

## RESEARCHING AMERICAN STUDIES THROUGH AMERICAN ART, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Researching American Studies through American arts and culture gives an opportunity to learn about America deeper. Works of arts are valuable records of revealing nation's history and culture. American culture-literature, music, dance, art have deep roots.

**Keywords: valuable records, art, culture, language.**

Исследование “Американоведение” через американское искусство и культуру дает возможность узнать об Америке больше. Произведения искусства являются ценными записями выявления истории и культуры страны. Американская культура, литература, музыка, танцы, искусство имеют глубокие корни.

**Ключевые слова: ценные записи, искусство, культура, язык.**

To understand any country one should know its works of art, culture and language. Researching American Studies through American works of art, culture and language gives an opportunity to become acquainted with this country.

First, studying and researching American works of art are valuable records of revealing important aspects of nation's history and culture. American art – literature, music, dance, and fine arts have deep roots. Most initial elements of American folk-lore were brought from Old World, others arose in New World, but even a combination of old elements, their development and modification gave a specific American product. The English and Scottish national ballads – song-stories, song-legends that spread widely in the US narrated not frequently about real events

and were direct part of a nation's life. As usual in a national art dance was often combined with music and a word. One of the main elements of a national music became Puritan choir hymns sung in churches. Oral folk – lore – stories, legends were spread widely in the western border of settlements. The heroes in these national stories were endowed with supernatural power, bravery and wit and unusual adventures happened with them.

American literature having a national creativity as one of its essential source was connected with the European, mainly with the English artistic tradition and in the early period this connection was close. In the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century literature fiction stood largely out of divinity and publicity. The first half of this century was the

time of domination of Romanticism both in America and in Europe. The best representatives of this time one may consider Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. Washington Irving is best known for his short stories “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle”, both of which appear in his book “The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent”. His historical works include biographies of George Washington, Oliver Goldsmith and Muhammad, and several histories of 15-century Spain dealing with subjects such as “Christopher Columbus”, the Moors and the “Alhambra”. Irving was also admired by some European writers, including Charles Dickens, Lord Byron, Walter Scott, Francis Jeffrey. Another American writer James Fenimore Cooper was a prolific and popular writer who is famous for his historical romances of frontier and Indian life in the early American days created a unique form of American literature. He is best remembered as a novelist who wrote numerous sea-stories and the historical novels known as the “Leatherstocking Tales”. Among his most famous works is the romantic novel “The last of Mohicans” often regarded as a masterpiece. Contemporary to Irving and Cooper was also Edgar Allan Poe belonging to the romantic direction as well, notable American poet of the half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a master of short stories. Poe is considered to be a “father” of detective genre in the world literature. His verses are musical, and detective stories are logically refined, his plots are full of mysteries.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the poetry of Walt Whitman sang the story of America in beautiful lines. Although some of his poetry was controversial during Whitman’s lifetime, he is now lauded as one of America’s greatest modern poets, well known for “Leaves of Grass”. Whitman expressed with astonishing power feelings of an ordinary man, the Man from a large letter, belief in true equal and democracy, in future of his country and the whole of mankind. The best verses of Civil War also belong to him. By adopted manner of versification by him Whitman forestalled far off his time - his free rhythm, his refusal from traditional rhymes and metres were appreciated and developed in poetry much later.

Herman Melville’s is famous for his interesting short stories, novels. One of his novels is “Moby Dick”, a philosophical allegory about kindness and evil, the short work “Bartleby, the Scrivener” about a clerk in a wall Street Office: the slave ship

narrative “Benito Cereno” and “Billy Budd, Saylor”. Melville worked as a schoolteacher for a short of time, and then he became a seaman when his father met business reversals. On his first voyage he jumped ship in the “Marquesas Islands”, where he lived for a time. His first book, on account of that time “Typee”, became a bestseller and Melville became known as the “Man who lived among the Cannibals”. When he died in 1891, he was almost completely forgotten. It was until the “Melville Revival” at the occasion of the centennial of his birth that his work won recognition.

More traditional poet Henry Sworth Longfellow got large popularity both in the USA and in abroad. He was a poet and educator whose works include “Paul Revere’s Ride”, “The Song of Hiawatha” and “Evangeline”. He was also the first American to translate Dante Alighieris “The Divine Comedy”. This poet wrote predominantly lyric poems known for their musicality and often presenting stories of mythology and legend.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century American literature attained a new maturity. Mark Twain (pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens), a master of short humorous stories, traditional genre of American prose of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became famous for “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer” and “The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn”. During his life Mark Twain was a friend with presidents, artists, industrialists, and European royalty. When American President William Howard Taft heard that Mark Twain was dead, he said: “Mark Twain gave pleasure - real intellectual enjoyment – to millions and his works will continue to give such pleasure to millions yet to become...His humor was American, but he was nearly as much appreciated by Englishmen and people of other countries as by his own”.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century there shone a new star of Jack London. His life way is shown in his autobiographical novel “Martin Iden” He expressed romances of people’s fight with severe northern nature in his most stories.

The World War I put indelible imprint on generation of people who endured it. Ernest Hemingway belonged to this generation, a participant of almost all wars occurring in his lifetime. One of his first novels “Farewell to Arms” is dedicated to the war. Another novel “For Whom the Bell Tolls” tells about Civil War in Spain. Hemingway is a master of short stories. His dialogue is terse built on a deep subtext and

psychologically meaning. Creative idea shown through his works is the idea of unity of the truth and beauty. Hemingway sings the praises of courage and dignity of a man in his life and death. An evidence to it, in particular, is one of his famous works-narrative “The Old Man and the Sea”, the novel for which he received a Nobel Prize in literature.

William Faulkner was one of the great writers of the southern school. He is primarily known and acclaimed for his novels and short stories, many of which are set in the fictional “Yoknapatawpha County”, a setting Faulkner created based on Lafayette County where he spent most of his life, and “Holly Springs/Marshall County”. Faulkner’s books are outstanding with their large social-psychological deep and peculiar style.

G. Salinger is a very popular both in America and in other countries, a master of modern story. One of his characters is young Holden Kolfild – who is looking for sense of life and his place in the world. Salinger Also embodied struggle, search and alienation of young people in his other works as well.

One of the great writers of contemporary America one may call Norman Kingsley Mailer, he belongs to a generation of participants of World War II. His first novel “The Naked and the Dead” published in 1948. His best work was widely considered to be “The Executioner’s Song” for which he won one of his two “Pulitzer Prize”. In addition to it, his book “Armies of the Night” was awarded the “National Book Award”. Mailer is considered an innovator of creative nonfiction, a genre sometimes called “New Journalism” which superimposes the style and the devices of literary fiction onto fact-based journalism.

American music is more connected with folklore than other kind of art. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there arose a row of symphonic orchestra to which creation and activity German musicians - immigrants played not little parts. By the end of this century the first opera-theatre ‘Metropolitan-Opera’ was opened in New York where famous singers sang. But authentically popular genre of musical theatre became a musical comedy combining American musical traditions with the devices of European operetta. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century a composer S. Foster wrote most lyrical songs on his own words in the national taste. His songs had a great success; most became authentically national and are still sung.

In the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century jazz

music became to spread fast in the US. Cradle of jazz is New Orleans, a famous jazz composer L. Armstrong was from there. Jazz is a mixture of different kinds of music. It is made up of the music of Western Africa, the work songs of the slaves and religious music. Its rule was a musical improvisation. By the 1920s, jazz was popular all over the US and after in other countries. Now people from many different countries come to New Orleans to hear jazz. Jazz is also played all over the world. On every continent special festivals are held where jazz musicians from the US, Africa, South America and Europe meet and share their music.

National creativity played its part, though less than in music, in fine arts. Thus, primitives, pictures representing environment portrayed by amateur artists were spread until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Professional artists portrayed at that time mainly portraits of statesmen, rich people and etc, and historical pictures representing, for instance, struggle of war for Independence. From the 20s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century landscapes and genre pictures, i.e., pictures of daily life, mode of life were prevailed in painting. Here only rural life, for instance, a farm family with some domestic animals was mainly represented. Mode of life and people were portrayed idealizelly. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century urban theme began to take large place (like in literature) that time. For instance, T. Ikins portrayed such pictures. W. Homer represented people among nature pathetically. The 20<sup>th</sup> century became a witness of variety of American artists’ creative search. Amateur artists’ primitives had a great success for all these years. In the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century artists-realists represented a city in all of its manifestations, including the most negative sides and paid more attention to industrial landscape. At the same time “artists-region” pictured farms and towns in the Middle West and South, emphasizing a national mode of life and local landscapes. R. Kent stood out among the artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by his strict style, picturesque painting skill as well as graphic works.

Theatre developed in difficult conditions, Puritanism either forbade theatre performances at all or did not encourage it, and even persecuted it. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century troupes often consisting of actors’ families who moved from place to place began to act on the stages.

By the end of this century there began to appear situational theaters. Theater center of the

US was a Broadway, street in New York, for a long time. Now there are many university and other amateur performance theatres with serious repertoire.

The US is the leader in the film industry with Universal, Paramount and MGM studios. Hollywood, California is the center of the American film industry. Independent filmmakers produce documentaries on serious social issues such as “Industrial Pollution”. Some go far more lighthearted stories on skateboarding or disc jockeys. Besides, I want to note that American film industry makes excellent historical films, films about animals.

The evaluation of toys followed the development of science and technology in the US. In colonial days children played with wooden stick figures and corn cob dolls. In more recent times, Raggedy, Ann and Andy, Cabbage Patch Kids and Beanie Babies became popular dolls. The Teddy Bear was named after President Theodore Roosevelt.

Toys reflected what was going in American society. As railroads were being built across the country toy trains became popular. Some toys had an underlying serious purpose. Erector sets, Tinker toys allowed young engineers to build houses and bridges. Chemistry sets encouraged

budding scientists. Board game such as “Monopoly” developed business skill.

Secondly, learning and speaking English helps to study and research American Studies. A teacher may use various useful textbooks in his or her classrooms to teach information about the US. Such textbook is a textbook “Readings about the US” by Amanda Wetsel. In this book a teacher has the tools to make lessons interesting, useful and effective. The teacher can also use the articles of this book to give students information about America or use it as comparative materials about Kyrgyzstan and the US. For instance, if students have a theme about “Thanksgiving Day”.

A teacher may conduct other themes in this way. Then the lessons become more enjoyable for SS and they broaden their outlooks as well.

In conclusion, works of art, culture and language help to learn about the US. From literature one may learn notable writers and their works and contributions to the world literature. Besides, literature fiction, music, dance, works of art reveal and tell us about important events that happened in history of America. Knowing and speaking the English language gives us an opportunity to read texts, stories, novels in origin. Studying and researching American Studies through art, culture and language gives information about America.

### **References:**

- 1.Amanda Wetsel, Elena Debelaya, Olga Smolaeva “Readings about the US”. Bishkek. 2011
- 2.George Klerk. “Society and Values. The United States of America. Snapshot”. journal. USA. 2006
- 3.U.B. Bromlei, N.I. Lebedev “Countries and Nations”. Moscow. 1980
- 4.Martin Hintz “Enchantment of the World. The United States of America. II series. New York. 2003