

LECTURE 3

Neoclassicism: Epic, Mock Epic, and Satire

Unfortunately, "literary" writing was not as simple and direct as political writing.

**When trying to write poetry,
most educated authors stumbled
into the pitfall of elegant
neoclassicism.**

**The epic, in particular,
exercised a fatal attraction.**

American literary patriots felt sure that the great American Revolution naturally would find expression in the epic.

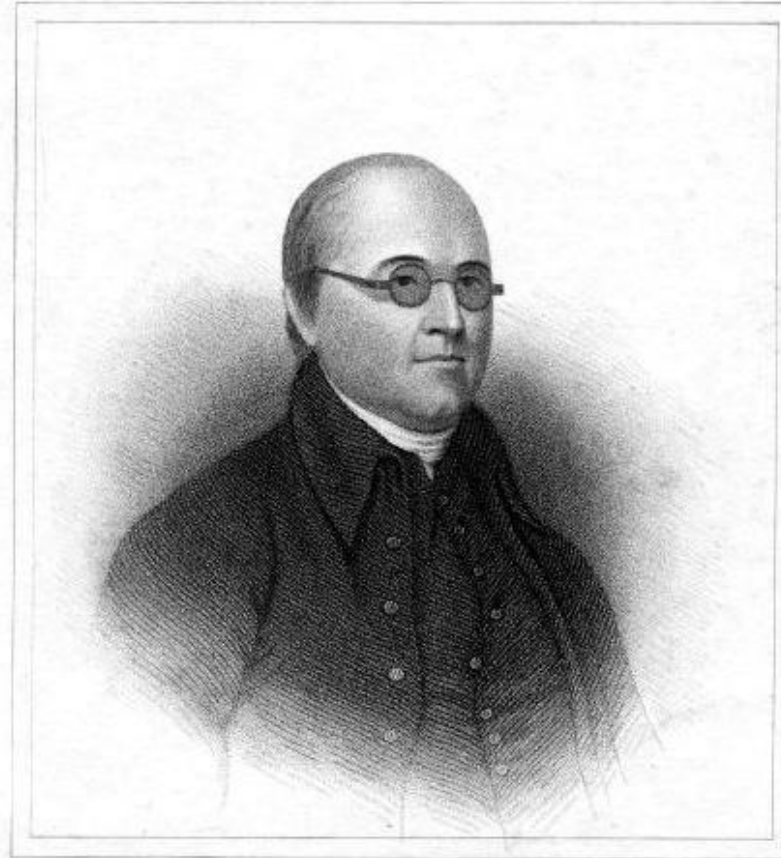
Epic



a long, dramatic narrative poem in elevated language, celebrating the feats of a legendary hero.

**Many writers tried but none
succeeded.**

Timothy Dwight (1752- 1817)



REV. TIMOTHY DWIGHT, S.T.D.L.L.D.

PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE

FROM 1795 TO 1817.

Timothy Dwight

**Satirical poetry fared much better
than serious verse.**

**The mock epic genre encouraged
American poets to use their
natural voices.**

In mock epics like John Trumbull's good-humored '*M'Fingal*' (1776-82), stylized emotions and conventional turns of phrase are ammunition for good satire.

The first American comedy, 'The Contrast' (1787) by Royall Tyler, humorously contrasts Colonel Manly, an American officer, with Dimple, who imitates English fashions.

Naturally, Dimple is made to look ridiculous. The play introduces the first Yankee character.

Another satirical work, the novel '*Modern Chivalry*', is published by Hugh Henry Brackenridge. He based his huge, picaresque novel on Don Quixote.

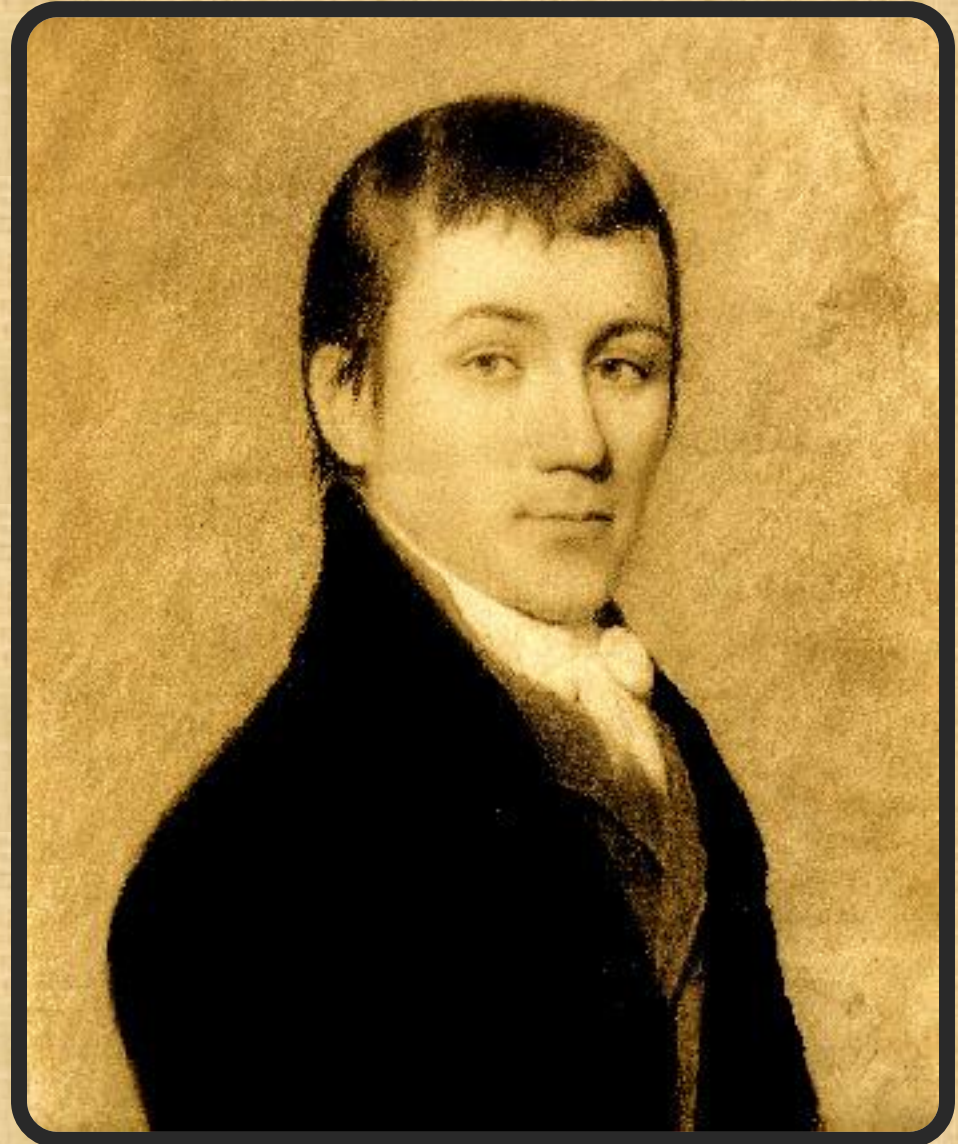
It describes the misadventures of Captain Farrago and his stupid, brutal, yet appealingly human, servant Teague O'Regan.

The first important fiction writers widely recognized today, Charles Brockden Brown, Washington Irving, and James Fenimore Cooper, used American subjects, historical perspectives, themes of change, and nostalgic tones.

**They wrote in many prose genres,
initiated new forms, and found
new ways to make a living through
literature.**

With them, American literature began to be read and appreciated in the United States and abroad.

**Charles Brockden
Brown
(1771-1810)**



**Charles Brockden Brown
was the first professional
American writer.**

**He was inspired by the English
writers.**

Driven by poverty, he penned four haunting novels in two years:

- Wieland (1798),**
- Arthur Mervyn (1799),**
- Ormond (1799), and**
- Edgar Huntley (1799).**

**In them, he developed the genre
of American Gothic.**

The Gothic novel was a popular genre of the day featuring exotic and wild settings, disturbing psychological depth, and much suspense.

Critics suggest that Brown's Gothic sensibility expresses deep anxieties about the inadequate social institutions of the new nation.

Brown used distinctively American settings, he dramatized scientific theories, developed a personal theory of fiction, and championed high literary standards despite personal poverty.

His works are darkly powerful.

Washington Irving (1783-1859)



**Washington Irving was born
on April 3, 1783 in New York
City, New York, USA.**

**He was one of eleven children
born to Scottish-English
immigrant parents, William
Irving, Sr. and Sarah.**

He was named Washington after the hero of the American revolution (which had just ended), George Washington, and attended the first presidential inauguration of his namesake in 1789.

Washington Irving was educated privately, studied law, and began to write essays for periodicals.

He travelled to France and Italy (1804-6), wrote whimsical journals and letters, then returned to New York City to practice law -though by his own admission, he was not a good student.

He and his brother William Irving and James Kirke Paulding wrote the '*Salamagundi papers*' (1807-8), a collection of humorous essays.

He first became more widely known for his comic work, A History of New York (1809), written under the name of "Diedrich Knickerbocker."

In 1815 Irving went to England to work for his brothers' business, and when that failed he composed a collection of stories and essays that became *The Sketch Book*, published under the name "Geoffrey Crayon"

In 1822 he went to the Continent, living in Germany and France for several years, and was then in Spain (1826) and became attache at the US embassy in Madrid.

While in Spain he researched for his biography of Christopher Columbus (1828) and his works on Granada (1829) and the Alhambra (1832).

He was secretary of the US legation in London, later returned to Spain as the US ambassador (1842-6), but he spent most of the rest of his life at his estate, near Tarrytown, NY, turning out a succession of mainly historical and biographical works, including a five-volume life of George Washington.

Although he became a best-selling author, he never really fully developed as a literary talent, he has retained his reputation as the first American man of letters.

In 1999, director Tim Burton released his film Sleepy Hollow based on Washington Irving's story "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

The film starred Johnny Depp as police constable Ichabod Crane, who is sent from New York City to investigate a series of murders by a mysterious Headless Horseman.



HEADS WILL ROLL

A TIM BURTON FILM
Sleepy Hollow

JOHNNY DEPP CHRISTINA RICCI

PARAMOUNT PICTURES AND MANDALAY PICTURES PRESENT A SCOTT RUDIN/AMERICAN ZOETROPE PRODUCTION A TIM BURTON FILM
JOHNNY DEPP CHRISTINA RICCI "SLEEPY HOLLOW" MIRANDA RICHARDSON MICHAEL GAMBON CASPER VAN DIEN JEFFREY JONES MISC. BY DANNY ELFMAN
CO-PRODUCER KEVIN YAGHER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA LARRY FRANCO BASED UPON WASHINGTON IRVING SCREENPLAY BY KEVIN YAGHER AND ANDREW KEVIN WALKER
PRODUCED BY ANDREW KEVIN WALKER PRODUCED BY SCOTT RUDIN ADAM SCHROEDER DIRECTED BY TIM BURTON

PG-13 PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
READ THE POCKET BOOK SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON HOLLYWOOD RECORDS
www.sleepyhollowmovie.com

NOVEMBER

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