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History and Literature Thoreau and Emerson warned the Americans that they were too materialistic and that they put too much emphasis on machines and technological values. Emerson tried to educate them as members of the European high culture. The visiting commentators from abroad did not have to worry about that. They only described what they saw and made comparisons with the European cultural tradition. Scottish minister, Sydney Smith published an article in which was largely read in America and made the American intellectuals feel uneasy. He listed provocative questions like: What does the world yet owe to American physicians or surgeons? What new substances have their chemists discovered? Who drinks out of American glasses? In literature and the arts the situation was different though. They were aimed at building up the national identity for the new country. Rather than trying to have recognition in Europe, the trend in literature and in the arts was to create something purely American - something that had nothing to do with Europe. On the other hand, every intellectual understood this was not possible; the European example and tradition were too strong to be neglected. But this did not hinder the basic goal: Romanticism was the dominant attitude in the early 19th century American literature. This was natural, since there were plenty of romantic features in American culture even without the aesthetic or philosophical principles of Romanticism. Americans admired their nature and their short history. Still, the authors faced problems trying to combine their nationalistic ideals with the European impulses. Past was seen as a very suitable theme for national purposes. Therefore, history was depicted scholarly as well as in fiction and poetry. After the War against England in , historical writing was regarded as a strong means in building up the national identity. Although the historians were aware of the new, modern historical research which originated in Germany, and although many of them got their training in German universities, the task of the historian was seen as educational. Behind the historical facts were eternal truths, "the hand of God", which had to be revealed. The most prominent American historian of the first part of the 19th century, George Bancroft wrote "that every page of history praises the Lord and his wonderful plans for the human beings". The historian was considered the equal of the poet, orator, and philosopher, possessed of the same aims and insights. The last, tenth volume, appeared in The founding of the Historical Magazine in , a scholarly journal devoted solely to historical research and criticism, was a proof that it was no longer enough for history to be patriotic, philosophical, and literary. Literature also leant on nationalism and Romanticism, which as a literary expression began in America in the early s, together with the works of Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper. Connected to this, a striking development in American literature after was the rise of fiction. By the middle of the century, there were plenty of new potential readers because of better elementary and higher education, high birth-rate and immigration. The development of transportation eased the distribution of books and magazines. Improved oil lamps meant more reading hours per day. Improvements in printing and bookmaking changed the technology of publishing and made the books cheaper. Publisher Samuel Goodrich estimated that the number of titles increased as much as twenty times between and Copyright laws, both domestic and international, were so loosely drawn and easily evaded that best-sellers were consistently pirated. This was hard for the livelihood of the authors. The popular novelists did the best. Susan Warner was one of them. In , for example, she published three books, all of which sold over 75 copies, netting her in excess of 25 dollars. In the s, Edgar Allan Poe received only dollars a page, while Henry Wadsworth Longfellow received the highest fees for poetry, as much as dollars after establishing himself. The absence of copyright laws, on the other hand, was an important factor in making American literature known in Europe. At the beginning, before , this was mainly true only in regards to popular novels. For the national identity, however, "serious" literature was more important. Political themes dominated immediately after the revolution, with heavy criticism against the English. But when writers discovered how to exploit the American past and the American landscape, the novel became a powerful instrument for

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defining and developing the national personality. This happened in the 1830s together with the Romantic impact. James Kirke Paulding was not the greatest of historical novelists, but he is a good example for us Finns. He published his novel *Konigsmarke. A Story of the New World* in 1820. It describes the 17th century Delaware Finns and Swedes, and what makes it important is the fact that the main character is a Finn. There were many other writers of the American past, and undeniably they have had a strong influence in making the history of the Americans familiar to readers. The first internationally known authors published their early works also around 1800, namely Irving and Cooper. Their appearance marked the beginnings of a distinctively mature American fiction. As writers, they were completely different. Irving represented a well-established British and Continental tradition. He lived in England for 18 years and was influenced by British Romanticism, particularly Coleridge and Carlyle as well as the historical novelist, Walter Scott. Nevertheless, the whole next generation of American writers was inspired by his example. But Cooper, much more than Irving, represented a thoroughly native point of view in his novels. His *Leatherstocking* series came out between 1823 and 1857, introducing true Americanism - nature, Indians, pioneers - in a Romantic way to Americans but also to Europeans who read books like *The Last of the Mohicans* even today. He published also sea novels and even presented his ideal society in an book, but for the pioneering national spirit his frontier stories were most influential. He always explored the contradiction between nature and civilization wanting to save the Americans from revolutions, many of which he experienced himself during his five years in Europe. Both Irving and Cooper were hailed by the critics and public in their lifetime. Edgar Allan Poe was not. His personal way of life and his poetic themes were strange to American values of the 1830s and 40s. A little later Longfellow took his place, and it is interesting to note in this context that his most Romantic works like *Song of Hiawatha* came out as late as in 1855. Longfellow as well as Walt Whitman, for example, were strongly influenced by New England Transcendentalists, particularly Emerson. Only after the Civil War the Romantic period in American literature started to give room to more realistic trends. One reason for this late start is, of course, that the young nation had needed identity builders, and a strong moralistic ethos had spoken admirably for that cause. And in many ways, as I have mentioned, Romanticism was built in into the American culture and landscape. Still, we might find this somewhat surprising. In addition, European literature was well on its way to Realism by the middle of the century, and the Americans were certainly aware of that trend. Nationalism and Romanticism needed each other to the bitter end.

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Chapter 2 : If You Want To Be A Winner, Change Your LITERATURE ESSAYS Philosophy Now! - The Ma

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Much of aesthetic philosophy has traditionally focused on the plastic arts or music , however, at the expense of the verbal arts. In fact, much traditional discussion of aesthetic philosophy seeks to establish criteria of artistic quality that are indifferent to the subject matter being depicted. Since all literary works, almost by definition, contain notional content, aesthetic theories that rely on purely formal qualities tend to overlook literature. The very existence of narrative raises philosophical issues. In narrative, a creator can embody, and readers be led to imagine, fictional characters, and even fantastic creatures or technologies. The ability of the human mind to imagine, and even to experience empathy with, these fictional characters is itself revealing about the nature of the human mind. Some fiction can be thought of as a sort of a thought experiment in ethics: It is in this light that some philosophers have chosen various narrative forms to teach their philosophy see below. Literature and language[edit] Plato , for instance, believed that literary culture and even the lyrics of popular music had a strong impact on the ethical outlook of its consumers. In *The Republic* , Plato displays a strong hostility to the contents of the literary culture of his period, and proposes a strong censorship of popular literature in his utopia. More recently, however, philosophers of various stripes have taken different and less hostile approaches to literature. Since the work of the British Empiricists and Immanuel Kant in the late eighteenth century, Western philosophy has been preoccupied with a fundamental question of epistemology: In more recent years, these epistemological issues have turned instead to an extended discussion of words and meaning: This cluster of issues concerning the meaning of language and of " writings " sometimes goes by the name of the linguistic turn. As such, techniques and tools developed for literary criticism and literary theory rose to greater prominence in Western philosophy of the late twentieth century. Philosophers of various stripes paid more attention to literature than their predecessors did. Others sought to use literary works as examples of contemporary culture , and sought to reveal unconscious attitudes they felt present in these works for the purpose of social criticism. The truth of fiction[edit] Literary works also pose issues concerning truth and the philosophy of language. In educated opinion, at least, it is commonly reputed as true that Sherlock Holmes lived in London. Yet Sherlock Holmes never lived anywhere at all; he is a fictional character. Samuel Pepys, contrarily, is judged to have been a real person. Contemporary interest in Holmes and in Pepys share strong similarities; the only reason why anyone knows either of their names is because of an abiding interest in reading about their alleged deeds and words. These two statements would appear to belong to two different orders of truth. Further problems arise concerning the truth value of statements about fictional worlds and characters that can be implied but are nowhere explicitly stated by the sources for our knowledge about them, such as Sherlock Holmes had only one head or Sherlock Holmes never travelled to the moon. The literature of philosophy[edit].

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