saying a word. After the meal, there was a verbal confrontation when Nick said there was going to be a full moon. Marjorie replied that she knew and they began to argue. Nick accused her of always knowing everything and that was the crux of the problem. Marjorie told him not to act like that and told him that the moon was already visible. After a moment of silence and watching the moon, Marjorie asked him what was going on. Nick told her that he was tired of their relationship, it wasn't as fun as it used to be, and that something inside him had gone wrong. Marjorie took the boat back to town.²³³ Nick lay on the blanket and thought. After a while, his friend Bill came up to him and asked him how Marjorie had taken it, if she had made a scene. Nick lied to him that she had taken it well. Finally, Nick sent Bill away because he wanted to be alone.²³⁴

4.2.1.1 Analysis

In this short story, the main theme is the breakup. While the surrounding scenery is described at the beginning of the story, from the very first dialogue the reader can sense that something is going on by the style in which Nick responds to Marjorie.

*“Can you remember when it was a mill?” Marjorie asked. “I can just remember,” Nick said.*²³⁵

In this case, the theme of growing up is portrayed here through the relationship as well as the breakup and disappointment. After the picnic, although initially, Nick did not want to eat, the couple began to argue. The tense atmosphere between them can be read in the fact that they were silent during the meal, not even looking at each other. Nick stated that he was bothered by Marjorie's knowledge of everything. Her response was to change the subject to the rising moon. Nick then told her that he was tired of their relationship. After Marjorie leaves, his friend Bill comes up to Nick and asks how things went. It is clear from this

²³² Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 80.

²³³ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 81.

²³⁴ Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories*, 82.

²³⁵ Ernest Hemingway, *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (New York: Scribners, 1998), 79.

question that Nick planned the breakup and consulted with his friend. Nick is dealing with the breakup alone, which is evident when he demands his friend to go away.²³⁶

4.2.2 “Lost in the Funhouse”

On Independence Day, the Ambrose family takes a trip to Ocean City. Magda, the girl Ambrose is in love with, travels with them. The short story describes the trip to Ocean City, but also most of the characters, through Ambrose's father, mother, brother Peter, and uncle Karl.²³⁷ Uncle Karl warned the children not to go under the boardwalk. Peter suggested they go to the fun house, where Magda and Peter had been, but Ambrose had not yet. The family spent the afternoon swimming. Ambrose did not swim because he was unwell but enjoyed being able to watch the others. Magda didn't go swimming either, even though Peter and Uncle Karl wanted to drag her into the water. It wasn't until her mother explained to them why she apparently didn't want to go swimming. Ambrose wondered what the future would be like if Magda were his wife. How they would remember going to Ocean City as children, all the fantasies Ambrose had about Magda, what it would be like if he had a son, what all he would do and what he would teach him.²³⁸ After dinner, Ambrose went under the boardwalk, looking for matchboxes from different towns. Here, however, he disturbed a couple who were enjoying themselves. When, at Peter's urging, they all stopped beside an attraction so that Peter could look up the girls' skirts, Ambrose suddenly got the idea. The whole funhouse, the whole of Ocean City is built on one thing, intercourse. Ambrose asked Magda to go to the funhouse with him, pointing out that he had never been there before. After a while, however, Magda went in with Peter and a sailor they met. And Ambrose found that he was relieved that he had not gone with them. After a while he got lost in the funhouse and could not find his way out. At the end of the story, when the family goes home, Ambrose tells himself that one day he will build funhouses for others.²³⁹

4.2.2.1 Analysis

Ambrose is a thirteen-year-old boy who feels affection for Magda.²⁴⁰ She is a year older than Ambrose. But Ambrose's brother Peter feels the same affection. Already at the beginning of

²³⁶ Jackson J. Benson, *New Critical Approaches to the Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 81, <https://archive.org/details/newcriticalappro0000unse>.

²³⁷ John Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* (New York: Anchor Books, 1988), 73-75.

²³⁸ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 79-85.

²³⁹ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 86-97.

²⁴⁰ Michael Hinden, "Lost in the Funhouse: Barth's Use of the Recent Past," *Twentieth Century Literature* 19, no. 2 (1973): 113. <https://doi.org/10.2307/440892>

the story, one can notice Ambrose's inner monologue regarding his interaction with Magda. Ambrose wonders how she might react if he were to touch her. In the end, however, he does not do so, he does not find the courage. The theme of growing up is woven throughout the story. For example, when Magda doesn't want to go swimming and Peter wants to drag her into the water anyway. Only after her mother's explanation does Peter finally understand why Magda won't go swimming.

*"I warn you, I've never been through it before," he added, laughing easily; "but I reckon we can manage somehow."*²⁴¹

When Ambrose mentions that he hasn't been to the funhouse yet, but Magda and Peter have, one could conclude that they already have some experience and that Ambrose still has that innocence in him. Ambrose's fantasies about the future, about marrying Magda and having children, are also frequent in the story. Towards the end of the short story, when Peter initiates the others to go to an attraction where he goes to see the girls under their skirts, Ambrose's epiphany is clear when he realizes that the whole point of funhouse is sex. Most people here are in couples; the funhouse is for lovers.

At that moment, Ambrose loses his innocence about the outside world. Ambrose realizes that what he sees, such as people in restaurants or on dance floors, is merely a foreplay to the main thing.²⁴² Despite Ambrose's determination and inviting Magda to go to the funhouse with him, he is met with his inability to express his affection and establish a relationship. This is due to the fact that Peter went with them and Magda decided to go with him and Ambrose stayed behind and decided not to go with them. In the end, he felt relieved, because he realized that funhouses - that is, love and intercourse - were not for him. The story ends with everyone returning back home and Ambrose reflecting on the fact that he will be the one to build the funhouses, which could be explained as a realization that he will never be the one to enjoy them because he is unable to express love.

Thus, it could be argued that while Ernest Hemingway's short stories are about initiation into the adult world through experiences such as birth, death, violence or break-up, in Barth's stories initiation can be seen as an intimate thing (in this case sexual intercourse).

²⁴¹ Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*, 90.

²⁴² Beverly Gray Bienstock, "LINGERING ON THE AUTOGNOSTIC VERGE: JOHN BARTH'S 'LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE,'" *Modern Fiction* 19, no. 1 (1973), 75, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26279136>.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to analyze the theme of coming of age in the short stories of writers Ernest Hemingway and John Barth. At the same time, the short stories as such, especially the American short stories and their popularity, were taken into consideration.

Although the short story is considered an "American invention" the parallel development of the short story in nineteenth-century Europe must not be overlooked. The short story developed primarily through magazines and newspapers where short stories were published. Washington Irving is considered the founder of the short story in the United States.

The short story became important to the United States because it was a new state, a new society without identity or history. The short story was instrumental in shaping a tradition and identity. The short story allowed writers to experiment.

The genre of coming-of-age literature stands on a similar footing to the short story. Every adolescent carries with them an innocence that they will one day lose. Similarly, this is the case in America, a new world that wants to form its own identity just like the teenagers. The process of the development of American culture is compared to the process of coming of age.

An analysis of the theme of coming of age in the short stories "Indian Camp", "The End of Something", "Water Message" and "Lost in the Funhouse" shows that both writers chose boy protagonists for their stories. Like Hemingway's Nick Adams, Barth's Ambrose Mensch represents the writers' alter egos. When comparing the stories, it was concluded that while Hemingway described growing up in his stories using events such as - birth, death, break-up, and violence. On the other hand, Barth used intimate events such as sexual intercourse, innuendos that only adults understood, or falling in love.

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