

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is concerned with the analysis of the image of Europe in the novels of James Salter, namely *A Sport and a Pastime* (1967), *Light Years* (1975), *Solo Faces* (1979) and *All That Is* (2013), while also taking into account Salter's memoir *Burning the Days* (1997). In Salter's fiction and non-fiction, Europe is presented as a place of freedom, culture, tradition, romance and possibilities, to which all of Salter's main characters – and Salter himself – are drawn at some stage in their lives, often at turning points. The journey to Europe serves various functions: it provides education and enables release from the domestic environment through a metaphorical conquest of the Continent. This thesis explores the motivations of Salter's characters for the journey, their expectations, as well as their actual experience, and the impact of their experience in Europe within the framework of the tradition of American writing in Europe, particularly modernism, with whose adherents Salter shares not only a similar notion of Europe, and particularly Paris as the cultural capital, but also a similar outlook on life, and a number of important themes and stylistic features. In positioning Salter as a belated modernist this thesis draws on Pascale Casanova's theory of the workings of the literary world expressed in her study *The World Republic of Letters*, as well as on the only substantial studies of Salter's work, *James Salter* by William Dowie and *Soldiers Once and Still: Ernest Hemingway, James Salter & Tim O'Brien* by Alex Vernon, who both cursorily connect Salter with the literary movement of modernism. This thesis strives to exemplify this connection both thematically, through the image of Europe and its function, biographically, by exploring the impact of expatriate life and the influence of the war on Salter and modernist novelists, e.g. Ernest Hemingway, and stylistically, through an analysis of the defining features of Salter's prose. In order to best exemplify the modernist connection, the latter part of this thesis focuses on the comparison of Salter with F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, demonstrating their similarities through close readings of the opening passages from *The Great Gatsby* and *The Sun Also Rises* set against Salter's *A Sport and a Pastime*, showcasing how Salter combines elements of the style of both writers. Salter's connection to Hemingway is paid particular attention as it encompasses the principal arguments made in this thesis in order to designate Salter as a belated modernist – both writers' style is guided by the modernist aesthetic, they share a similar view of Europe and the benefits of travel, and their war experience has left its mark on their prose. Yet while Salter shares a great deal with Hemingway, his writing has developed in its own direction and the modernist aesthetic does not render it antiquated, as this thesis, in its broader sense, seeks to show.