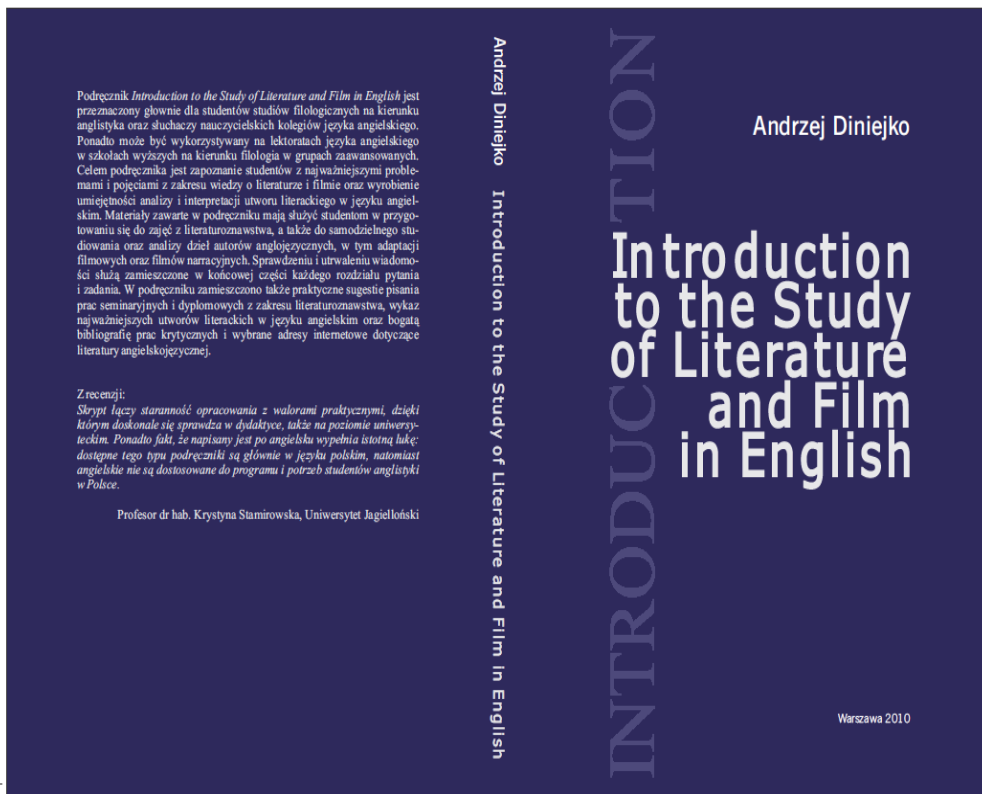


Andrzej Diniejko

Introduction to the Study of Literature and Film in English



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Preface

This e-book is an updated and extended version of the publication from 2010. It is primarily designed to serve as a practical introduction to literary study for first-year students of English Studies, but it can also be read by students of other courses who are keen on literature and narrative film in English. It attempts to raise students' awareness of the nature of literature in society, its various forms and features by looking at some literary theories, terms and sample texts. It also discusses the changes in literary study that have occurred in the last fifty years or so, whereby "traditional" ways of reading and studying literature have been supplanted by a growing interest in literary theory, offering new ways of reading and interpreting texts.

The overall aim of this book is to help advanced students of English to understand and enjoy the literature and narrative film in the English language and to give them tools and methods of critical reading and appreciation of literary works. This book will introduce students to the key issues of literary study, enabling them to think, talk and write about literature in English in an intelligent, informed and up-to-date manner.

The book consists of eleven chapters. Chapter One surveys general concepts of literary study, such as literariness, reading, literary theory and criticism, traditional and modern approaches to literature and the difference between literary language and the language of literature, as well as certain issues related to electronic literature. Chapter Two provides basic terms and definitions of literary analysis. Chapters Three, Four and Five offer introductions to the understanding, analysis and interpretation of poetry, drama and prose fiction, respectively. Excerpts from selected literary works with study questions are appended. Chapters Six and Seven contain introductory surveys of the history of English and American literature. Chapter Eight surveys briefly other literatures in English: Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Indian, Caribbean, South African and Nigerian. Chapter Nine introduces the basic concepts of film theory and genres of narrative cinema, as well as a short overview of the history of American and British cinema. Chapter Ten provides practical suggestions how to read literature critically and write interpretive essays. Chapters One to Ten end with questions and assignments for self-study, discussion, and/or project work. Terms in **boldface** are defined more fully in the final Chapter Eleven. Select printed and Internet bibliography and index of names and terms are provided at the end of the book.

I hope that this book will be of interest to all who enjoy reading and discussing literature and film in English. It will help them feel more confident in their ability to recognise specific forms, modes and techniques of literary and cinematic expression and to appreciate the distinctness of literary and film genres.

The size of the book does not allow to embrace all that is worth mentioning. Nor is the book exempt from drawbacks. Therefore, all remarks and criticism concerning its content as well as its construction will be welcomed. Students or teachers who have suggestions for improving this book are encouraged to email me at: asdiniejko@poczta.onet.pl.

How to Use this Book

This book is designed to introduce students to essential knowledge in literary and film theory and English literary studies through a mix of basic theoretical information, reading of complete literary texts or their extracts, watching film adaptations of literary works and then discussing them in class and/or writing home assignments as well as doing extra self-study assignments based on library and web quest. Students will be encouraged to keep a STUDENT'S DIGITAL NOTEBOOK in which they will note down important information, answer selected questions and do self-study assignments in which they will develop their competence for literary analysis and synthesis as well as ability for interpretation of literary texts and narrative films.

It is recommended that at the outset students should read Chapters One and Two in order to get some initial insight into literary study. The remaining chapters may be read in an arbitrary order. Students will be encouraged to do analytical reading of extracts of literary texts and to read assigned full-length texts. They will eventually submit a final project applying literary analysis and interpretation to selected literary works.

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I would like to thank Professor Krystyna Stamirowska of Jagiellonian University and Professor Andrzej Weseliński of Warsaw University, who commented on more than one draft, discussed it with me at length, and provided me with advice and much intellectual stimulation. The acknowledgements are also due to my students, who repeatedly urged me to convert my notes and scattered ideas into a finished piece. Of course, all responsibility for errors or omissions is my own.

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

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C. S. Lewis
British Author

Chapter One

A general introduction to literature

We shall begin our considerations by asking what literature is, what reading is, and how you know that you are reading a piece of literature, as distinct from any other kind of writing. Then we shall discuss various functions and forms of literature, and try to understand what literature does, why one reads it and what one gets out of it. We shall formulate some general characteristics of literature and its various interrelations. We shall also present various approaches to literature and look into literary theory and literary criticism. Finally, we shall show the difference between literary language and the language of literature and outline the development of literary English.

1.1. What is literature? Literariness, connotations

Since the word literature comes from a Latin word meaning 'writing', the simplest answer would be that literature is everything that is written or printed. However, this definition is not practical because it is too vague and imprecise. We shall consider the term 'literature' as imaginative writing.¹ Robert Frost (1874-1963), an outstanding American poet, said that literature is a 'performance in words' (Cook 42). He considered literature as imaginative writing which uses a specific language distinctly different from that of non-literature (e.g. scientific, business, or documentary writing). We read works of literature because they are interesting, quite often entertaining, and also informative. A literary work may have a power to catch our attention, arouse our imagination, move our emotions, and even influence our behaviour. A literary work is an act of communication, just like a movie or a painting. It is composed by an **author** who transmits a certain complex message encapsulated in a text consisting of a set of linguistic and social signs which are understood by a reading public.

Is there a way that we can distinguish between a literary and non-literary text? These characteristic features which distinguish literary texts from non-literary ones are generally referred to as **literariness**. Literature is a form of **discourse** which is constituted by such features which differentiate it from other discourses, e.g. everyday speech or scientific discourse. According to the Russian Formalist School, literature makes a peculiar use of language. Roman Jakobson² wrote that

The subject of literary scholarship is not literature in its totality, but literariness (*literaturnost*), i.e., that which makes a given work a work of literature." (Erich 172)

The literariness of the language of literature is characterised by the specific content and form of the words used. As Terry Eagleton has written, "Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech (Eagleton 2). Jonathan Culler defines literariness as a set of traits, objectively present in the text itself, into two basic groups of criteria: typical of literary texts are a special use or, rather, arrangements of language on the one hand, and a particular attitude. Let's read the first two stanzas of "The Raven" by Edgar Allan Poe:

¹ For a discussion on what is and what is not literature, see Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory. An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

² Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), born in Russia, was one of the most important linguists and literary theorists of the **Prague School**, which contributed to the rise of structuralism and theoretical linguistics.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
'Tis some visitor,' I muttered, 'tapping at my chamber door -
Only this, and nothing more.'

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow; - vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow - sorrow for the lost Lenore -
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels named Lenore -
Nameless here for evermore.

As can be seen, the language of this poem, through the use of special linguistic and formal properties, distinguishes it from a non-literary text. The two stanzas contain a variety of stylistic devices, such as internal rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia, epithet, metaphor, repetition, rhythmic refrain, and tone, which are used to enhance the message of the poem and make it literary. Thus, literariness can be defined as the feature that distinguishes a literary work from an ordinary text by using certain formal properties and stylistic devices appropriate to literature rather than to ordinary speech or writing.

A characteristic feature of literature is the widespread use of **connotations**. Scientific language, for example, tends to be purely denotative, i.e. it is exact and explicit, without **ambiguity** or imprecision. On the contrary, the language of imaginative literature makes use of connotations, i.e. words or statements which cannot be explained unequivocally. For example, the word 'book' in **denotative** language means only what it refers to: a number of printed or written pages bound together along one edge and usually protected by thick paper or stiff pasteboard covers. However, in connotative language, the word 'Book' may mean the Bible.

It is difficult to define what literature is. We might call it "imaginative or creative writing", such as poetry, drama and prose fiction, but this definition does not include nonfiction which is also part of literature. For the purpose of our study we shall define literature as the creative expression of individual experiences preserved in texts that have universal appeal. Literature offers a special kind of both aesthetic and intellectual experience. Through literature we are released from the bonds of everyday routine and we can make an imaginary journey in time to different more or less remote places, or we can explore the unknown aspects of life. Literature offers insight into things we are hardly aware of – and at the same time – it provides enlightenment and enjoyment.

1. 2. What are the functions of literature?

René Wellek and Austin Warren³ begin their discussion of the functions of literature in their famous *Theory of Literature* (1949) with Horace's statement that works should be 'sweet and useful' (*dulce et utile*) (Wellek and Warren 20). Similarly, the English Renaissance poet Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) wrote that the functions of literature is "to teach and delight" (Devitt 179). There have been many views about the function(s) of literature. Generally, we may say that literature is a form of entertainment and a form of transcendence (escape) from the real world to the world of imagination. Roughly, we may say that literature has:

1. an entertaining function,

³ René Wellek (1903-1995) and Austin Warren (1899-1986) published *Theory of Literature* (1949), an influential and comprehensive book which combined literary theory with literary criticism and literary history from the standpoint of New Criticism.

2. an informative function,
3. an aesthetic function, and last but not least,
4. an intellectual function.

An entertaining function of literature consists in giving us pleasure. What is it that makes literature pleasant? A variety of features can make a literary work delightful. It depends on the reader and his or her taste. A book of adventures will be pleasant reading for many young and adult readers. Others will read thrillers and police novels for pleasure and enjoyment. A few, however, will find this type of reading unworthy of notice. They will rather read literature to expand the knowledge of the past, present or future world. They seek information in literature. A certain percentage of readers achieve aesthetic and/or intellectual experience in literature. They read literature because it offers them a unique delight or satisfaction or some sort of truth which they are looking for.

Besides, literature has two more important functions which are worth mentioning. It contributes to the development of the power of imagination (5). It contributes to social integration (6).

Literature is a common **cultural heritage** of mankind. It also integrates, preserves, and improves a national language.

A literary work creates a certain image of reality. This image may be realistic, idealistic, satirical, objective or subjective. In the sections that follow we shall be concerned with literature as a representation, recreation or expression of reality by means of language.

1.3. What is reading?

Now let's consider the phenomenon of reading. We shall understand reading as an active process of the mind to get message or information from text. It involves understanding (comprehension), interpretation and feeling. In the act of reading, a reader usually confronts and compares his or her experience of life with that presented in a literary text. It should be stressed that the comprehension of a literary text is not a passive assimilation of information presented in the text, but it is an elaborate process which involves making inferences about individual and complex senses in a literary work and references to extratextual reality. Meaning created by the author is processed by a reader in the act of reading. This process is called **interpretation**.

We should now make a distinction between a 'naive' (incompetent) and 'critical' (competent) reader. The naive reader is usually fairly content with the surface meaning of a literary text. He or she does not attempt to uncover the deeper or more complex meaning encapsulated in the text. The critical reader (student), on the contrary, who is equipped with a sufficient number of **mental schemata**, has enough literary and **cultural competence** to analyse and interpret the complex meaning of a literary text.

How can we, therefore, read and interpret literary texts? Can we achieve interpretive objectivity? Probably not. Interpretation can never be fully objective. It is dependent on a number of factors, of which the reader's literary and cultural competence is of great significance. Literary and cultural competence is an ability based on prolonged exposure to or experience of literary and cultural heritage which allows the reader to adequately recognise and respond to literary and cultural messages. It should be emphasised that response to literary messages may change significantly during subsequent readings of the same literary text.

1.4. Interrelations between author and text, reader and text, author and reader

In earlier literary criticism the concept of the **author** was quite simple to explain. An author was the individual writer who created a literary work and who had the ultimate knowledge and understanding of his work. Traditional criticism never doubted at the author's **omniscience** with regard to his texts. New Criticism, and later some French critics (Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault) downplayed the role of the author (as creator) and emphasised the primacy of the text. In his essay, "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes⁴ claims that the author is dead because it is not the author but the reader who creates meaning in the fixed text. According to him, "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture." (Barthes, 146). In turn, Michel Foucault⁵ argues in his essay "What is an author?" (1969), that an author exists only as a function of a written text.

As a result, we could say that in a civilisation like our own there are a certain number of discourses that are endowed with the "author-function," while others are deprived of it. A private letter may have a signer – it does not have an author; a contract may well have a guarantor – it does not have an author. An anonymous text posted on the wall, probably has a writer – but not an author. The author-function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation and functioning of certain discourses within a society. (quoted after Harari, 148)

Postmodernist criticism, for example, argues that it is almost impossible to find the individual author of many new literary genres. Most contemporary popular literature, especially that designed to be media productions, e.g. *pulp fiction*, *soap operas*, *sitcoms*, *thrillers*, *fanfiction*, etc., is created collectively.

Likewise, the notion of authorship with regard to classic literature is also blurred by the fact that many acknowledged authors, including William Shakespeare, are known to have borrowed their ideas from other authors. Let's take Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an example. We know that Shakespeare's nondramatic source was Saxo Grammaticus' narrative in his *Historia Danica*, which was later retold by Belleforest in French in 1570 as one of his tragic legends. Another source of Shakespeare's tragedy was perhaps Thomas Kyd's play *The Spanish Tragedy* (1592), which shows some affinity with *Hamlet*. Thomas Kyd may have written another play which is now lost. It is known as *The Ur-Hamlet* and it had a character named Hamlet.

Communication model

Let's see how an author communicates his message to a reader. The well-known communication model, developed by Roman Jakobson⁶, shows that any kind of message, including that contained in imaginative literature, is transmitted from a sender to a receiver via a medium (text). A message is encoded by its sender and then it is to be decoded by its receiver.

⁴ Roland Barthes (1915-1980) was a prominent French semiologist and literary critic. His works helped establish structuralism and post-structuralism as two of the leading critical theories of the 20th century.

⁵ Michel Foucault (1926-1984): a French philosopher and historian, who explored the relationships between power, knowledge and discourse. His works include *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *History of Sexuality* (1976-1986). He exerted a great influence on literary criticism and theory, philosophy, history, and the sociology of knowledge.

⁶ Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) was a Russian-born linguist and literary critic associated with the **Prague Linguistic Circle**, which was concerned with the structural analysis of language, poetry and art.

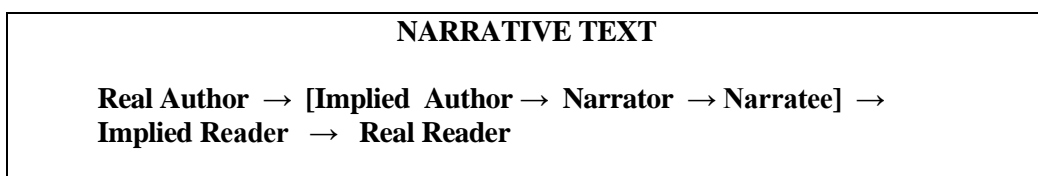
Context
Sender > Message [> Receiver]
Channel
Code

Jakobson distinguishes six elements of language communication: (1) context, (2) sender (author), (3) message (literary text), (4) receiver (reader), (5) channel and (6) common code. Thus, in case of literature, a sender (author) creates a message, encodes or encapsulates it in a fictional form and transmits it to a potential receiver (reader) who decodes it through an act of reading comprehension, analysis and interpretation.⁷

A unique characteristic of a printed literary text is that its form and content are fixed and permanent, yet it may convey a plethora of meanings to its readers. One can read a literary text a great number of times, and although its form and content are never changed, one may constantly discover new meanings in it. It should be emphasised, however, that contrary to what deconstructivists now say, the reader's interpretive capability is not unlimited. The reader who lives in a certain culture and remains under the influence of specific interpretive strategies, can hardly go beyond these constraints in his or her individual interpretation of a literary text. Thus, we may assume that interpretation is the outcome of the interaction between author, text, reader and culture. The process of interpretation entails a certain risk that the original or intended meaning of a literary text can be superseded by conceptions derived from the reader's (interpreter's) previous knowledge and his/her system of values.

Let's now look at the interrelationship between author and reader. It is very rare that the real reader knows the real author. They often come from various spatial and temporal backgrounds, e.g. Charles Dickens has long been dead, but he still has his devoted readers, not only in England but elsewhere. Thus, it is better to speak about the implied author and the implied reader.

According to the structuralist Seymour Chatman⁸ (1978: 151), the narrative-communication situation can be illustrated by the following model:



The term 'real **author**' means one who physically writes texts (books) for real readers. The **implied author** is a hypothetical construct, developed in the twentieth century. It is an intermediary between the real author and the **narrator**, who is the intratextual voice or teller within a narrative. His or her views cannot be appropriately ascribed to either the real author or the narrator. The term **implied reader** is also a hypothetical construct. He or she is the assumed reader of a literary text; a person outside the text for whom the text is written. The implied reader is the person the author addresses in his/her work, who shares in

⁷ See Louis Hébert, "The Functions of Language" *Signo. Theoretical Semiotics on the Web* <http://www.signosemio.com/jakobson/functions-of-language.asp> (accessed 2013).

⁸ Seymour Chatman is an American film and literary critic, one of the most important representatives of American narratology (theory of narrative). His works include *Story and Discourse. Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1978), *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (1990).

some measure the author's knowledge. The implied reader should not be identified with the real reader, who refers to the actual (**extratextual**) reader of a narrative text. Note that the real author and the real reader belong to reality whereas the implied author and the implied reader belong to **fiction**. Every story is told by a **narrator** to a **narratee**, who is the **intratextual** listener. They also both belong to fiction. It should be remembered that all narrative texts have a narrator but the narratee may be absent in some texts, and a character in others.

1.5. Appreciation of literature

Why do people read literature? In section "What are the functions of literature, we have outlined several functions of literature. In the majority of cases people read literature either for entertainment or for study. Literature appeals to readers because it tells them about situations and people different from those they know from ordinary life. Works of literature may provide readers with humour, suspense, adventure and serious reflection. The last feature (serious reflection) engages readers' intellect and immerses them in the world of ideas. Many literary works are clearly didactic, while others explore personal relationships, individual and collective conflicts and fears, psychological and philosophical problems, social and national issues.

As this book is mainly designed to increase the student's appreciation of literature in English, it will focus largely on a **literary canon**, i.e. writings which have been acclaimed as the most representative selection of works of English and American literature. The rules by which the canonical texts of English and American literature are selected are not easy to formulate. Selection is always open to criticism. Our aim will be to increase students' interest in four main genres: poetry, drama and fiction, and to help students become more careful and competent readers who can read with a purpose, critically examine literary works, draw inferences and make analogies which show insight into the topic discussed.

1.6. General characteristics of literature

In our discussion of literature we can list the following general characteristics:

1. A literary work is a work of art.
2. A literary work does not exist independent of its contexts: social, historical or literary. At the same time, neither does it assume a subservient role to those contexts.
3. All works of literature use certain conventions or techniques of expression.
4. In a literary work, form and content are fused together, and are integral parts of each other.
5. Conflict and contrast are the most characteristic organising principles of literary works, especially of dramatic and narrative texts.
5. Literature usually presents personal experience, although it is not as a rule a direct representation of real-life events.
6. Literary works require analysis and interpretation because their statements are not always direct but are ambiguous.

These characteristics apply generally to all forms of literature although individual characteristics may not be easily detected in particular literary texts.

1.7. Literary study

The study of literature or literary study is an essential component of humanistic or liberal education. It is based on a systematic accumulation of literary knowledge, literary analysis, interpretation and evaluation of works of literature. Literary study involves analysis and interpretation, i.e. a search for meaning which helps students of literature to understand better not only literature but also the world around them. Students or critics of literature may assume two opposite approaches to the study of literature: the **intrinsic** and the **extrinsic** approach. When they analyse and interpret particular works of literature without reference to their historical context or to the life of the author, this approach is called intrinsic or formalistic. However, when they relate works of literature to historical, economic or psychological contexts, such an approach is called extrinsic.

Literary study is based on a theory or theories of literature, i.e. a system/systems of categories, norms, principles, concepts and methods of analysis and interpretation of literary texts. Briefly, we may reduce the traditional theories of literature to three general types:

The imitative theory

According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle⁹ (384-322 BC), who is the author of the earliest literary theory, which was formulated in his *Poetics*, art is an imitation of something. The Greek word for imitation is **mimesis**, a central term in aesthetic and literary theory since Aristotle. A literary work that is understood to be reproducing an external reality or any aspect of it is described as mimetic, while **mimetic theory** is the kind of criticism that assumes or insists that literary works reflect reality. Following the tenet of this theory, we can conclude that Shakespeare imitated earlier authors and real life events. However, he did not merely imitate them; he recreated facts and characters and presented them to spectators and readers in a way in which they could perceive those facts and characters more fully and then derive certain truths about life in general. After reading a work of literature, we may feel that we have achieved an understanding of some phenomena or problems, therefore, we feel wiser.

The expressive theory

A significant shift from the imitative to expressive theory of literature occurred in Romanticism. William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the English Romantic poet, wrote in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1802) that poetry is “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”. He claimed that a poet must not imitate or recreate reality as it actually is, but that he must express what he feels about it. In other words, literature should be rather an expression of the author’s inward world than the outward one. Thus the expressive theory views literature as the product of some inner creative process. The expressive theory arose from a reaction to the excesses of Neoclassicism, which undermined the inner creative life of the poet.

The affective theory

The affective theory theory deals with the effect of a work of literature rather than its creation. It holds that a work of literature ought to arouse a particular emotion or affect in the reader. Leo Tolstoy¹⁰ (1828-1910), the outstanding Russian novelist, is credited with saying: “Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected

⁹Aristotle (384 BC– 322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato. He wrote on subjects such as physics, metaphysics, poetry, theatre, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology and zoology. His *Poetics* makes a distinction between lyric and epic poetry and the drama.

¹⁰Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a Russian writer regarded as one of the greatest of European novelists. His masterpieces, *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, represent the highest achievement of 19th century realist fiction.

by these feelings and also experience them” (Tolstoy).

1.8. Approaches to literature

Apart from a general theory of literature we should also be familiar with various practical approaches to literature. Practical or applied criticism of literature offers discussion of particular works of literature, literary movements, schools and genres. Literary texts can be viewed from a variety of standpoints. Critical approaches to literature reveal how or why a particular work is constructed and what its social and cultural implications are. Here we present a few important approaches to literature.

Mimetic or naturalistic approach suggests that the role of literature is to give an accurate and fair representation of the world. The mimetic approach to literature has often been criticised because it seeks to copy life only. However, the mimetic or naturalistic approach was advocated by many writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, among others by Émile Zola¹¹ in France, Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser in the USA, and George Moore and Arnold Bennet in England.

Historical / biographical approach relies on the information about the author’s life and his world. According to this approach, a literary work reflects the contemporary beliefs, opinions and prejudices of the author and his times. In order to understand a literary work, the reader has to know the author and his time well, although it must be remembered that a work of literature is not a direct representation of his life and experiences.

Moral / philosophical approach proposes that the aim of literature is to instruct. Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), the English man of letters, believed that literature might help to make the world better. A hundred years later, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), a poet and critic, supported Dr Johnson’s view. He thought that literature was a ‘criticism of life’ and a guide to a deeper humanity, dignity and pathos. In the 20th century, a group of critics, such as F(rank) R(aymond) Leavis, David Holbrook, William Walsh and many others, saw literature as a civilising force. The above-mentioned critics took a so-called moral or philosophical approach to literature, which implies that literature should be appreciated and enjoyed as a specific intellectual experience. Literature is aimed at edifying and improving people. The moral/philosophical approach is based on personal involvement. It assumes that literature is not isolated from philosophical and moral implications. This approach is useful only for some literary works. For example, it can be applied to the analysis of the novels of Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad, but it will be ineffective for such works as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

An extreme case of the moral / philosophical approach is, however, *the sectarian approach or sectarianism*. For example, some critics will seek proof of views which the author did not share. Some Marxist critics, for example, tended to see the representation of class struggle in almost all great works of literature. Such diverse authors as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy were perceived by Marxist critics as champions of the proletariat.

Finally, *an aesthetic approach* postulates to treat literature as an experience which enables the reader to escape from everyday routine in order to enjoy the more colourful and sublime aspects of life. The aesthetic approach also holds that literature, and art in general, is self-sufficient and has no other purpose than its own. The origins of the aesthetic approach can be seen in the works of the German Romantic poets Johann von Goethe¹² and Johann

¹¹ Émile Zola (1840-1902) was a French novelist and critic, the founder of the Naturalist movement in literature. His most important works is the Rougon-Macquart cycle (1871-1893), which includes such novels as *L'Assomoir*, *Nana* and *Germinal*.

¹²Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832) was a German writer whose works include poetry, drama and prose. His two-part dramatic poem *Faust* is considered as one of the greatest achievements of world literature. Goethe’s other well-known literary works include his poems, the Bildungsroman *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and the epistolary novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

Schiller¹³, in the writings of Friedrich Schelling, who claimed that art is autonomous, and in the philosophical writings of Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche. In England, aestheticism can be traced back to John Keats' poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819), in which the poet says: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." Later this approach was a reaction to the middle-class materialism of the Victorian Period. Aestheticism in English literature begins with the Pre-Raphaelites who revived interest in classical mythology and medieval romance. The most outstanding representatives of English aestheticism were Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), William Morris (1834-1906), and particularly Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), who propounded the idea of pure beauty and the slogan 'art for art's sake'. A new form of aesthetic criticism was developed by T(homas) S(tearns) Eliot (1888-1965). His first collection of essays, *The Sacred Wood* (1920), especially the essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent", and essays on 17th century poetry, were highly influential.

1.9. Literary criticism

Literary criticism is a study, analysis and evaluation of literary works done by specialists. It includes **genre** classification, analysis of the structure and style of a literary work, interpretation of meaning, comparison and evaluation of different literary works, etc. Reading and interpretation of literature cannot be separated. We always interpret when we try to understand. Therefore, interpretation is part of the reading process. Interpretation is also part of literary criticism. The most notable examples of ancient literary criticism are Aristotle's *Poetics* (4th century BC) and Horace's¹⁴ *Ars Poetica* (c.19 BC). In the medieval period Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (c.1303-1305) dealt with the problems of language appropriate to poetry. The purpose of literary criticism is to help the reader:

- 1) better understand a literary work and its various implications,
- 2) better interpret literature,
- 3) appreciate and evaluate literature.

A knowledge of critical perspectives will help you understand, interpret, appreciate and evaluate a literary work as a multilayered construct of meaning.

1.9.1. Modern theories of literary criticism

Traditional or *old criticism* assumes that great works of literature are expressions of the author's genius, i.e. the extraordinary and unique powers of thought, skill and imagination, and offer ultimate truths and universal values. The value of literary works can be judged by absolute principles and rules of good taste.

New Criticism (1940s-1950s), which developed mostly in the United States, focused its attention on the work without regard to the author's life and his social interrelations. The New Critics advocated a careful and detailed examination of literary texts. The leading figures of New Criticism were R(ichard) P(almer) Blackmur (1904-1965), Kenneth Burke (1897-1993), Cleanth Brooks (1906-1994), John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), Allen Tate

¹³ Johann Schiller (1759-1805) was a German Romantic poet, dramatist and historian. He is best known for his historical plays, such as *Don Carlos* (1787) and *Wallenstein*, and for his poetry.

¹⁴ Horace (65 BC – 27 BC) was one of the most important Roman lyric poets. Horace coined many Latin phrases that remain in use today, whether in Latin or translation, including *carpe diem* ("seize the day") and *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori* ("It is sweet and fitting to die for one's country"). His *Ars Poetica* ("The Art of Poetry"), a treatise on poetics, was first translated into English by the English Renaissance poet Ben Jonson.

(1899-1979), Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989) and W(illiam) K Wimsatt (1907-1975). In England T(homas) S(tearns) Eliot (1888-1965), I(vor) A(rmstrong) Richards (1893-1979), F(rank) R(aymond) Leavis (1895-1978) and William Empson (1906-1984) were associated with New Criticism. New Criticism was a reaction against the old criticism which treated literature as authorial self-expression or applied external criteria to literature, such as moral values. New Criticism regarded literary texts as autonomous and self-contained universes of discourses.

New Criticism focused on the internal characteristics of the text itself without regard to external reality. The method advocated by New Criticism is close reading, which concentrates on such formal aspects as rhythm, metre, imagery, metaphor, etc.

The most prominent works of the adherents of New Criticism include: *Practical Criticism* (1929) by I. A. Richards; *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) by William Empson; *Understanding Poetry* (1938) by W. K. Wimsatt and Robert Penn Warren; and *Theory of Literature* (1949) by René Wellek and Austin Warren.

Russian Formalism, developed in the 1920s and 1930s, was an attempt to study literature, or rather its specific manifestation – **literariness** – from the linguistic point of view. Victor Shklovsky (1893-1984), Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), Yury Tynyanov (1894-1943), Boris Eichenbaum (1886-1959) and other Russian formalists studied literary language in terms of sound patterns, rhythmic structures, narrative devices and processes of literary development. The ideas of Russian Formalism soon spread to other research centres, particularly to the **Prague Linguistic Circle**, where Jakobson continued his research. Formalist criticism ignored content and was exclusively interested in formal and stylistic matters. Literature was regarded as a unique use of language. A literary work was studied as an independent entity and a critic's task was to analyse the relationships of various elements existing within a literary text without regard to outside reality.

Psychological (and *psychoanalytical*) *criticism* applies psychological and psychoanalytical theories to the interpretation of literature. It may be particularly effective in character analysis. Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psychoanalytical theory had an influence on 20th century literary theory. Psychoanalysis suggests that all statements, narratives and dreams carry meaning which is, however, not always related to external reality. A literary text is sometimes compared to a dream and, therefore, Freud's theory of dream interpretation can be applied to the interpretation of literary texts. Although psychoanalytical criticism is now considered as a most controversial interpretation of literature, it proves to be effective and intriguing with respect to some literary motifs and characters. For example, the psychoanalytical criticism of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is focused on the protagonist's apparent Oedipus complex.

Hermeneutics is the science or theory of interpretation of meaning. The origin of the word is derived from the Greek god Hermes, who is the "messenger" of gods. In the past hermeneutics was mostly concerned with questions how scriptural texts like the Bible should be read. It was revived and developed in the 1960s by Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and Jürgen Habermas in Germany and Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) in France. Hermeneutics is mainly concerned with the phenomenon of understanding and interpretation of messages conveyed through literature and arts.

The term "hermeneutic circle" refers to the process of understanding of literary and non-literary texts. Understanding of the text as a whole is only possible when we understand the individual parts of this text. However, we cannot understand the individual parts without reference to the whole. Therefore, interpretation of texts is a never-ending process. Hermeneutics claims that the meaning of the text must be interpreted within its cultural, historical and literary context.

Semiotics or *semiology* is the science of signs. It was created under the influence of two outstanding theorists, C(harles) S(sanders) Peirce (1839-1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913). According to semiotics, words have two aspects: a "signifier", i.e. a written or spoken form and a "signified", i.e. their concepts or referents. In language, words acquire meaning only when they enter a system of relations with other words. Semiotic analysis of literature is focused on the structure and coherence of literary works. Semiotics

has often been described as an outcome of structuralism. It is interested not only in relationships within literary texts but also outside them. Semiotics has discovered that any social practice of mankind is conditioned by the fact that it signifies, in other words, that it is articulated like a language. Literature is thus a form of transmission of cultural messages through language. The outstanding proponents of semiotics in literary criticism include Julia Kristeva and Umberto Eco. In the late 1960s Kristeva introduced the notion of **intertextuality**, which has become an important contribution to literary theory. Intertextuality refers to the relationships between different works of literature. A literary text is treated as a dialogue with other texts.

Structuralist criticism arose in France in the 1960s. The term “structuralism” itself appeared in the works of the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), who exerted a significant influence on a number of “structuralist” and “post-structuralist” authors, such as Michel Foucault (1926-1984), Roland Barthes (1915-1980), Louis Althusser (1918-1990) and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). Its concepts and methods of analysis of literary works were derived from structural linguistics. Structuralists attempted to find unity and coherence in contingent, heterogeneous phenomena, and describe the systems of conventions that are used in literary texts. Structuralists viewed literature as a coherent system of signs which convey meaning. They wanted to develop a “grammar” of plot structure, i.e. a system of narrative possibilities used by various authors. Structuralism allows the interpretation of different aspects of human activity, including myth and literature, in terms of a code. When a particular code is decoded, it can be fully understood. Structuralists say that all features of life are significant as relations they bear to each other. Meanings are expressed through these relations which can be both textual (within a literary text) or extratextual (within culture, society, etc.).

Structural literary theory has an affinity with **Northrop Frye’s** (1912-1991) **archetypal criticism**, which is indebted to the anthropological study of myths and archetypes. Archetypal criticism argues that archetypes determine the form and function of literary works, i.e. the meaning of literary texts is shaped by myths and archetypes. Archetypes are basic forms manifested in recurring images, symbols, or patterns which may include motifs such as the journey during which the protagonist must overcome a series of obstacles before reaching his or her goal. The quintessential journey archetype in Western culture is Homer’s *Odyssey*. Archetypal symbols include the forbidden fruit in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, or the dragon in a number of literary works, including Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*.

Marxist and *neo-Marxist* criticism is derived from the historical, economic and sociological theory of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). It focuses on the sociohistorical context that determines the content and form of literary works. A Marxist theory of literature is primarily interested in the content of literary works. The leading exponents of Marxist criticism were **Mikhail Bakhtin**¹⁵ and **Georg Lukács** (1885-1971). Bakhtin viewed literary text in terms of discourses and dialogues. Lukács, a Hungarian who converted to Marxism in 1919, wrote *The Theory of the Novel*, a seminal work in literary theory and the theory of genre. The book is a history of the novel as a form and an investigation into its distinct characteristics. In Britain Raymond Williams (1921-1988) was one of the most prominent Marxist critics. His most important works include *Culture and Society* (1958), *The Country and the City* (1973) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977). In recent time Marxist criticism has undergone significant transformations. For example, the French critic Louis Althusser (1918-1990) reinterpreted the Marxist concept of

¹⁵ Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975) was a Russian semiotician, philosopher of language and literary critic. His writings inspired many scholars working in a number of different traditions (Marxism, semiotics, structuralism, religious criticism), and in disciplines as diverse as literary criticism, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychology. Bakhtin was active in the debates on aesthetics and literature that took place in the Soviet Union in the 1920s, but his theories became widely discussed since the 1960s. His most famous works are *Discourse in the Novel*, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, *Rabelais and his World*, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*.

ideology and assimilated it to structuralism. A leading contemporary representative of Marxist criticism in England is Terry Eagleton, the author of *Literary Theory* (1983). He shares Althusser's view that a literary text contains an implicit discourse which combines ideology and literariness. Eagleton has integrated cultural studies with traditional literary theory. In the USA, Fredric Jameson is considered as a neo-Marxist critic of culture, language and literature. His books include *Marxism and Form* (1972), *The Political Unconscious* (1981) and *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991).

Feminist criticism emerged as an outgrowth of the feminist movement in the 1960s although important voices on women's issues could be heard in earlier periods. For example, Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Deuxieme Sexe* (1949) was an important landmark in the development of feminist criticism which is committed to examining works of literature in which gender issues are prominent. Feminist criticism is concerned mainly with studies of writing by and about women. The study of women writing as a distinct literary tradition is sometimes called **gynocriticism**. It provides an alternative view for what its exponents call a male-centred or male-dominated approach. Feminist critics attempt to change the consciousness of readers and their relation to woman as a theme in literary works. Feminist criticism thus explores the ways in which the experience of being male or female in a particular society and historical time is reflected through literary imagination. Some feminist theorists believe that men and women tend to perceive and represent the world in different terms by virtue of their gendered interests, attitudes, emotions and values. In its extreme version, feminist criticism often tends to show that feminine standpoint is underrepresented in literature and literary criticism. The chief practitioners of feminist criticism are Ellen Moers, Sandra Gilbert, Elaine Showalter and Nina Baym.

Narratology, or theory of narrative, is an offshoot of structuralism which attempts to construct a grammar of literary fiction by applying linguistic models to the analysis of **narrative**. Basically, narratology is the study of narrative. The term was popularised by structuralist critics, Gérard Genette, Mieke Bal, Gerald Prince and others in the 1970s. In recent years narratology has produced some interesting insights into the relations between **narrative** and **ideology**. Algirdas J. Greimas (1917-1992) and Gérard Genette are regarded as the most influential representatives of narratology. The basic structure of all narrative forms is made up of **story**, which refers to the actual chronology of events in a narrative, and **discourse**, which refers to the manipulation of that story in the presentation of the narrative. Discourse also refers to all the stylistic devices an author adds to a story, e.g. metaphors, similes, synecdoche, verse or prose, etc.

Post-structuralism and *deconstruction*, associated with Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), emerged in the mid 1970s. Poststructuralism, particularly in the form of deconstructive criticism, has had a stronger influence on Anglo-Saxon criticism than structuralism. Deconstruction rejects the concept of 'structure' and 'structural relations' and claims that there is no 'objective' interpretation of literary texts. Literary texts express basically through their language and reveal not 'relations' but manifold 'references', such as biographical details, contemporary socio-cultural conditions, literary tradition and convention, etc. References do not create a system of one explicit meaning. Therefore, literary texts can never be fully interpreted or explained. Deconstruction emphasises the impermanency of literary texts which is due to many factors, e.g. textual revisions, editors' alterations. The central tenet of deconstruction is that literary texts may have an infinite number of contexts and since meaning is context-bound, it is impossible to determine one unequivocal meaning of a literary text.

New Historicism, influenced by the ideas of the French critic Michel Foucault (1926-1984), argues that history is the best context for the study of literature. New Historicists criticise the tendency of New Criticism to treat literature as wholly independent of its historical context. New Historicists interpret problems of literature within the relevant historical context using the available tools. The most prominent representatives of New Historicism are Stephen Greenblatt, Jerome McGann, Marjorie Levinson, Marilyn Butler, Hayden White and others. According to Greenblatt, New Historicism is a form of analysis of the connections between literary and non-literary texts and a particular historical situation.

New Historicism is also called cultural poetics.

Cultural criticism, or *cultural studies*, is related to New Historicism. It examines social, economic and political conditions that affect institutions and products of culture, such as literature and the arts, including popular literature, popular music, film, soap opera, cartoons, and even food habits, etc. The origins of cultural criticism can be sought in the works of the Victorian sages, Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) and John Ruskin (1819-1900), who wrote extensively on social theory, literary theory, philosophy, art history to study cultural phenomena in English society.

Present-day cultural criticism has been strongly influenced by the Russian philosopher, literary critic and semiotician Mikhail Bakhtin, the French historian and philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984), and the British left-wing critic Raymond Williams (1921-1988), who laid the foundations for the literary theory known as **cultural materialism** in his influential books, *Culture and Society* (1958), *The Long Revolution* (1961), and *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

Reader response criticism rejects the tenet of the New Criticism that close analysis of the text is central for understanding a literary work and thus allows for alternative readings of the same texts. In this view, the interpretation of a literary work is not seen as the discovery of the pre-existing meaning created by the author, but rather as recreating a new meaning thanks to the reader's unique cultural knowledge and interpretive skill. According to reader-response criticism, critical interpretation is an ongoing process of adjustment, revision and self-discovery. The critical reader is constantly revising his assumptions and makes new conclusions about the literary work he is reading. The meaning of a literary work thus emerges for the reader through confrontation between the text and his cultural background; thus the significance of the literary text does not lie only in the intended meaning encapsulated by the author but above all in the meaning which the reader has recreated from the text. In this view, the meaning of a literary text is not objective. Reader response criticism was influenced by the phenomenological analysis of the reading process developed by the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden¹⁶ (1893-1970) and the German critic Wolfgang Iser (1926-2007). The Italian semiotician and writer Umberto Eco has proposed a theory of reading in his book *The Role of the Reader*. The contemporary American critic Stanley Fish has developed a theory of "affective stylistics" which describes the process of acquiring "literary competence" by a reader.

Postcolonial criticism is usually concerned with the study of literary texts produced in countries and cultures that have come under the control of European colonial powers at some point in their history. It interprets literature by identifying the topics and markers characteristic of writers shaped by colonial and postcolonial experience. Postcolonial criticism often focuses on economic exploitation, power relations, and marginalisation of the native culture and in favour of the colonising culture. A notable representative of postcolonial criticism was Edward Said, whose work, *Orientalism* (1978), is regarded by many as a foundation text of the academic field of postcolonial studies.

Postcolonial criticism has been strongly influenced by Marxist criticism, the work of Michel Foucault, and by deconstruction theory, which is a form of semiotic analysis, derived mainly from the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's¹⁷ work *Of Grammatology* (1967). An important book in postcolonial criticism is *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (1988) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin.

Queer criticism, or *queer theory*, emerged in the early 1990s out of gay and lesbian

¹⁶ Roman Ingarden (1893-1970) is best known for his work in aesthetics, particularly on the ontology of the work of art and the status of aesthetic values. His work written in German, *Das literarische Kunstwerk* [*The Literary Work of Art*, 1931; *O dziele literackim*, 1960]) has been widely influential in literary theory and has been crucial to the development of New Criticism and Reader Response Theory.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) was the founder of the poststructuralist theory of deconstruction, a method of analysis both literary and philosophical texts, and also political institutions.

literary criticism and feminist literary criticism. Influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, queer criticism attempts to redefine the cultural definitions of sexuality and gender identity, stressing their historical variability and fluidity. Queer criticism suggests that there is a long tradition of queer writing in literature. It includes the works of William Shakespeare, George Byron, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, James Baldwin and many others. All these authors often blurred the gender divide and showed characters who do not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male or female gender roles.

1.9.2. English and American literary criticism. A brief overview

English literary criticism began in the Tudor Period and was influenced by the Italian scholars. The earliest formal treatise touching upon literature in England is Leonard Coxe's *Arte or Crafte of Rhetoryke*, written about 1524. Another early example of English literary criticism is Roger Ascham's *Scholemaster* (1570), which contains reference to Aristotle's *Poetics*.

The most important early works of literary criticism in England are: Sir Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poetry* (1579-80) and George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589). Sidney argues that poets have the power to create new worlds and to populate them with fictional creatures. Puttenham wrote the best treatise on English versification of its time. John Dryden's *Of Dramatick Poesie* (1668) and Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* (in verse - 1711) are landmarks in the evolution of literary criticism. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was the first major man of letters in England who was fully engaged in literary criticism. He wrote the Preface to his edition of the *Plays of William Shakespeare* (1765) and the *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-1781). He believed that the poet is "the interpreter of Nature." Following Plato, Johnson argued that assessment of literature should be based on its moral effect. Edmund Burke (1729-1797) contributed to aesthetic theory in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757, 1759), in which he formulated the aesthetic ideas of sublimity and beauty. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) wrote *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* (edition of 1800), which became an important contribution to criticism making way for the Romantic Revolution in English literature. Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was mainly concerned with the aesthetics and psychology of literary criticism. Coleridge's most important criticism appeared in his *Biographia Litteraria* (1817), in which he wrote about primary imagination and secondary imagination. He believed that reading literature allows sharing emotions with other people. Coleridge's ideas of poetry have influenced modern literary critics such as A. O. Lovejoy and I.A. Richards. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) wrote *The Defence of Poetry* (1821), in which he contrasted artistic creation with the concepts of utilitarian and materialistic ideology that emerged after the Industrial Revolution.

However, a systematic literary study began in Britain in the 1840s. Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), who was professor of poetry at Oxford, wrote a number of important works of literary criticism such as *Essays in Criticism*, *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, and the most famous, *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Matthew Arnold claimed that the critic is not merely an interpreter of a literary work; he ought to be an authority on values, culture and good taste. Henry James (1843-1926), the Anglo-American writer, revived interest in English prose fiction. He claimed that the novel is a form of art (*The Art of Fiction*, 1884) and started a continuing discussion about the structure, narrative method and interpretation of the novel. The 1920s was a period particularly favourable for the development of literary criticism in England. Critics such as I. A. Richards (1893-1979), R. F. Leavis (1895-1978), William Empson (1906-1984), L(ionel) C(harles) Knights (1906-1997), John Middleton Murry (1889-1957), Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), and also the poet **T. S. Eliot** (1888-1965), all laid the foundations of the new approach to criticism. Eliot is regarded as the most influential critic of his generation. His essays had a great influence on literary criticism in Britain and overseas. In intellectual circles periodicals such as *The Criterion*, *The*

Athenaeum, *The Calendar of Modern Letters* and *Scrutiny* spread the new ideas of literary criticism.

I. A. Richards introduced the notion of practical criticism, which insisted that the best and indeed the only way to study literature is to study the text itself in close detail. The critic ought to disregard anything outside the text itself. According to Richards, the author's biography and the historical context in which the work appeared were irrelevant for understanding and interpretation of a literary work.

Post-war British criticism of literature was developed by Arnold Kettle (1916-1986), David Daiches (1912-2005), Raymond Williams (1921-1988), Terry Eagleton, David Lodge and others.

In the first half of the 20th century in the United States new ideas were introduced to literary criticism by a number of innovative critics, including Irving Babbitt (1865-1933), John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), Cleanth Brooks (1906-1994), Percy Lubbock (1879-1965), Kenneth Burke (1897-1993), Malcolm Cowley (1915-1981), Edmund Wilson (1885-1972), Lionel Trilling (1905-1975), Wayne C(leanth) Booth (1921-2005) and others.

Northrop Frye (1912-1991) was a Canadian literary critic. His literary theories, particularly, *The Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), which outlined a science of literary criticism based on identifiable mythic forms, had a great international impact.

Some of the prominent contemporary American critics include Jonathan Culler, Robert Scholes, Harold Bloom, Stanley Fish, G(ayatri) C(hakravorty) Spivak.

Jonathan Culler is one of the most outstanding representatives of contemporary literary theory and criticism. His influential books include *Structuralist Poetics* (1975) and *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (1983). He is also the author of *On Deconstruction* (1982), one of the most influential overviews and assessments of deconstructive theory. Robert E. Scholes is known for his ideas on **fabulation** and **metafiction**. His important works include *The Fabulators* (1967), *Structural Fabulation* (1975), *Fabulation and Metafiction* (1979). Harold Bloom is known for controversial theories of poetic influence. He supports an aesthetic approach to literature and argues against the politicisation of literary studies which is manifested in feminist, Marxist, New Historicist and poststructuralist theories. In *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975) Bloom suggested that poetry results from poets deliberately misreading the works that both influence and threaten them. His best-selling work is *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994) in which he identified 26 canonical Western writers.

G. C. Spivak is an Indian-born American literary feminist critic and postcolonial theorist. Her writings include *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987), *The Post-Colonial Critic* (1990), *Thinking Academic Freedom in Gendered Post-Coloniality* (1992), *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), *Death of a Discipline* (2003). She translated Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1976).

Most recent trends in English and American literary criticism include **ecocriticism**, **evolutionary literary criticism** (also known as Darwinian literary studies or literary Darwinism).

1.10. A general division of literature

Generally, we may divide imaginative literature into oral and written. Oral literature is the product of illiterate or semi-illiterate societies. Oral literature usually preceded written literature. Literature can be composed either in **verse** or in **prose**. Poetry is one of the oldest forms of literature. We may also distinguish a few more types or categories of literature, e.g. popular literature, children's literature, ethnic literature, etc. These categories can be further subdivided. We shall now describe briefly a few characteristic categories of literature. In the next chapters we shall discuss in more detail the main division of imaginative literature into poetry, drama and prose fiction.

1.10.1 Popular literature

Popular literature refers mostly to fiction, i.e. novels and short stories which have a wide readership. The term ‘popular literature’ may suggest that it has not much literary merit, which is not always true. The list of popular literature genres is very long. Here we can only mention a few characteristic subgenres of popular literature: crime fiction, spy fiction, women’s fiction (chick lit), sci-fi (science fiction), and **cyberpunk fiction**.

Crime fiction is a subgenre of popular fiction that deals with crimes and their detection. It includes the detective novel. **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849) is often credited as the forerunner of the detective story. The British authors who contributed to the development of the genre are **Wilkie Collins** (1824-1889), **Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930), who has created the famous amateur detective, Sherlock Holmes, and **Agatha Christie** (1890-1976), who also created the famous detective Poirot.

The American author who contributed significantly to the development of the crime fiction genre was **Raymond Chandler** (1888-1959). He wrote crime fiction which was not only extremely popular with readers but also attracted a serious attention of literary critics round the world. Chandler had a great stylistic influence on American popular literature, and is considered to be a founder, along with Dashiell Hammett, and James M. Cain, of crime fiction subgenre known as **hard-boiled fiction**.

Spy fiction appeared shortly before World War One. Some characteristic elements of spy fiction can be found in Rudyard Kipling’s novel *Kim* (1901). John Buchan (1875-1940) wrote a famous spy novel *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915), which was later loosely adapted by the film director Alfred Hitchcock in his spy movie. After World War II **Graham Greene** (1904-1991), drawing on his own experience as an agent of the British Intelligence, wrote a number of spy novels, including *The Quiet American* (1952), *Our Man in Havana* (1959), *A Burnt-out Case* (1961), *The Honorary Consul* (1973), and *The Human Factor* (1978).

During the period of the Cold War **Ian Fleming** (1908-1964) wrote a number of popular spy novels with the handsome James Bond as the main character, who blended his intelligence service with romantic and sexual exploits as well as an exciting lifestyle. Fleming’s spy novels exerted influence on two British writers, John le Carré and Len Deighton.

In the 1960s, **John le Carré** (David Cornwell) published numerous spy novels, the most famous being *The Spy Who Came from the Cold* (1963). In his early novels le Carré uses a character named George Smiley, an intelligence officer working for MI6 as the centre for his stories. In his later novels, e.g. *The Little Drummer Girl* (1983) and *The Constant Gardener* (2001) he explores broad themes in international politics and commerce that focus on moral questions related to Middle East conflicts, the arms trade and the commercial misuse of medical research.

Other prominent novels of spy fiction include Len Deighton’s *The IPCRESS File* (1962), Frederick Forsyth’s *The Death of the Jackal* (1971), Robert Ludlum’s *The Bourne Identity* (1980) and Tom Clancy’s *The Hunt for Red October* (1984). All these spy novels were made into successful films.

Thriller fiction includes numerous, often overlapping subgenres. Thrillers are characterised by skillful plotting, fast action and suspense. Its purpose is to “thrill” the reader. Thriller books are usually about life and death situations. Some classic examples of this genre include Geoffrey Household’s *Rogue Male* (1939), **John Grisham’s** *A Time to Kill* (1989), *The Pelican Brief* (1992) and *The Summons* (2002); **Dan Brown’s** *The Da Vinci Code* (2003).

A specific subgenre of crime fiction is *psychological thriller* which focuses rather on the character’s psyche than physical action. The authors of psychological thriller include Patricia Highsmith, Desmond Cory, Jonathan Kellerman, Stephen King and Thomas Harris, whose novels deal with various matters of criminal psychology.

Thomas Harris’s *The Silence of the Lambs* (1988) is regarded as a masterpiece of this subgenre. The book concerns a serial murderer known only by the nickname Buffalo

Bill who kidnaps and kills women so that he can harvest their skin. Clarice Starling, a young trainee at the FBI Academy in Quantico, gets an assignment to interview Dr. Hannibal Lecter, a former psychiatrist and a notorious murderer, who is kept under close watch in the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane, so that his expertise may help her track down Buffalo Bill.

A *political thriller* deals with fictionalised political power struggle, political corruption, terrorism. Political thrillers are often based on true facts such as the assassination of John F Kennedy. *Robert Harris's The Ghost* (2007) is a contemporary political thriller commenting indirectly on the controversial domestic and foreign policy of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The novel has been adapted into a film, directed by Roman Polanski, which was released in 2010.

Women's fiction is a wide-ranging genre of popular literature that includes various types of novels that generally appeal more to women than men. They are usually written by women, are addressed to women, and usually tell one particular story about women.

Chick lit is a subgenre of women's fiction which is mainly addressed to adolescent girls and young women. The term 'chick lit' is derived from the slang word 'chick', meaning a young woman, and 'lit', short for literature. Chick lit, which emerged in the mid 1990s, reflects many tensions between contemporary society and the lives of young emancipated women.

A representative example of chick lit is **Marian Keyes's** *Watermelon* (1995), a story of a 29-year-old pregnant woman, Claire, who is shocked to learn that her husband James is leaving her for Denise, a downstairs neighbour. Claire is left with a lovely baby daughter and a broken heart.

My husband told me about twenty-four hours ago that he has been having an affair for the past six months with and get this with – and get this – not even his secretary or someone glamorous from work, but a married woman who lives in the apartment two floors below us. I mean, how *suburban* can you get! And not only is he having an affair but he wants a divorce.

I'm sorry if I'm being unnecessarily flippant about this. I'm all over the place. In a moment I'll be crying again. I'm still in shock, I suppose. Her name is Denise and I know her quite well.

Not quite well as James does, obviously.¹⁸

Shocked and humiliated, Claire, decides to leave her London flat and go back to her family home in Dublin, where she stays with her parents and two younger sisters. After going through the feeling of loss and loneliness, she finally pulls herself back together, and then ... James, tries to regain her affections.

Other notable chick lit fiction includes **Melissa Bank's** *The Girl's Guide to Hunting and Fishing* (1999), a collection of short stories linked by the protagonist, Jane Rosenal, starting with her life at age 14, as well as **Helen Fielding's** *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996) and **Lauren Wiesberger's** *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006).

A rough equivalent of chick lit is *lad lit*, a subgenre of popular literature, written by men, focusing on various types of young, male characters, those who are sensitive and caring, and those who are selfish and insensitive. The second group of characters prevails. As Elaine Showalter has observed, "the anti-heroes of ladlit are often losers and boozers, liars, wanderers, and transients".¹⁹ Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* (1992), *High Fidelity* (1995) and *About a Boy* (1998) are early examples of lad lit in Britain. Hornby's novels, primarily aimed to entertain, present critically various types of modern masculinity. *A Long Way Down* (2005) goes beyond the characteristics of lad lit. It is a dark comic novel about four misfits, three males and one female, who meet on the New Year's Eve on the top of a

¹⁸ Marian Keyes, *Watermelon* (New York: HarpersCollins, 2002) 3.

¹⁹ Elaine Showalter, "Ladlit," in *On Modern British Fiction* ed. by Zachary Leader (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 60.

building, known as “Toppers’ Tower”, where they are planning to commit a group suicide by jumping to their deaths.

Science fiction (abbreviated SF or sci-fi) is a literary fantasy involving the imagined impact of science and technology on society. The early founders of science fiction were Jules Verne²⁰ and Herbert George Wells.

One of the most popular American science fiction writers is **Ray Bradbury** (1920-2012), who is best known for *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) and *Fahrenheit 451* (1953). Other notable American SF authors include **Robert A. Heinlein** (*The Future History* 1939-1941; *Tunnel in the Sky*, 1955; *Stranger in a Strange Land*, 1961) **Ursula Le Guin** (*Planet of Exile*, 1966) **Samuel R. Delany** (*Babel-17*, 1966) and Philip K. Dick (*The Man in the High Castle*, 1962; VALIS, 1980).

Cyberpunk fiction is a subgenre of SF which presents a modern world of advanced technology, megacorporations and artificial intelligence. The most famous representative of American cyberpunk fiction is **William Gibson** (b. 1948), whose most popular cyberpunk novels are *Neuromancer* (1984), *Count Zero* (1986), *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). Gibson created the term, “cyberspace,” and his conception of virtual reality has had an influence on the development of digital media.

Gibson also became an important author of another science fiction subgenre – **steampunk fiction** – with the 1990 alternate history novel *The Difference Engine*, written with Bruce Sterling. Steampunk fiction incorporates technology and aesthetic designs inspired by 19th-century (Victorian) industrial steam-powered machinery.

1.10.2 Children’s literature

There is a long tradition of children’s literature dating back to ancient times. However, until the mid-18th century it is difficult to distinguish literature aimed particularly at children. Young readers were usually expected to read adult literature.

In the 18th century, educators postulated that children’s literature should be instructive and aimed at self-improvement. Thus many old fairy tales were condemned for their violence and absurdity. Luckily not all writers favoured the idea that children’s literature should be morally uplifting. In his essay written in 1853, “Friend of the Faeries,” Charles Dickens defended old fairy tales and fantasy. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) is the author of a comic fairy tale entitled *The Rose and the Ring* (1855). Charles Kingsley (1819-1975) wrote *The Water Babies* (1863) which is a fantasy about a young chimney sweep, Tom, who runs away from his cruel master, Mr Grimes, and falls into a river where he is transformed into a water baby. Perhaps one of the most popular books for children is *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* written in 1865 by a professor of mathematics at Oxford, Lewis Carroll (1832-1898). All these books avoided simplified didacticism and are masterpieces of children’s literature.

The popularity of children’s literature grew gradually and early in the 20th century more outstanding works were produced, e.g. **Lucy M. Montgomery’s** (1874-1942) *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) and **Eleanor H. Porter’s** (1868-1920) *Pollyanna* (1913). An important subdivision of children’s literature is an adventure story. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) is the author of *Treasure Island* (1883), which is a novel about adventure and piracy set in the 18th century. Anne Sewell (1820-1878) wrote *Black Beauty* in 1877. It is one of the most popular stories about animals. Other outstanding books of children’s literature include Rudyard Kipling’s (1865-1936) *Jungle Book* (1894), Robert Ballantyne’s (1825-1894) *The Coral Island* (1858), Mark Twain’s (1835-1910) *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), Frank L. Baum’s (1856-1919) *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), A(ian)

²⁰ Jules Verne (1820-1910) was a French author known for his adventure novels, many of which were set in the future. Verne’s books include *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, and *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. He exerted a profound influence on the development of science fiction.

Alexander Milne's (1882-1956) *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926), Hugh Lofting's (1886-1947) *The Story of Doctor Dolittle* (1922), and others.

J(ohn) R(onald) R(uel) Tolkien (1892-1973), a scholar from Oxford, published a series of books aimed not only at child readers. They are *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) and others. They tell about the adventures of amiable hobbits, evil goblins and fearful dragons.

In recent years a series of *Harry Potter* novels by **Joan Rowling** have become an international success. The main themes in children's literature are: the world of the child, the limitations and restrictions of ordinary life, the conflict between good and evil, the supernatural, the world of nature.

1.10.3. Ethnic literature

Ethnic literature encompasses the literature by writers who perceive themselves as belonging to an ethnic minority, particularly in the United States and Canada, and write from this perspective (usually in English); and works that deal with immigrant or ethnic experience but are not necessarily written by a member of the group portrayed.

American ethnic literature includes: African American, Asian- and Pacific-American, Jewish-American, Latino-American, Native-American writing, and ethnically specific Euro-American literary works, their authors and cultural contexts. Literary works classified as ethnic writing may be regarded as windows into and out of respective subcultures. Ethnic literature has generally been regarded as outside the literary mainstream and has often been overlooked by scholars.

The relationship between ethnic writing and **mainstream literature** is in flux. The increasing thematic significance of ethnicity in the works of contemporary writers and the growing number of authors of ethnic descent who have won a general literary recognition have blurred the boundary of ethnic writing. For example, the works of **Toni Morrison** and **Alice Walker**, the outstanding representatives of Afro-American ethnic writing, as well as those of Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan and David Hwang, who represent Chinese American ethnic literature, have recently enjoyed literary success that goes beyond ethnic confines.

1.11. Interrelations between literature and other forms of expression and communication

Literature can no longer be studied as a single, coherent and self-contained art. The study of literature becomes increasingly interdisciplinary. Thus the study of literature requires crossing the boundaries of the realm of literature to history, psychology, sociology, linguistics, religion, as well as to the arts, such as theatre, film, music, etc. Literary works are artefacts of culture. Literature is indebted to myth, religion, philosophy, science and the arts. Besides, literature is related to such disciplines as philosophy, psychology and history.

Literature and myth

Myths embody the sacred stories and traditions of a people as regards their origins, gods, early history, etc., which explain natural or historical events. Western literature has been strongly influenced by Greek, Roman, Norse, Celtic and Judeo-Christian mythologies. The presence of myth in literature can be found in classical narrative and dramatic poetry, e.g. Homer's *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Medea*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In modern literature some classical myths or mythical characters were revived as **intertexts**. Many modern writers refer to myths and mythical characters, e.g. John Milton in his *Paradise Lost* (1667); and James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922). Some poets created their own mythology, e.g. William Blake or J.R.R. Tolkien.

Literature and religion

Like all Western literature, literature in English has through the ages been inspired by the two main religious sources: the Bible and Greek mythology. We can find numerous references and allusions to the Bible and religious themes in poetry, drama and fiction. For example, the origins of English drama can be sought in various religious ceremonies of the medieval Church. In the Middle Ages dramatic performances were usually staged inside or outside churches, especially during the Easter season. Church authorities regarded the theatre as a means of disseminating Christian religion. They tried to familiarise the predominantly illiterate audience with Biblical events through a series of dramatic performances known as 'mystery' plays and the knowledge of the lives of saints through 'miracle' plays. Both mysteries and miracles were played by young clerics. The mystery plays grew out of Christian liturgy; their source was the Bible. The favourite topics of the mystery plays included the creation of man. Miracle plays also originated from the liturgy but they dealt with the lives of saints. Mystery plays were performed in cycles which dramatised the biblical story from the creation of the world to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Another example of the impact of religion on literature is *Paradise Lost* by John Milton. *Paradise Lost* is a magnificent epic poem in blank verse about man's destiny.

There are many parallels between John Fielding's novel, *Tom Jones* (1749), and the Bible. Tom, the principal character resembles the story of the Prodigal Son. Another parallel can be found between Tom and Sophia and Adam and Eve. Like Adam and Eve, Tom and Sophia have to leave home, their small 'paradise'. Fielding emphasises this by calling Squire Allworthy's mansion Paradise Hall. Tom and Sophia's return home at the end of the novel is shown as the return to the Biblical Eden.

A significant impact of religion is found in American literature. For example, religion has been a major factor in the formation of a philosophical and literary movement known as Transcendentalism. Conceptualised by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), this movement was a reaction against the Age of Reason. Transcendentalists rejected many aspects of New England's Calvinism and the rationalists idea of God as the 'divine clockmaker'. Transcendentalists believed that human nature is essentially good, but organised society makes it corrupt. Therefore, they developed the concept of self-reliance which was to protect individuals from the destructive impact of social institutions and materialism. Many transcendentalists propagated a new way of life in utopian communities. They emphasised the importance of personal experience. They saw religion as an individual quest for spirituality. The doctrine of transcendentalism was described by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essays, especially *Nature* (1836), and by Henry Thoreau in *Walden* (1854). These had influence on the development of American literature.

Literature and other arts

Literature, like the other arts, is an expression of individual thoughts, feelings and attitudes, known as **Weltanschauung**, achieved through the creative process. Works of literature share certain expressive elements, such as structure, theme and tone with works of visual arts and even music. Although works of literature may not be directly influenced by some artistic movements, they may express certain common themes, motifs and anxieties, and use certain common techniques of expression. For example, the film story or script is a piece of literature.

Literature and philosophy

Literature is often the playground of various philosophical ideas. Philosophy explores basic, general ideas, such as truth, beauty, goodness and the nature of evil. The French writer Albert Camus (1913-1960) once remarked that 'a novel is never anything but a philosophy put into images'. The contemporary American novelist William H. Gass wrote: "Novelist and philosopher are obsessed with language, and make themselves up

out of concepts. Both in a way create worlds” (Hix, 53).

Other philosophical themes in literature include: various conceptions of life, different visions of cosmic order, man’s relation to nature, free will versus determinism, commitment, the search for personal identity, faith, gender, authenticity, the significance of death, and the loss of meaning. Philosophy may help readers understand the general ideas or themes of a literary work.

1.12. Literature and the Internet

New digital technologies are changing the nature of literary studies and enable other kinds of readings than those permitted by bound books. The Internet has enabled access to works of literature, art and research findings on an unprecedented scale. Thanks to the Internet scholars and students can read and interpret works of literature in ways never before thought possible.

Hypertext

In the digital age printed literature exists alongside **hypertext** documents, which is an umbrella term for all texts available on the Internet. Hypertext documents, which include both digitalised original works of literature and literary criticism, are becoming an increasing part of academic study, teaching and research nowadays.

A *hypertext* is a text displayed on the Internet that enables a user to access other hypertexts in webpages by clicking on **hyperlinks**. The term “hypertext” was coined in 1965 by Ted Nelson, an American sociologist, philosopher and pioneer of information technology. Nelson, who created an early hypertext system called Project Xanadu, had a utopian vision to store all the world’s literature in a single hypertext system. He conceived a “docuverse,” i.e. a global electronic library of interconnected documents, in which everything that has ever been written is both accessible online and linked to everything else. Although this dream has not been accomplished yet, a great number of hypertext systems have been developed in the rapidly developing World Wide Web.

The impact of hypertexts in the humanities

George P. Landow’s²¹ seminal work entitled *Hypertext 3.0* applies critical literary theory to the study of the impact of hypertext in the humanities. Landow has pointed in his book to a series of parallels between the emergence of hypertext and the literary and cultural theory known as “postmodern.” He claims that the approach to textuality of such theorists of postmodernism as Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard²² facilitated the understanding of hypertexts and hypermedia.

While criticising the limitations of “print culture, ” or the “culture of the book, ” postmodern theorists opened ways for “hypertext culture” as a radical change in human cognition. George Landow was one the first scholars to notice the convergence of literary theory and information technology. He pointed out that “over the past several decades

²¹George P. Landow, Professor Emeritus of English and Art History at Brown University, is an authority on Victorian literature, art, and culture, as well as a pioneer in criticism and theory of electronic literature, hypertext and hypermedia. He has also pioneered the use of hypertext and the web in the humanities. He is also the founder and current webmaster and editor-in-chief of The Victorian Web, a hypertext project that anticipated the World Wide Web.

²²Jean Baudrillard (1929–2007) was one of the foremost representatives of postmodern theory. In his treatise, *Simulacra and Simulation* (French: *Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981) he sought to interrogate the relationship among reality, symbols and society. In his view, simulacra are copies that depict things that either had no reality or that no longer have an original. Simulation is the imitation of the operation of a real-world process or system over time. Baudrillard suggested that modern society has lost distinction between reality and simulacrum (a false copy). He argued that in a postmodern culture dominated by media such as TV, films, and the Internet, people are surrounded by simulacra (false copies).

literary theory and computer hypertext, apparently unconnected areas of inquiry, have increasingly converged.” (Landow 1) The result of this convergence is a quicker and easier access to knowledge.

Unlike the linear, indivisible printed texts hypertexts make a fluid, nonlinear, network of loosely-linked **lexias**. These lexias are essentially self-contained and independent, since each lexia is a complete document. According to Landow, the reading of hypertexts alters the very fabric of the cognitive process. Hypertexts are now a part of our global reality like printed texts. Hypertext culture develops alongside with the printed book culture. Our reading is no longer only linear; it also becomes non-linear.

According to Landow, poststructuralists called for a decentered, multivocal, “readerly” text, which soon found manifestation in hypertext. The concept of the online hypertext system emulates Derrida’s idea of textual openness. In a way, hypertext fulfilled Barthes’ and Derrida’s visions of a textuality that subverts the hierarchies and limitations of the availability and use of print culture. It appears that hypertext culture has eventually overcome the centrality and elitism of print culture. As Jay David Bolter has written:

Our culture is itself a vast writing space, a complex of symbolic structures. Just as we write our minds, we can say that we write the culture in which we live. And just as our culture is moving from the printed book to the computer, it is also in the final stages of the transition from a hierarchical social order to what we might call a “network culture.” For decades all forms of hierarchy have been disintegrating, as greater and greater freedom of action is granted to the individual. (Bolter, 232)

The hypertext systems are gradually changing the global learning environment. They have intricately decentered and deconstructed the traditional idea of academic study. Students receive now more knowledge from the web than from the teachers who deliver lectures and dictate them notes in university classrooms. With the growing popularity of the World Wide Web, not only students but also faculty tend increasingly to use hypertext knowledge resources in the form of self-directed research. As Landow writes further in *Hypertext 3.0*:

All hypertext systems permit the individual readers to choose his or her own center of investigation and experience. What this principle means in practice is that the reader is not locked into any kind of particular organization or hierarchy. (Landow, 58)

In Landow’s view hypertext also blurs the distinction between author and reader. This blurring happens at several levels. The reader is free to restructure the document according to their needs. When the reader links to other documents, they have created a new document. Thus, in conformity with **poststructuralist theory**, hypertext may be seen primarily as a new form of discourse organisation. A hypertext system, such as the World Wide Web, offers both reader and writer the same learning environment. The reader can copy the document and modify it for their own use. They can also link either whole documents, or individual pages into their own document, creating a new document that puts the original document(s) in an entirely different context.

Hypertext literature

Literary studies in the digital age are changing their traditional character. The Internet literary resources begin to supplant the old-fashioned libraries. Hypertext literature, a sector of **digital humanities**, is a quickly evolving field of artistic practice and literary study. It gives the ability to escape the printed book’s linearity and provides multiple links between screens of text in the nonlinear webwork of various narratives.²³ Hypertext literature

²³ See Robert Coover, “Literary Hypertext: The Passing of the Golden Age,” Keynote Address, Digital Arts and Culture, Atlanta, Georgia, 29 October 1999, *Feed*, 2000; accessed at: http://nickm.com/vox/golden_age.html (April 2013)

on the World Wide Web includes, amongst others, two new digital genres of literature, hypertext fiction (HF) and interactive fiction (IF).

Hypertext fiction and *interactive fiction* are subgenres of **electronic literature** written and presented in the World Wide Web as electronic hypertext documents, especially those that allow variations in plot development and reader interaction. The reader chooses links to move from one **lexia** (unit) of text to the next, and in this fashion rearranges a story. One of the first examples of hypertext literature, also called interactive literature, is *53, or Tube Theatre*, a novel by Geoff Ryman, originally created as a website in 1996, then published as a paper book titled *253: The Print Remix* in 1998.

Storyspace, developed in 1990 by Mark Bernstein, is the world's first program for creating, editing and reading hypertext fiction. It can also be used for writing and organising fiction and non-fiction intended for print. Michael Joyce wrote the first electronic hypertext novel *Afternoon*, a story with Storyspace in 1990. Robert Coover called *afternoon* "the granddaddy of hypertext fictions".²⁴

A relatively new growing category of both hypertext and printed literature is **fan fiction** (fanfic) which refers to derivative and transformative creative stories featuring the characters, settings, premises, etc. based on the original iconic literary work, but written by a fan. The vast majority of fanfic is on the web on specialised websites. The largest fanfic website is www.fanfiction.net. In addition, there are websites that are dedicated to single books or series, such as sugarquill.net, which is devoted solely to Harry Potter fic.

1.13. Literary language and the language of literature

At the outset of this section we shall elucidate the difference between the two concepts: (a) literary language and (b) the language of literature.

Literary or standard language is a historical category and it is a variety of the national language. The national language has two distinct varieties: the spoken and the written. The spoken variety is primary and the written one is secondary. The spoken variety differs from the written one in many ways. One of the most obvious differences is the choice of words. Some words are characteristic only of the oral (or colloquial) variety whereas others are usually found in written texts only.

The written language is more exact than the spoken one owing to a number of connective words, such as eventually, possibly, likewise, therefore, thus, however, henceforward, etc. Sentences in the written language are usually well-formed, complex, and coherent. Also the syntactical patterns of the written language are different from the oral variety.

Literary (standard) language has a number of functional styles. We can distinguish at least the following functional styles of modern standard English:

- 1) the style of imaginative literature
- 2) the style of science and scholarship
- 3) the style of official documents
- 4) the style of technical and commercial information.
- 5) the style of advertising and propaganda

The style of imaginative literature is a peculiar functional style which has developed over the long history of the English language. It has a number of distinctive features, historically changeable, which are manifested in the particular literary form or genre, the epoch, and the individual style of the author. The style of imaginative literature may employ elements of other functional styles. The most characteristic feature of literary style is its **imagery**.

²⁴ Robert Coover, "The End of Books." *The New York Times* June 21, 1992. (June 2015).

The language of literature (fiction) is a complex category. It may include literary (standard) language as well as many varieties of language: dialects, slang, etc. The language of literature may be didactic, philosophical, lyrical (poetic) and satirical. Language may be employed in fiction as a tool for retrospection and for the creation of specific imagery.

Among the various functions of language, we should mention at least two:

1) communicative function and 2) phatic function.

Communicative function means that language is used for communication, i.e. for the exchange of information, feelings and thoughts. The *phatic function* of language is used in order to establish social contact and to express sociability rather than specific meaning. An example of the phatic function of language is a baby's babbling or the so-called small talk of adults, i.e. a conversation about everything and nothing in particular. Literary instances of the phatic function of language can be found in Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.

1.13.1 The development of literary English

The literary English language has a long history which begins with the integration of the tribal dialects of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes who occupied the British Isles in the 3rd-5th centuries. We distinguish three stages in the development of English:

- a) Old English (8th-12th centuries)
- b) Middle English (12th-15th centuries)
- c) Modern English (15th century until the present time).

The first manuscripts written in Old English date back to the 8th century. Some of them were written in the runic alphabet used for carving inscriptions on wood or stone. The Latin alphabet was brought over from Ireland by Christian missionaries. The vocabulary of Old English consisted mostly of words from the Germanic stock and a small number of words borrowed from Latin, e.g. 'bishop', 'martyr', 'candle', 'wine'. The Vikings, who invaded Britain in the 8th-10th centuries, added such common words as: 'window' (wind eye), 'call', 'die', 'get', 'give', 'skin', 'take'.

After the Norman invasion in 1066 AD, Norman French became the official language of the court in England. It was a dialect of French influenced by popular Latin and Old Norse. Many modern English words derive from Norman French, e.g. 'beef', 'bacon', 'mutton', 'pork', 'veal', 'venison', etc. A number of terms dealing with government, such as liberty, parliament, authority, etc. crossed the Channel along with the Normans. Although Norman French became the language of the Royal Court and the ruling class, Old English or Anglo-Saxon was still spoken by the common people. Gradually, it was transformed into what is called Middle English, which lost most of its inflections and greatly expanded its vocabulary by borrowing from Norman French and Latin.

After the end of the 15th century the London dialect was recognised as the standard form of English, especially in writing. The writers of the Elizabethan Age exerted a great influence on the growth and perfection of literary English. For example, Sir Thomas More (?1477-1535) introduced such words as: 'absurdity', 'acceptance', 'anticipate', 'compatible', 'comprehensible', 'congratulate', 'explain', 'monopoly', 'necessitate', 'obstruction', 'paradox', 'pretext' and many others. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) is believed to have coined words like 'emancipate', 'eradicate', 'exist', 'extinguish', 'harass', 'meditate', etc. William Shakespeare (1564-1616), a great master of the English language, invented many words which are now in common use, e.g.: 'accommodation', 'assassination', 'courtship'; and idiomatic expressions: 'star-crossed lovers', 'the mind's eye', 'what the dickens', 'love is blind'.

In the successive editions of Shakespeare's works in 1623, 1632, 1664, 1685 the language of the great English playwright was 'improved' because some of his words and phrases seemed to the contemporary language purists 'ill bred and clownish'. John Wallis's

Grammatica Linguae Anglicanae written in Latin and published in 1653 attempted to introduce certain norms into the literary English language.

The book which had a profound effect on the development of the standard form of the English language was the Authorised or King James Version of the Bible, first published in 1611. It was widely read and helped to keep alive English words of the Germanic stock. There are many expressions still used today which first appeared in the Authorised Version, e.g. 'by the skin of our teeth', 'an eye for an eye', 'cast pearls before swine', 'the salt of the earth', 'money is the root of all evil', 'a wolf in sheep's clothing'.

The next factor which contributed to the development of standard or literary English was the Protestant Reformation. Numerous books on religion, treatises, and pamphlets written in plain English were distributed in churches or read by ordinary people. In the 17th and 18th centuries a number of English language dictionaries began to appear. The writers of the 18th century paid much attention to the 'correctness' of language. Two great men of letters, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) and Samuel Johnson (1709-84), exerted a great influence on the development of norms of standard English. Swift even wrote a letter addressed to the Lord Treasurer which contained a "Proposal for Correction, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue". Although Swift's idea of executing a central control over the English language was approved by the Lord Treasurer, it was luckily never accomplished in practice because it would have severely limited the uninhibited development of the language. Dr Johnson compiled *The Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), which led to a greater standardisation of spelling.

In the 19th century, Englishmen who served in the colonies brought home new exotic vocabulary, e.g. 'bungalow', 'dinghy', 'kangaroo', 'kayak', 'jungle', etc., which was soon adapted into the literary language.

The Industrial Revolution and subsequent technological advancement produced a number of terms which are now used not only in English but in many other languages, e.g. 'locomotive', 'dynamo', 'computer' etc. During the sixteen hundred years of its history the English language has undergone constant change and is still changing.

Revision questions

1. Can you explain the definition of literature as the 'creative expression of individual experiences that have universal appeal'?
2. Discuss the five functions of literature. Provide examples of literary works which fit the definition of each function.
3. Do you think literature should have some aim(s) to fulfil?
4. What is the difference between a 'naive' and 'critical' reader?
5. Discuss some characteristic genres of popular literature. Provide examples.
6. Discuss some characteristics of children's literature. Do you know any books particularly designed for boys and for girls?
7. What is intertextuality?
8. What are the features of ethnic literature?
9. Give examples of some literary works inspired by religion.
10. Watch a film adaptation of a literary work. Make comparison.
11. What is the difference between literary language and the language of literature?
12. What is literary canon?
13. Give some examples of popular literature.
14. Discuss a few examples of crime fiction.
15. What is chick lit?
16. What is children's literature?
17. What is ethnic literature?
18. What is a hypertext?
19. What is hypertext literature?
20. What is fanfic?

Assignments

1. Discuss the purpose of reading literature.
2. Discuss the purpose of literary study.
3. Discuss the purpose of literary criticism.
4. Present in class the features of a spy novel, detective fiction, science fiction, thriller, historical romance, 'Harlequin' romance, etc.
5. Present in class one of your favourite children's books. Explain why you liked it particularly.

Chapter Two

Basic concepts of literary analysis and interpretation

In this chapter we introduce basic literary terms which will help you better understand and enjoy literary texts, their structure and various meanings. You will also be able to speak and write about them in a more explicit way.

Suggested reading: E. A. Poe, “The Raven”; William Blake, “The Lamb” and “The Tyger”; Emily Dickinson, “I’m Nobody”; William Carlos Williams, “This Is Just to Say”.

2.1. Content and form

We may start our considerations by distinguishing in a literary text two complementary elements: content and form.

Content is what a literary work says; what it is about. Form is the way in which it says it, how it is written. Content is thus the substance of a literary work which includes its theme, motif, subject matter and message. Form denotes the structure or the manner of construction of a literary work; it denotes the genre to which a literary work belongs, e.g. sonnet, ode, novel, short story, etc. A work of fiction may be written in the form of a series of letters or a diary as parts of the story. In this case its form is diversified.

Of course, we should bear in mind that this distinction is arbitrary and many critics, especially those following the tradition of New Criticism, will use the term structure instead of form. However, this latter term is not equivocal and some other critics make a distinction between form and structure.

2.2. Theme, motif and subject matter

Theme, motif and subject matter are interrelated and confusing terms. Formalist criticism (New Criticism, structuralism) was not interested in the content of a literary work, and therefore, theme, motif and subject of matter were usually left out of consideration. They preferred to look into such distinct units of a literary text as image, tone, style and structure. However, more recent critical theories, such as New Historicism, deconstruction, feminism and reader-reception theory recognise the importance of these terms in literary analysis.

Theme is the unifying and universal idea explored in a literary work. It may reappear in other literary works, e.g. tragic love, loneliness, death, etc. It may be explicit (directly stated) or implicit (indirectly stated, implied). Sometimes theme may be confused with motif. Theme is the subject of discourse. It usually contains some insight into the human condition. In a literary work of considerable length, the central theme is often accompanied by a number of lesser, related themes. Themes in *Hamlet* include the nature of a son’s duty and the dilemma of the idealist in a non-ideal world, the sense of existence, etc. The central theme of *Macbeth* is that too much ambition leads to destruction. Another theme is: fate versus free will. A theme in John Keats’ poem “Ode to a Nightingale” is incompatibility between the ideal and the real world. We may find more than one theme in a literary work.

A *motif* is a distinct element (incident, person, device, statement or a recurring symbol) which appears in numerous works of literature. Although some critics use the

terms theme and motif interchangeably, many others believe that motif is a kind of subtheme, a unit less complex than theme. For example, the motif of a female heroine known as *femme fatale* appears in many Romantic and Victorian novels and poems. The *carpe diem* (seize the day) motif can be frequently found in lyric poetry.

Subject matter is a less abstract term than theme and motif. It usually refers to action. It tells what the story or poem is about, e.g. the subject matter of Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is Christmas, but the theme is compassion, forgiveness, generosity.

It has to be emphasised that effective reading means reading for theme, motifs, subject matter, character development, context, symbolism and setting.

2.3. Setting

Setting is a particular place where and when something happens or is done. We distinguish two types of setting in works of literature: (a) spatial setting which refers to place and (b) temporal setting which refers to time. For example, the spatial and temporal setting of E. A. Poe's poem "The Raven" is a gloomy room on a December night. Setting of can also be used as a symbol.

Besides time and place, setting may also include the historical and social context and atmosphere. Setting is usually presented in narrative description, but it may also be revealed in dialogue, or characters' thoughts.

Setting may be described in a general way or in great detail. It may be presented as occurring at specific times in the story or more or less continuously. In 19th century fiction setting was presented in great detail and it was an important element of the narrative. Setting is often one of the ways an author establishes the mood (atmosphere) of the story. In some narratives, setting can strongly affect the plot, as for example, the Yorkshire moors, which became the setting for Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. Rural Wessex was the setting for most of Thomas Hardy's fiction. Dublin is the setting for James Joyce's novel, *Ulysses*. Yoknapatawpha, an imaginary county in Mississippi, is the setting for the cycle of novels and short stories written by William Faulkner. In many modern novels and short stories setting is frequently only suggested. In some novels changes of setting are important.

2.4. Style

The word **style** is derived from the Latin word "stilus" which meant a short stick sharp at one end and flat at the other used by the Romans for writing on wax tablets. Now the word *style* refers to a manner of making use of language. In traditional theories of rhetoric styles were generally divided into:

1. the high style,
2. the low style

The high or grand style was devoted to dignified themes in epic and lyric poetry as well as tragedy, and the low style was characteristic of comedy and satire. The difference between the high and low style is mainly in the use of language. The high style uses words and expressions rarely found in ordinary speech whereas the low style imitates colloquial speech with its characteristic coarseness. Contrary to many contemporary writers, William Shakespeare deliberately mixed features of the high style and the low style in his dramas.

The individual style of a writer can be distinguished by its uniqueness and originality. It can be recognised by a peculiar use of lexical, syntactical, and stylistic devices. Thus, style can be viewed as a "technique of expression." It is synonymous with an ability to write effectively.

2.4.1. An overview of stylistic devices

One writer may use **figurative language** while another may avoid it. In subsections that follow we shall deal with certain expressive means of language or stylistic devices. Literary (stylistic) devices are commonly used in literature to give a special depth or significance to a literary work. The overall use of stylistic devices in a literary text is called imagery.

Imagery is the use of concrete images that appeal to one or more of our senses. These images establish mood and arouse emotion in readers. All writers, and poets in particular, use imagery, i.e. different figures of speech in order to expand and develop the meaning of words they are using. Atmosphere in a literary work is created by the use of imagery, which according to the poet Cecil Day Lewis (1904-1972), is 'a picture made out of words' (18). In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for example, the most persistent images are blood, water and darkness. An image may be thus understood as a mental picture. Many images in literary works contain symbols.

Images can be generally classified as: visual (sense of sight), olfactory (sense of smell), tactile (sense of touch), auditory (sense of hearing), gustatory (sense of taste), kinaesthetic (movement) and conceptual (intellectual). It should be remembered that some images may belong to more than one category listed above.

Symbolism may be understood as representation of reality by symbols or a system of symbols or symbolic meaning in a literary text. However, Symbolism (with the capital letter) refers to the movement which came into being in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a reaction to naturalism and realism.

It is not easy to define a **symbol**. Poetry makes an extensive use of symbols, but they can also be found in drama and prose fiction. A symbol may be an object or image that stands for something else. Many symbols are deeply rooted in cultural heritage, e.g. the cross is the symbol of Christianity; birds may mean flight, freedom; rose means beauty, delicacy, fragility, shortness of life; rain may signify fertility; night may symbolise death or evil. Some symbols are created by authors and it is difficult to understand their meaning and significance unless we have studied critical analyses. For example, the lamb in William Blake's poem is a symbol of the innocence of childhood, whereas the tiger stands for the fearful power of experience or creative energy.

The Lamb²⁵

Little Lamb, who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb, who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:

²⁵ Unless otherwise stated, quotations of primary sources are from Frank Kermode et al. (eds.). *The Oxford Anthology of English Literature*. New York, London, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973; and Nina Baym et al. (eds.) *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998.

He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee.
Little Lamb, God bless thee.
(1789)

The Tyger

Tyger, Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes!
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger, Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?
1793 (1794)

Assignment

1. Compare the two poems. Discuss their form and content.
2. Discuss the symbolical meaning of the lamb and the tiger.
3. Explain the antagonism between these two symbols.
4. Find rhetorical questions about God. Interpret them.
5. Discuss Blake's concept of God on the basis of these two poems.

Literary works may contain *symbols* which are not easily understood by the audience or readers. For example, in Shakespeare's *King Lear* the weather symbolises the inner states of the major character, especially that of King Lear. The handkerchief in *Othello* symbolises both Othello's love and Desdemona's chastity. Bloodstains on Lady Macbeth's hands are a symbol of guilt.

An important feature of fiction is the peculiar use of symbols. Symbols in fiction may include words, objects, actions, setting, characters, nature, etc. Whole fragments of fiction may have symbolic meaning. For example, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* contains a number of symbols. The novel's heroine, Hester Prynne, for her sins, received a scarlet letter "A" which she had to wear upon her chest. This letter has a rich symbolic meaning. It stands not only for "adultery", but it also refers to Hester's daughter, Pearl, who

embodies the “scarlet letter”. Pearl was both Hester’s burden and her greatest treasure. In time, the local Puritan community sees the letter as meaning “Able” or “Angel”. Likewise, F. S. Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* contains such evocative symbols as the Valley of Ashes, which stands for the spiritual waste land; and Dr T. J. Eckleburg’s eyes on a billboard, which look as if they are the eyes of God.

2.4.2. Tone

Another specific feature of literary style is tone. Tone usually refers to the mood or atmosphere of a literary work. It is the author’s emotional attitude towards his subject. It may be stated or implied. Tone is revealed through a choice of words (**diction**), syntax, imagery and details. Tone can be mysterious, romantic, serious, satiric, sentimental, playful, formal, intimate, angry, serious, ironic, outraged, baffled, tender, serene, depressed, etc. Tone conveys feeling and emotion.

2.4.3. Figurative language and stylistic devices

Literary texts are characterised by **figurative language**, e.g. any use of language that departs from the typical order, construction or meaning of words in order to create new ways of expression. We may find various stylistic devices in figurative language. Some of them are distinctly phonetic, others have syntactical or semantic features.

Phonetic stylistic devices

Phonetic stylistic devices include: onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance.

Onomatopoeia is a combination of speech-sounds which aims at imitating some natural sounds, e.g. hiss, splash, buzz, cuckoo, mew, bow-wow, bang, roar, murmur, etc. However, many words are merely thought to be onomatopoeic although they are not clearly imitative of the thing they denote, e.g. horror, terror, thriller. Onomatopoeia is often effectively used in poetry, as - for example - in Edgar Allan Poe’s famous poem “The Bells”: “Silver bells... how they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle”, or in “The Raven”: “And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain.”

Alliteration is a phonetic stylistic device which consists in the repetition of similar consonant sounds in close succession. It is used to create melody, establish mood, call attention to important words, and point out similarities and contrasts, e.g. ‘west wind’; ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost’; ‘Sense and Sensibility’; ‘Pride and Prejudice’; ‘Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing, Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before’ (“The Raven” by E. A. Poe). Alliterative verse was a characteristic feature of Old English poetry. It was revived in the late Middle Ages, for example, in William Langland’s *Piers Plowman* and in anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Assonance, also known as vocalic rhyme is a similarity of sounds, especially vowels, between words or syllables, e.g. born/warm. Consider the repetition of the ‘i’ vowel in this fragment of John Donne’s poem “Song”:

When thou sigh’st, thou sigh’st not wind,
But when sigh’st my soul away,
When thou weep’st, unkindly kind,
My life’s blood doth decay.

Syntactic stylistic devices

Syntactic stylistic devices are based on the specific use of syntax, i.e. the way in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses or sentences. The most characteristic syntactic stylistic devices are anaphora, antithesis, ellipsis, epithet,

exclamation, inversion, hyperbole, litotes, paradox, parallelism, rhetorical question, zeugma.

Anaphore is a rhetorical repetition in which the same word or phrase is repeated several times, e.g.

We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the street, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender.

Winston Churchill²⁶

Antithesis is a rhetorical device that serves to emphasise the contrast or opposition of ideas, e.g. "To err is human; to forgive, divine." (Alexander Pope).

Apostrophe is a direct address either to an absent person or to an abstract or non-human entity. John Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn", begins with the following apostrophe: "Thou still unravished bride of quietness".

An address to a deity or muse or some other being to assist the poet in his or her composition is called an *invocation*. In *Paradise Lost* John Milton begins with invocation to the Heavenly Muse, which is actually the Holy Spirit and not one of the nine classical muses, asking it to fill him with knowledge of the creation of the world.

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: Or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's Brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.
And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumin, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great Argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justifie the wayes of God to men.

Here is the invocation in plain English: Tell me about man's first sin, when he tasted the forbidden fruit and caused all our troubles, until Jesus came and saved us. Inspire me with this knowledge. You are the heavenly spirit who inspired Moses in his teachings. I'm asking for your help because I want to write a great work different from any that was ever written before. I want you to teach me, Holy Spirit, because you value goodness more than fancy churches. You know everything. You were there at the Beginning. You sat like a dove with your wings spread over the dark emptiness and made it come to life. Enlighten me where I am ignorant and strengthen my abilities so that I can correctly explain God's great purpose to men. You know everything about Heaven and Hell, so tell me, what was it that made Adam and Eve go against God's orders? They seemed so happy. He had given them the whole world, except for one little thing. Who made them

²⁶ <http://history.hanover.edu/courses/excepts/111church.html> (January 2004).

do this awful thing? It was that snake from Hell, wasn't it. His envy and thirst for revenge made him go trick Eve the way he did. His pride had got him thrown out of Heaven with all his followers. They supported him in his ambition to glorify himself - even to the point of waging war against God. But he was doomed to fail. After a terrible war, God threw him into Hell for daring to fight him. (Source: <http://www.paradiselost.org/lmg/Book-1.html>)

Ellipsis is the deliberate omission of a word or phrase from a sentence which is necessary for grammatical clarity but which can be guessed from a context. For example, Shakespeare frequently uses the phrase: "I will away" missing the verb "be" or "go".

Epithet is an attributive characterisation of a person, thing, or phenomenon. Examples of epithets include: morning dew, loud ocean, sweet smile, blue skies, true love, etc.

Exclamation expresses a sudden strong feeling, eg.

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
(John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn")

Hyperbole is an exaggeration used to heighten the rhetorical effect, e.g. "I will love you until the end of the world and one day more."

Inversion: reversal of a normal word order in a sentence in order to preserve rhyme, rhythm or emphasise something, e.g. "Said he", "Off they went", etc.

Litotes, which is called an ironical understatement, is a stylistic device in which affirmation is achieved by denying its opposite, e.g. "It's not bad" instead of saying "It's good". An excellent example of an extended litotes is a poem by Robert Frost "Fire and Ice."

Fire and Ice

Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if it had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To say that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice.

Paradox is an apparent contradiction. It is statement that, despite sound (or apparently sound) reasoning from acceptable premises, leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory. Examples of paradox: "I'm nobody." "Wise fool." "Ignorance is strength." "Riches make men miserable."

Parallelism is a recurrence of syntactically identical sequences which lexically are completely or partially different. In William Shakespeare's *Richard II* this device is used by the protagonist in the following monologue:

What must the king do now? must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be deposed?
The king shall be contented: must he lose
The name of king? o' God's name, let it go:
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown,
My figured goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little little grave, an obscure grave;
Or I'll be buried in the king's highway [...]

(Act III, scene iii)

Rhetorical question: a question which is not intended to obtain information but for emphasis, e.g.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
(Emily Dickinson, "I'm Nobody")

Zeugma: Zeugma occurs when one word applies to two different concepts, e.g. "She opened the door and her heart to this boy".

Semantic stylistic devices or rhetorical figures

Semantic stylistic devices include figures of speech or **tropes**, i.e. expressions in which words are used in a nonliteral sense; they permit the writer to say one thing and mean another. For example, a poet may say: "My love is like a red, red rose". The figure used here is a direct comparison between unrelated objects: a woman and a flower. This figure of speech is called a simile (see below). Similes, metaphors as well as other figures of speech are frequently found in poetry. They interpret and assess the world represented in a literary work. Below we shall discuss some of the most characteristic semantic stylistic devices: simile, metaphor, conceit, personification, oxymoron, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, periphrasis and cliché.

Simile is a comparison between two things of unlike nature that have something in common. It is recognisable by the use of the word "like" or "as". Similes frequently appear in verse and prose as well as in ordinary speech, e.g. "He fell like a stone". "She looked like a doll". Similes are also used in colloquial phrases, e.g. sly as a fox, busy as a bee, to work like a horse, stubborn as a mule, etc.

Metaphor is the most frequent figure of speech. It compares two unlike objects having something in common. In Greek, this word meant "transfer" because it transfers meaning from one word to another. The metaphor can convey experience which would otherwise be hard to name. Thus instead of saying X we say Y having in mind X. For example, when Shakespeare says "the eye of heaven", he means the sun. The stars are called "blessed candles of the night" (*The Merchant of Venice*, V, 1). The metaphor may deal with a person, object, process, or situation. It allows expression of an individual outlook. Metaphors may be genuine or trite (dead). Genuine metaphors can be usually found in good poetry, e.g. "The leaves fell sorrowfully." Trite metaphors, on the other hand, are to be found in popular literature, newspapers, and scientific prose. "A flood of tears", "years fly" and the "shadow of your smile" are trite or dead metaphors. In Elizabethan love lyrics a number of standard metaphors appear, e.g. cheeks are "roses"; eyes are "rising suns" or "stars"; hair is "gold wires"; lips are "cherries"; and teeth are "orient pearls." Metaphors enable writers to express themselves imaginatively and colourfully. In Macbeth's soliloquy we find a number of genuine metaphors:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.
(William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, V.v)

According to I.A. Richards²⁷, a metaphor consists of three elements called the

²⁷ I(vor) A(rmstrong) Richards (1893-1979) was an influential English literary critic, considered as one of the founders of the contemporary study of literature in English. His books, *The Meaning of Meaning*, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, and *Practical Criticism*, exerted a great influence on modern literary criticism.

tenor, vehicle and ground. The tenor is the subject (topic) to which the metaphor is applied, the vehicle, which is the metaphorical term itself, is the term attributed to the tenor, and the ground is the link between the two. In John Donne's phrase "No man is an island, the tenor is 'man' the vehicle is 'island' and the ground is the comparison of man to island.

Conceit (an old word for concept) is a kind of complex or extended metaphor which draws a parallel between two very distant concepts. English Metaphysical Poetry of the 17th century contains some of the most elaborate conceits. In John Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" a man and wife are compared to a compass.

A VALEDICTION FORBIDDING MOURNING
by John Donne

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
"Now his breath goes," and some say, "No."

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move ;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears ;
Men reckon what it did, and meant ;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love
—Whose soul is sense — cannot admit
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove
The thing which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assurèd of the mind,
Care less, eyes, lips and hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to aery thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two ;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet, when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect, as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

Notes:

1. tear-floods, sigh-tempests – conceits imitated from Petrarch;
2. Moving of th' earth – earthquake;
3. sublunary – those who live below the moon, i.e. inferior to those who are in the heavens;
4. elemented – composed of;
5. a device for finding direction which has a freely moving needle which always point to magnetic north.

Assignment

1. Explain the central metaphor (conceit) of the poem: the compass.
2. Find and explain other conceits.
3. Interpret the meaning of the poem.

Cliché (stereotype) is an expression which has lost its originality by long overuse. Sometimes it is called a dead metaphor, e.g. “You mean everything to me”.

Euphemism is a kind of periphrasis in which an unpleasant or strong word is replaced by a conventionally more acceptable one, e.g. to die = to pass away, to be gone.

Metonymy is the association of one object with another, e.g. “crown” may mean kingdom; bottle means wine; “I’ve drunk a cup” (i.e. a cup of tea).

Oxymoron is a combination of two words whose meanings are opposite, e.g. awfully nice, sweet sorrows, darkness visible, little big man. The following saying of Hamlet is an example of oxymoron: “I must be cruel only to be kind” (III, 4).

Personification (prosopopoeia) is a kind of metaphor in which an inanimate or an abstract concept is described as if it had human features. It can be digressive, e.g. “Thou, nature, art my goddess” (William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, I, 1), or it can be a direct reference: “O Rose, thou art sick!” (William Blake “The Sick Rose”). A particular form of personification is *pathetic fallacy*. This term was used for the first time by the critic John Ruskin in 1856, who referred to the tendency of ascribing human emotions to nature. The technique of pathetic fallacy has been extensively used in poetry.

Periphrasis is a stylistic device which both names and describes. For example, instead of saying: “women”, a poet may say “the fair sex”; “the better half” means wife.

Synecdoche is a trope similar to metonymy in which part is used to signify the whole, e.g. a farm hand means a farm labourer; sail means ship.

Exercise

Identify the following stylistic devices: alliteration, apostrophe, assonance, metaphor, simile in the following excerpts.

1. O wild West Wind,
Thou breath of Autumn being. (Percy Bysshe Shelley)
2. Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets
His hour upon the stage.
And then is heard no more. (William Shakespeare)
3. My love is like a red, red rose. (Robert Burns)
4. All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances;
(William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 2/7)
5. Betty Botter bought a bit of butter.
The butter Betty Botter bought was a bit bitter
And made her batter bitter.

But a bit of better butter
Makes batter better.
So Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter,
Making Betty Botter's bitter batter better.

2.5. Other features of literary style

Apart from the above-defined stylistic devices, we may find several other specific features of style, e.g., allegory, irony, paradox and satire, allusion, pun, parody, travesty and burlesque.

Allegory is a narrative strategy of extending a metaphor through an entire story so that it contains at least two different levels of meaning: surface meaning and a second disguised meaning. A well-known allegory is Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (between 1308 and 1321). One of the most famous allegories in English literature is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Modern allegories include George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945) and William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954). Allegory is closely related to parable, fable and metaphor.

Irony constitutes a special mode of expression frequently found in literature. Irony is based on a certain incongruity between what is said and what is actually meant. The first-century Roman orator Quintilian defined irony as "saying what is contrary to what is meant" (Colebrook 3). It is like saying one thing while you mean another. The surface meaning of words in ironical speech is different from their underlying meaning. Irony sets up a double audience: those who understand only the surface meaning, and those who understand that and also the underlying one. Irony is often used in criticism. We can distinguish the following types of irony:

1. verbal irony,
2. irony of situation,
3. cosmic irony or irony of fate,
4. dramatic irony,
5. Socratic irony,
6. Romantic irony.

In *verbal irony* the author usually expresses an attitude opposite to what he feels. The irony of situation is based on the difference between the actual course of events presented in a literary work and the reader's expectations. In *cosmic irony* or the *irony of fate*, misfortune is the result of fate or chance. In *dramatic irony* the audience knows more than the characters in the play. For example, in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the audience knows that Juliet is not dead, whereas Romeo does not. *Socratic irony*, named after Socrates' teaching method, assumes ignorance and openness to opposing points of view which turn out to be foolish.

Ironic vision is an overall tone of irony that pervades a literary work, suggesting how the writer views the characters and situations. Jonathan Swift's *Modest Proposal* and Daniel Defoe's *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* are the masterpieces of ironic vision in English literature.

Romantic irony, a central notion of Romantic literary theory, is a kind of rhetorical strategy in which an author makes use of playfulness, mockery and ambiguity, which undercut the credibility of his or her literary text. Byron's narrative poem *Don Juan* (1819–24) is a good example of an extensive use of Romantic irony. Concluding, it should be noted that irony is often confused with sarcasm, paradox and satire.

Sarcasm is a peculiar kind of irony. It sounds like praise but it is really an insult. A sarcastic remark aims to ridicule or compromise somebody. Mark Twain once said that the coldest winter he had ever spent was a summer in San Francisco.

Paradox is a statement which sounds false or self-contradictory but may be taken as

truth, e.g. “The child is the father of man.” (William Wordsworth, “The My Heart Leaps Up”); “April is the cruellest month” (T. S. Eliot, “The Waste Land”); or

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter.
(John Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”)

Satire (from Latin *satira* - a medley) is a rhetorical strategy the main aim of which is to expose human individual follies, vices and abuses in order to ridicule and scorn people, institutions, events or customs through irony, burlesque, sarcasm, or other means. It rejects a naive acceptance of false values, foibles, hypocrisy, etc, and exposes in an exaggerated way the differences between truth and falseness. Satire may be an independent literary form or may appear in other forms of literature, both in verse and prose. It can also be found in other arts, e.g. painting, drawings, cartoons, film and new media. Direct satire openly ridicules its object whereas indirect satire, often found in poetry and prose, has to be deduced by the reader.

There are three main types of satire, Horatian, Juvenalian and Menippean, which were developed by Horace²⁸, Juvenal²⁹, and Menippus³⁰. Satires that follow traditions of these authors are classified as Horatian, Juvenalian and Menippean. Horatian satire is tolerant, witty, wise and self-effacing, whereas Juvenalian satire is angry, caustic, resentful, and personal. The third kind of satire, known as Menippean, is usually in prose, which has a length and structure similar to a novel and is characterised by attacking mental attitudes rather than specific individuals or entities.

The history of satire in England begins in the medieval period with **fabliaux**. The works of Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1343-1400) and William Langland (c. 1330- c. 1386) contain satirical elements. One of the most famous satires in the form of a long narrative is Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Another example of the form is Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

Some of stylistic techniques used in satire

Invective: the harsh denunciation of some person or thing in abusive speech or writing, usually by a succession of insulting epithets. A lengthy invective is sometimes called a *diatribe*. A memorable example of invective is in Shakespeare *Timon of Athens*:

Live loathed and long,
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time’s flies,
Cap and knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!
Of man and beast the infinite malady
Crust you quite o’er! (Act III, scene VI)

Caricature is comic exaggeration in order to achieve a grotesque or ridiculous effect. This is most skillfully and famously illustrated in the first two books of Jonathan

²⁸ Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 BC- 8 BC), known as Horace, was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. His works include *Satires*, *Epodes*, *Odes*, *Epistles*, and *Ars Poetica*.

²⁹ Decimus Iūnius Iuvenālis (fl. in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries), known as Juvenal, was a Roman poet and the author of the *Satires*.

³⁰ Menippus of Gadara (fl. 3rd century BC) was a Greek satirist who invented a serio-comic literary genre known as Menippean satire, which was later continued by the Greek rhetorician and pamphleteer Lucian of Samosata (c. 120 – 180 AD), and in ancient Rome by Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC – 65 AD) in *Apocolocyntosis*, and by Petronius (c. 27-66 AD) in *Satiricon*.

Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*.

Reductio ad absurdum: this Latin phrase means "reduction to the absurd". It is used to refer to the process of demonstrating that an idea is false by first assuming its truth, and then showing how that truth leads to absurd conclusions which cannot possibly be true. The most famous example of this technique in an English satire is Swift's "A Modest Proposal".

A literary work may contain references to other works or real life through allusion, pun, parody, pastiche and travesty.

Allusion is an indirect reference to an object, person, event or even another work of literature. A name or event of the story may allude to myth, religion, or to any other aspect of ancient or modern culture (literature). Allusive style is a frequent feature of literature. It is based on the assumption that the a competent reader has a knowledge of the common cultural heritage or the literary tradition and will eventually discover the meaning of an implicit statement hidden behind an allusion. Literary allusions may classified as mythological, classical, biblical, Shakespearean, etc. Mythological allusions are usually references to mythologies of Greece, Rome, Scandinavia and other cultures.

Classical allusions refer to the literary works of ancient Greece and Rome. English and American literatures contain numerous allusions to the Bible and to Shakespeare, regarded as the greatest author in the English language. For example, allusions to Shakespeare's literary output can be found in numerous works of later writers. The title of William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* refers to a phrase from *Macbeth*. John Fowles's novel *The Collector* contains explicit references to *The Tempest*. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is filled with satiric allusions to identifiable contemporary persons, political parties, philosophical trends and institutions. The description of Academy of Projectors on the floating island Laputa is a parody of the Royal Academy; the Lilliputians are the allegorical Whigs, etc. Allusions which are clear to readers in one period of time or in cultural community may be too difficult to understand by readers in another period of time or by readers from other cultures.

Pun is a word which has two meanings, like the one uttered by Mercutio as he is dying in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*:

Ask for me tomorrow and you shall find me a grave man.
(Act III, scene i)

Elaborate puns can be found in the works of such diverse writers as William Shakespeare, John Donne Alexander Pope, James Joyce, Lewis Carroll and Vladimir Nabokov.

Parody is imitation of the characteristic style of a writer or a literary work or literary period designed to ridicule it. The effect of parody obviously depends upon the reader's being familiar with the original. Read the famous medieval poem "Cuckoo Song" and its parody made by Ezra Pound:

Summer is icumen in,
Lhude sing cuccu
Groweth sed and bloweth med
And springth the wode nu.
Sing cuccu!

("Cuckoo Song")

Winter is icumen in
Lhude sing Goddamm,
Raineth drop and staineth slop
And how the rain doth ramm!
Sing: Goddamm.
(from *Ancient Music* by Ezra Pound)

Exercise

Translate this fragment of the medieval poem “Cuckoo Song” into Modern English and compare it with Pound’s ironic version.

Jonathan Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub* is primarily a parody of Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*. Related to parody and satire are pastiche and travesty.

Pastiche is less aggressive than a parody; it is a literary technique that imitates the elements of the style of a previous work. Fredric Jameson writes that “Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language; but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody’s ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse.” (quoted after Hoesterey, X)

Travesty is quite similar to pastiche; it is an imitation of a serious literary subject in a trivial or grotesque manner. Travesty is a crude form of burlesque in which the original subject matter is mocked through incongruous language and style.

A ludicrous or mocking imitation of another work of literature or literary genre is *burlesque*. The word comes from the Italian, ‘burlesco’, meaning ridicule or mockery. In literary criticism the term refers to a literary work whose aim is to caricature the subject matter of another literary work. We distinguish two kinds of burlesque: high and low. In high burlesque a low or trivial subject matter is treated in an inappropriately serious (high) style. Low burlesque or *travesty* deals with a serious (high) subject matter in a ridiculously low style. The *mock heroic* style is a particular form of burlesque. Two of the greatest mock heroic satires in English poetry are “Mac Flecknoe” by John Dryden and “The Rape of the Lock” by Alexander Pope. “Mac Flecknoe” and “The Rape of the Lock” are examples of high burlesque, while the tragedy of Pyramus and Thisbe from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is low burlesque.

A comic misuse of language by a person who is either pretentious or ignorant or both is called *malapropism*. The term is derived from Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s *The Rivals* (1775), in which the character Mrs. Malaprop frequently misused words to great comic effect, e.g. “She’s as headstrong as an *allegory* on the banks of Nile” [alligator].

2.6. Categorisation of literature: literary genres

Genre denotes a category, class, type or structural form of literary works. The classical literary genres, established by Aristotle in his *Poetics* and reinforced by Horace, included epic, lyric, comedy, tragedy and satire. A precise assessment of the genre of certain literary texts may be very difficult and confusing. In some literary texts, particularly in prose fiction, diverse genres may coexist. For example, it is debatable whether Thomas Hardy wrote tragic **novels** or **romances**. We can find features of the Gothic novel, romantic novel and the thriller in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. Until the 18th century the distinction between genres was fixed and clear. Since the 19th century, especially with the development of new literary genres such as the novel, it has been increasingly recognised that the division into genres is arbitrary and historical.

The categorisation of literature can be made on the basis of formal, thematic or other criteria. For example, poetry can be subdivided into epic, lyric and dramatic, while prose can generally be divided into fiction and non-fiction. These categories or genres can be further subdivided.

Literary genres have a history. For example, medieval literary genres include romance, fabliau, beast story, debate, exemplum, etc.

In studying the history of literature you should consider the following points:

- what are the characteristic features of a given genre,

- how it has developed, and
- how it is related to other genres.

2.7. Paratextual devices in a literary work

A literary work contains some or all of the following paratextual devices, i.e. not belonging strictly to the main body of the text, such as title, subtitle, preface, prologue, epilogue, epigraphs, chapter headings, and author's note. These devices, also known as paratexts, are important contexts for a literary work. They provide additional information to the main authorial text.

Title usually suggests the theme of a poem, play or a novel. The writer can explicitly or implicitly state the theme by placing the name of the protagonist in the title, e.g. *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens. The title may also consist only of the forename of the protagonist, e.g. *Emma* by Jane Austen; its diminutive form or nickname, e.g. *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, *Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad or *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov, or a full name, e.g. *David Copperfield*. The title of Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*, has a complex symbolic significance. Literally, it refers to Africa's interior, which was described in the 19th century as the Dark Continent (little known), but it also refers to the dark side of the human mind or soul. Some titles of novels have been inspired by Shakespeare's work, e.g. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* derives from *The Tempest* and William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, from *Macbeth*.

Titles of early novels were quite long, for example, the full title of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoke; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates*. As can be seen, the purpose of such a lengthy title was to summarise the novel's plot and make it attractive for a potential reader.

Subtitle is a secondary title which is usually explanatory in nature. Mary Shelley used a subtitle to give her famous novel, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*,

Preface is an introduction to a book or other literary work written by the work's author. An introductory essay written by a different person is a **Foreword** and may precede an author's preface. The preface often closes with *acknowledgements*.

Prologue, which in Greek means "speech before (something)", is typically an opening to a dramatic play or novel that establishes the setting and gives background information to the plot.

Proem is an introduction to a longer work of poetry. It is similar to invocation, but additionally it gives the plan of the literary work. Each of Edmund Spenser's poem *The Fairy Queen* contains a proem.

Epigraph is a phrase, motto or a quotation that is set at the beginning of a work of literature, setting forth a theme.

Epilogue is the final paratextual component of a novel.

Author's note is usually at the beginning or at the end of a book in novels. It is used by the author to explain why he or she wrote the novel. Sometimes *Foreword* is introduced instead of the author's note. The contemporary American author of horror, suspense, science fiction and fantasy fiction, Stephen King, usually begins his novels with author's notes.

Acknowledgment (also spelled acknowledgement) is a short statement of gratitude at the beginning or end of a book in which the author thanks all the people who have helped in writing the book.

In the following chapters we shall deal with literary categories classified as poetry, drama and prose fiction. But, to conclude, answer the revision questions and do the assignment.

Revision questions

1. What is the difference between content and form in a literary text?
2. What is theme?
3. What is subject matter?
4. What is setting?
5. What are the features of the high and low style in traditional literary theory?
6. What is imagery?
7. Explain the meaning of the following literary devices: alliteration, onomatopoeia, symbol, simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy, synecdoche, euphemism, periphrasis, epithet, hyperbole, ellipsis, anaphora.
8. What are the four types of irony?
9. What are the classical literary genres?
10. Explain the function of some paratextual devices in a literary work.

Assignment

1. Describe some themes, motifs and subject matter of some literary works you know well.
2. Read E. A. Poe's poem "The Raven" and provide a more detailed description of the spatial and temporal setting of this poem.
3. Find and describe images in "The Raven".
4. Find examples of onomatopoeia and alliteration in "The Raven".
5. Find words and phrases which create the tone of the "The Raven".
6. Describe the central symbol in "The Raven." Read in secondary sources about the symbolism of the raven in European culture.
7. Read William Carlos Williams' "This Is Just to Say", and describe its tone.

Chapter Three

Introduction to Poetry

In this chapter we shall study various poetic forms approached through close reading of a wide range of examples. We shall make distinction between narrative (epic) and lyric poetry and then we shall learn about various epic and lyric forms, versification, rhyme, rhythm and other poetic devices. Finally, we shall learn how to analyse and interpret poetry.

Suggested reading: “Lord Randal”; Christopher Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd To His Love, Walter Raleigh, “The Nymph’s Reply”, “What Is Our Life?”; Sir Thomas Wyatt, “I find no peace...”; Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti*, Sonnet 75; William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 and 130; John Donne, “The Good Morrow”, “The Flea”; George Herbert, “The Collar”; John Milton, two short fragments from *Paradise Lost*; Alexander Pope, a fragment from *Essay on Man*; Robert Burns, “O my Luve’s like a red, red rose”, “My Heart’s in the Highlands”; William Wordsworth, “The Daffodils”; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”; John Keats, “Ode On a Grecian Urn” “Ode to a Nightingale”; George Gordon Byron, “She Walks in Beauty”, fragments from *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, a fragment from *Don Juan*; Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind”; E. A. Poe, “The Raven”; Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”; Walt Whitman, “I Hear America Singing”; Emily Dickinson, “I Never Saw a Moor”, “There is No Frigate Like a Book”; Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Pied Beauty”; Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro”; T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”.

3.1. What is poetry?

Probably, no comprehensive, simple answer can be given. Aristotle defines it as ‘imitation by words’. Others understand poetry as an ‘experience of words’. It is much easier to define a poem. A poem is a phonic or graphic record of a poetical idea. Poetry, more than other forms of literature, is intimately concerned with feelings, and it tries to find the right expression for different experiences of the mind. The central themes of poetry are components of human experience, such as: love, death, nature, religion, etc.

Poetry differs radically from prose not only in its peculiar choice of words (poetry uses patterned, concentrated and imaginative language) but in that it deals with fancy: it expresses the inexpressible. Poetry seems to be more than just words. For sensitive people it is an experience of words and their various associations.

3.2. General classification of poetry

Poetry has been traditionally divided into the two major categories: narrative (epic) and lyric. The latter category, i.e. lyric poetry, is probably most popular now. A narrative poem is one that tells us a story, e.g. the epic. Narrative or epic poetry usually deals with the past (history, legends, myths). A lyric is a non-narrative poem in which the poet expresses his feelings, makes a statement about life or creates an image. The lyrical poet is an interpreter of the inward world. In ancient Greece epic poetry was sung while lyric poetry was usually recited to the accompaniment of the lyre.

3.3. Narrative (epic) poetry

Narrative poetry derives its source in an experience of nature and man, which found manifestation in myths and legends. Its aim is to mirror the world without a moral comment. At the dawn of civilisation there were no poets but only singers (minstrels) who danced and chanted in a sort of 'recitative' song relating the heroic deeds of a god or legendary hero. In order to explain the natural processes, early man peopled the universe with a multitude of supernatural beings. He created mythology – an allegorical narrative dealing with gods, demigods and legendary heroes.

The narrative poem is based on what has happened (history) or what men think has happened (legend or myth). Narrative poetry is simple in construction and its metre is uniform. It includes epic, ballad (folk and literary ballads), saga and romance.

The term *epic* (from Greek *epos*, "word" or "tale") is applied to a wide variety of imaginative works, ranging from the earliest oral narrative poems to certain modern novels. An epic poem is a long narrative in high (elevated) style recounting the deeds of a legendary or historical hero. The epic tells an adventurous story which has no explicit moral message and no comment on the actions described. The action of an epic poem has a grand scale.

Some of the most outstanding examples of epic poetry in world literature are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. Among early English epics is *Beowulf* composed by an anonymous author. The most famous epic poem in the English language is John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, published in 1667. It concerns the Fall of Man and its origins.

Saga and *romance* are closely related to epic. Sagas, related to the *Eddas*, are prose narratives of the great Scandinavian heroes. Romances are verse tales of chivalry from medieval France, Spain and England. The most famous medieval English metrical romance (i.e. romance in verse) is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, about the adventures of an Arthurian knight.

Mock epic

The mock epic is a type of epic poetry which satirises some contemporary issues, e.g. "The Rape of the Lock" (1712-14) by Alexander Pope. The story of the poem is as follows: Belinda wakes up from unpleasant sleep, gets dressed, goes out in public, plays cards, has a lock of her hair cut and gets upset. In the opening lines Pope describes the trivial theme of the poem.

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing — This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t'assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?
(Alexander Pope, "The Rape of the Lock," Canto I;
Source: Gutenberg Project)

Mock epic satire is characteristically a neoclassical form. It flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Modern epic

19th century English and American Romantic poetry has produced a number of epic poems which contain autobiographical or discursive elements, e.g. Lord Byron's *Don Juan*, Robert Browning's *The Ring and the Book*, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Ezra Pound's *Cantos* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

Published in 1922, *The Waste Land* shows in a series of visions the chaos, impotence and emptiness of the world. The poem reflects Eliot's belief in the collapse of the values of western civilisation. The basis of the poem is the legend of Fisher King who ruled over the Waste Land. *The Waste Land* opens with a reference to Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Unlike in Chaucer, for Eliot April has lost its power to regenerate nature. It is a painful reminder of the decay of modern civilisation.

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire, stirring
Dull roots with spring rain.
Winter kept us warm, covering
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding
A little life with dried tubers.
(T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*;
Source: Project Gutenberg)

Ballad

One of the oldest forms of poetry is a special kind of narrative poem known as the ballad. These anonymous stories in songs were concerned with sharp conflicts and deep human emotion. The first ballads were sung by minstrels who travelled from town to town to entertain people. The language of the early ballads was quite simple because they were composed, as a rule, by uneducated people. Ballads differ from ordinary narrative poems in these ways:

1. They usually involve common, everyday people (although there are ballads about nobles, too).
2. They ordinarily deal with physical courage and/or tragic love.
3. They contain little characterisation or description; the action moves forward mainly through dialogue. Much of the story is told indirectly.
4. They deal with a single dramatic event, e.g. sudden death.

Ballads tell their stories in ballad stanzas. Each stanza has four lines, and the fourth line usually rhymes with the second (abab). As a rule, the rhythm comes from the repetition of one unaccented sound followed by one accented sound. A common device in ballads is refrain which is a phrase or a sentence repeated at intervals, especially at the end of the stanza. A refrain adds emphasis or suspense and creates rhythmic flow in a ballad. As a rule, ballads were meant to be sung. Folk ballads were thus popular songs of the day. They first

appeared in the British Isles during the Middle Ages. Some of the best ballads were composed in the 15th century. The most popular folk ballads in English include *Lord Randal*, *Barbara Allen*, *The Three Ravens*, *Sir Patrick Spence* and a number of Robin Hood ballads, such as *Robin Hood and the Monk* and *Chevy Chase*. Popular ballads have been imitated by many professional poets. The most notable of literary ballads are John Keats' *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*. Romantic ballads combine epic, lyric and dramatic elements. Ballads may be grouped as follows:

1. ballads about chivalry and those related to popular history;
2. ballads involving various superstitions, e.g. faeries, elves, magic and ghosts;
3. tragic love ballads;
4. love ballads but not tragic;
5. other ballads.

"Lord Randal" is an old Anglo-Scottish border ballad consisting of dialogue. The ballad refers to the death of Randal whose lover was an English spy and murdered him by feeding him black eel broth.

Lord Randal

'O where ha' you been, Lord Randal my son?
 And where ha' you been, my handsome young man?
 'I ha' been at the greenwood; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm wearied wi' hunting and fain wad lie down'.

'An' wha met ye there, Lord Randal my son?
 An' wha met you there; my handsome young man?
 'O I met wi' my true-love; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm wearied wi' huntin' an' fain wad lie down.'

'And what did she give you, Lord Randal my son?
 And what did she give you, my handsome young man?
 'Eels fried in a pan; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm wearied wi' huntin' and fain wad lie down'.

'And wha gat your leavins, Lord Randal my son?
 And wha gat your leavins, my handsome young man?
 'My hawks and my hounds; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm wearied wi' hunting and fain wad lie down'.

'And what becam of them, Lord Randal my son?
 And what becam of them, my handsome young man?
 'They stretched their legs out an' died; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm wearied wi' huntin' and fain wad lie down'.

'O I fear you are poisoned, Lord Randal my son,
 I fear you are poisoned, my handsome young man'.
 'O yes, I am poisoned; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down'.

'What d'ye leave to your mother, Lord Randal my son?
 What d'ye leave to your mother, my handsome young man?
 'Four and twenty milk kye; mother, mak my bed soon,
 For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down'.

'What d'ye leave to your sister, Lord Randal my son?
 What d'ye leave to your sister, my handsome young man?
 'My gold and my silver; mother, mak my bed soon,

For I'm sick at the heart an' I fain wad lie down'.

'What d'ye leave to your brother, Lord Randal my son?
What d'ye leave to your brother, my handsome young man?'
'My houses and my lands; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down'.

'What d'ye leave to your true-love, Lord Randal my son?
What d'ye leave to your true-love, my handsome young man?'
'I leave her hell and fire; mother, mak my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart and I fain wad lie down'.

Assignment

1. Summarise the 'plot' of the ballad.
2. Explain the typical features of a ballad, its subject matter, construction, imagery, rhyme scheme.
3. Describe the patterns of repetition that prevail in the poem. What is their effect?
4. Bob Dylan has written and sung contemporary ballads, e.g. "The Ballad of Hollis Brown" or "The Ballad of Frankie Lee and Judas Priest". Read or listen to one of them and comment.

3.4. Lyric poetry

Lyric poetry is the most extensive category of poetic expression. Since the relative decline of epic poetry in the late 18th century, lyric poetry has become dominant. It is usually concerned with the manifestation of personal moods, feelings or meditations. Lyric poems deal with many existential problems, e.g. love, death, loneliness, etc. The characteristic features of a lyric poem are its unified structure, melodious tone and spontaneously expressed subjective emotions.

The most popular lyric forms include pastoral poetry (eclogue), sonnet, ode, elegy, hymn, psalm, song, aubade, epitaph, etc. Lyric poetry can also be subdivided into: religious, love, patriotic and philosophical lyric.

Pastoral poetry or eclogues

Pastoral poetry celebrates idealised rural life and love between shepherds and shepherdesses. The first pastorals were written by the Greek poet Theocritus (c. 316 - c. 260 BC). The Roman poet Virgil imitated Theocritus in his *Eclogues*. The most memorable examples of Elizabethan pastoral poetry include Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherd's Calendar* as well as the two short poems, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" by Christopher Marlowe and "The Nymph's Reply" by Sir Walter Raleigh.

Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd" and Walter Raleigh's "The Nymph's Reply" are perhaps the most famous Elizabethan pastoral poems. The theme of both poems is *carpe diem* (seize the day) contrasted with reality.

Christopher Marlowe

The Passionate Shepherd To His Love

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, grooves, hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,

By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold,

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs;
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

1599-1600

Sir Walter Raleigh

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

Time drives the flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold,
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten;
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

1600

Notes:

prove - try; a kirtle - a long dress; swain - young man, lover; Philomel - the nightingale; no date - no end.

Assignment

1. These two poems are some of the finest examples of pastoral poetry in the English language. What are the features of pastoral poetry?
2. What atmosphere do the two poems evoke? Who are the speakers and addressees?
3. Compare the theme and tone of the two poems.
4. How do sound and rhyme contribute to your experience of the poems?

Sonnet

The sonnet is one of the most popular forms of English poetry. Its most frequent theme is love, although some sonnets may focus on life, religion and even politics. The sonnet probably originated in Italy in the 13th century. Early sonnets were set to music, with accompaniment provided by a lute. In Italian 'sonnet' meant 'little sound' or 'song'. The Italian poet Petrarch (1304-1374) popularised this form in a collection of lyric poems dedicated to a young woman called Laura. Other popular Italian sonneteers were Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) and Guido Cavalcante (1255-1300). Petrarch's sonnets were translated and imitated by English Renaissance poets, such as Henry Howard Earl of Surrey (1517-1547), Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) and Philip Sidney (1554-1586).

There are two main forms of the sonnet in English poetry: the Petrarchan, or Italian sonnet, and the English, or Shakespearean sonnet. The original Italian (Petrarchan) sonnet form, first used in English poetry by Surrey and Wyatt, is a lyric poem of 14 lines, usually written in the rhythmic pattern called **iambic pentametre** (-/-/-/-/-/). It is divided into two parts, an octave (first eight lines) and a sestet (last six lines). In the first 8 lines a story is told or a problem is set and in the last six lines a solution is given. Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) established the reputation of this form in English poetry. In some of his sonnets Surrey replaced Petrarch's scheme of an eight-line stanza and a six-line stanza with three quatrains (four-line stanzas) and a two-line conclusion known as a couplet. Edmund Spenser (c. 1552-99) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616) adopted the latter scheme in their sonnets.

The *English sonnet*, developed by Edmund Spenser in his *Amoretti* (1595) and William Shakespeare (1564-1616) in *Sonnets* (1609), differs from the *Petrarchan sonnet* in being divided into three quatrains and a final couplet. The Spenserian sonnet has three quatrains, rhyming abab bcbc cdcd and a couplet rhyming ee. Shakespeare's sonnets consist of three differently rhymed quatrains and a concluding couplet. The rhyme scheme of the Shakespearean sonnet is abab cdcd efef gg.

Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are recognised as masterpieces of poetry. Shakespeare wrote 154 sonnets (probably between 1592 and 1594) which expressed the poet's most personal feelings and attitude to life. The first 126 sonnets contain references to a young man of superior beauty and rank (the "fair youth"). The sonnets numbered from 127 to 152 are dedicated to a mysterious and sensual "Dark Lady", the poet's mistress. There are also references to a rival poet. The two final sonnets are probably translations or adaptations of earlier poems. The *Sonnets* were published in 1609 under that title by Thomas Thorpe without the author's authorisation. The main themes of the *Sonnets* are the preservation of beauty and love from the destructive action of time and of the power of poetic art. Sonnet 18 reflects fully these preoccupations.

William Shakespeare**Sonnet 18**

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
 Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
 And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
 And every fair from fair sometime declines,
 By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed;
 But thy eternal summer shall not fade
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
 Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
 When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
 So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
 So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

Assignment

1. Examine the construction of this sonnet.
2. Into how many parts can it be divided?
3. How are these parts related to each other?
4. What is the relationship between Shakespeare's verse and the person he is addressing?
5. What is the meaning of the final couplet?
 What is the rhyme pattern of the Shakespearean sonnet?

In the seventeenth century John Donne (1572-1631) modified the strict pattern of the sonnet form in a series of poems entitled "Holy Sonnets" devoted to religious themes. Donne employed *enjambment*, the technique of running one line into another which raises the emotional intensity of a poem.

John Donne Holy Sonnet X: Death, Be Not Proud

Death, be not proud, though some have callèd thee
 Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
 Die not, poor death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
 From rest and sleep, which yet thy pictures be,
 Much pleasure, then from thee much more, must low
 And soonest our best men with thee do go,
 Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.
 Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men
 And dost with poison, war and sickness dwell,
 And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
 And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

Assignment

Find enjambment and some other stylistic devices in the poem.

Other great masters of the sonnet were John Milton (1608-74), William Wordsworth (1771-1855), John Keats (1795-1821), Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), who wrote a collection of love poems entitled *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882). A number of excellent sonnets were written by First World War poets, including Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) and Wilfred Owen (1893-1915)

Rupert Brooke
The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

Wilfred Owen
Anthem for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs,—
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?
Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of blinds.

Assignment

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two poems.
2. What does the poet want to personify in the first poem?
3. What are the main ideas of the two poems?
4. Both poems contain powerful images. Describe them.
5. Identify metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia and alliteration in both poems.
6. What is the tone of either poem?

Aubade

Aubade or 'dawn song' is a medieval and Renaissance love lyric in which the speaker complains about the coming of the dawn when he must part from his lover. An example is John Donne's "The Sun Rising".

John Donne
The Sun Rising

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
Why dost thou thus,
Through windows, and through curtains, call on us?

Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
Saucy pedantic wretch, go chide
Late school-boys and sour prentices,
Go tell Court-huntsmen that the King will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices;
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams so reverend and strong
Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long:
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late, tell me,
Whether both the Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me.
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday.
And thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes, I,
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compared to this,
All honour's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou sun art half as happy as we,
In that the world' contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere.

Notes:

country ants – rural drudges; rags – fragments

Assignment

1. Why does the Speaker argue with the sun?
2. What argument is presented in the poem?
3. Discuss the form of the poem. What is its rhyme scheme?
4. Find some metaphors (conceits) in the poem.

Other forms of poetry

Dramatic monologue, developed by Robert Browning is a type of lyric poetry in which a speaker addresses not the reader but a silent (hypothetical) listener. Examples include Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses," and T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

In "My Last Duchess," written in 28 rhymed couplets of iambic pentameter, the poet puts in the mouth of the Duke of Ferrara, an art patron, a description of his late wife, whom he probably killed out of jealousy.

My Last Duchess
by Robert Browning
(a fragment)

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Fra Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,

But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 the curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
 Fra Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat"; such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart – how shall I say – too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,
 The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace – all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men – good! but thanked
 Somehow – I know not how – as if she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech (which I have not) to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark" – and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 E'en that would be some stooping; and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. [...]

(Source: Project Gutenberg)

Assignment

1. The Duke of Ferrara reveals in his monologue his own nature and his attitude to his late wife. Say how the Duke describes his late wife and try to explain why he finds the portrait of his late wife preferable to the living original. What does the Duke reveal about himself?
2. Read more about the poem on the Internet and prepare a short presentation.

Elegy presents the poet's meditations on death. The form dates back to 7th cent. B.C. in Greece. Later it was widely used by the Roman poets Catullus and Ovid. Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is one of the most popular elegies in the English language.

Epigram is a short form in verse or prose that is often humorous or satiric, e.g.

We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
 Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think so.
 (Alexander Pope, from *Essay on Criticism*)

Similar to epigram is *aphorism*, which is a concise serious or comic statement, e.g.:

The old believe everything; the middle-aged suspect everything; the young know everything.

(Oscar Wilde)³¹.

Idyll is either a pastoral poem about shepherds or it is an episode describing a rural or idealised setting. Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, a series of 12 poems deals with the history of the legendary King Arthur, his wife Guinevere, Sir Lancelot and Elaine.

Limerick is a fixed verse form popularised by Edward Lear (1812-88). It always rhymes aabba. The a-lines have five feet and the b-lines three feet. The first and last lines usually end with the same word, as in the following example:

There was a Young Lady whose Nose,
Was so long that it reached to her toes;
So she hired an old lady,
Whose conduct was steady,
To carry that wonderful nose.³²

Nonsense verse contains words or phrases which make no sense, or where common words accompany neologisms in expressions intended to mystify and amuse. Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky" in *Through the Looking-Glass* begins with "Twas brillig and the slithy toves".

Nursery rhymes are traditional verses read or chanted to small children by adults. They derive from songs, proverbs, riddles and other forms of literature. Some fine poetry for children was written by Christina Rossetti (1830-94), e.g. *Sing-Song* (1872) and T.S. Eliot's (1898-1965) *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), which is a nonsense verse in the tradition of Lewis Carroll (1832-98). One of the best-known English nursery rhymes is "Humpty Dumpty".

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the King's horses, And all the King's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again!

Other well-known nursery rhymes are: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"; "London Bridge"; "Ring-a-Ring o' Roses"; "Little Jack Horner"; and "Little Miss Muffet".

Ode is a lengthy, song-like poem with an elaborate stanzaic structure and elevated style. The first odes were written by the Greek poet Pindar (c. 522-443 BC) and the Roman poet Horace (65BC-8 BC). The Horatian ode is characterised by uniform stanzas, each with the same metrical pattern, and is generally more meditative and more personal. During the Renaissance the ode was revived in France by Pierre Ronsard. The ode often praises people, music and poetry, natural scenes, or abstract concepts. Some of the most famous Romantic odes include William Wordsworth's "Intimations on Immortality," John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode to Autumn" or Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" (see Supplement 3.10).

Villanelle, originally an Italian verse form, has a complex structure. It consists of five three-line stanzas (*tercets*) and a final quatrain. The structure of the first five verses is as follows: the first and third lines end with rhyming words; the second lines throughout the first five verses rhyme in their ending words. The sixth verse has four lines and the first, third and fourth lines all rhyme with the first and last lines of the other five verses. An example of a modern villanelle is Dylan Thomas' poem "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night."

³¹ Oskar Wilde, *Nie lubię zasad, wolę przesady i inne aforyzmy* (Kalisz: Wielkopolskie Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1994) 70.

³² K. Fordoński (ed.), *An Anthology of English Literature. From the Victorians to Our Contemporaries (1832-1997)* (Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis, 1999) 64.

Do not go gentle into that good night,
 Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
 Because their words had forked no lightning they
 Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
 Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
 And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
 Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
 Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
 Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
 Do not go gentle into that good night.
 Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Assignment

1. Compare and contrast this poem with John Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning."

3.5. Prosody

Prosody is the study of versification, i.e. the structure of poetic composition. It includes the study of metre, rhythm, rhyme and stanza forms.

Metre

Metre is a sequence of accented and unaccented syllables which is organised into a pattern called foot. The foot is a unit of English verse. It consists of not less than two or more than three syllables. One foot forms one unit of rhythm in a poem. For example, a line consisting of 5-feet is called a pentametre; 6-feet - hexametre. The most popular feet in English poetry are listed below.

Anglo-Saxon poetry was not metrical; it was mainly based on a system of alliteration. From Chaucer until the emergence of free verse English poetry is metrical. i.e., it relies on a sequence of accented and unaccented syllables.

Iamb (-/)	<p>An unstressed syllable is followed by a stressed one, e.g. To be or not to be (William Shakespeare, <i>Hamlet</i>) or Come live with me and be my love. (Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd")</p> <p>It is the most common of metre in English. An example of iambic tetrametre is: I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills. (William Wordsworth, "Daffodils")</p>
Trochee (/ -)	<p>A stressed syllable is followed by an unstressed syllable. E.g.: daily, certain, over .</p>

	<p>Tyger, tyger, burning bright... (William Blake, "The Tyger")</p> <p>Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary... (E.A. Poe, "The Raven")</p>
Anapest (--)	<p>Two unstressed syllables are followed by a stressed one, e.g. up above, referee, comprehend, cameroon.</p> <p>If a person conceives an opinion That my verses are stuff that will wash, Or my Muse has one plume on her pinion, That person's opinion is bosh. (Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Poeta Loquitor")</p>
Dactyl (/--)	<p>A stressed syllable is followed by two unstressed ones. It was a natural foot for the Greek language, e.g. beautiful, merrily, murmuring, Washington.</p> <p>When can their glory fade? O the wild charge they made! All the world wonder'd. Honour the charge they made! Honour the Light Brigade, Noble six hundred! (Alfred Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade")</p>

Table 1. The most popular feet in English poetry.

Iambic pentametre

The most common verse pattern in English poetry is **iambic pentametre**, i.e. the iambic five-foot line.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date: ...
(Shakespeare, Sonnet XVIII)

Rhythm

Rhythm is a flow of speech characterised by regular recurrence of certain phonetic elements such as beat or accent. It is based on the opposition of stressed and unstressed syllables. Rhythm may be regular or varied. **Sprung rhythm** refers to the poetry of the late Victorian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, in which a stressed syllable is combined with any number of unstressed syllables.

Rhyme

Rhyme is the repetition of identical or similar syllable sounds. There are three kinds of rhymes: single or masculine rhymes between words ending in stressed syllable: day/say, awake/forsake; double or feminine rhymes between words in which the first syllable is stressed and the last is unstressed, e.g. daily/gaily; triple rhymes between words in which the first syllable is stressed and the last two are unstressed, e.g. tenderly/slenderly. Rhymes can be full or complete, e.g. deep/sleep or incomplete, e.g. flesh/fresh. Rhymes are arranged within a stanza. We may distinguish between end-of-line rhymes and internal rhymes. End-of-line rhymes appear at the terminal words or syllables in a line. Internal rhymes occur inside a verse. For example: "Once upon a midnight dreary while I pondered weak and weary..."(E.A. Poe); "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain" (George) Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*). Rhymed words share all sounds following the word's last stressed syllable. The rhyme scheme is the pattern of end-of-line rhymes in a stanza, e.g. abba.

Stanza forms

Stanza is an ordered group of lines forming a complete division of a poem, also known as verse. Here is a description of the most common stanza forms in English poetry.

A *two-line stanza*, rhyming aa, is called a *couplet*. A heroic couplet is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used for epic and narrative poetry. It was introduced by Geoffrey Chaucer in the *Legend of Good Women* and *The Canterbury Tales*.

A *three-line stanza*: tercet, rhyming aaa or aba. *Terza rima* is a verse consisting of a series of three-line stanzas with the rhyme pattern: aba bcb cdc, etc. The second line of each tercet sets the rhyme for the following tercet. This pattern changes only at the conclusion of the poem, where a single line that rhymes with the second line of the final tercet stands alone; the rhyme pattern at the end of the poem is: "aba bcb cdc." A fine example of the *terza rima* occurs in Percy Bysshe Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind." Here is the beginning of the poem. The whole poem is presented in 3.10 Supplement below.

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, ...

The *terza rima* has been used by a number of poets, including Dante (*The Divine Comedy*), Giovanni Boccaccio (*Amorosa Visione*), Geoffrey Chaucer ("Complaint to His Lady") and several English Renaissance poets. George Gordon Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley used *terza rima* in their poetry. In "Ode to the West Wind" Shelley employs a *terza rima sonnet* form for each of the five parts that make up the poem.

A *four-line stanza*: quatrain, rhyming abab (cross rhymes) or abba (framing rhymes);

A *five-line stanza*: quintet or quintain; The best-known quintain in English poetry is called the limerick (aabba).

There was an Old Man with a beard,
Who said, "It is just as I feared!—
Two Owls and a Hen,
four Larks and a Wren,
Have all built their nests in my beard.

The *quatrain* is a four-line stanza. It is one of the most common stanza forms in poetry. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751) by Thomas Gray contains heroic quatrains which rhyme in an abab pattern and are written in iambic pentameter. Let's read the beginning of the poem.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

The *ballad metre* has the pattern abcb consisting of alternating four- (tetrametre) and three- (trimetre) stress lines. Usually only the second and fourth lines rhyme (in an a/b/c/b pattern). Samuel Taylor Coleridge adopted the ballad stanza in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, alternating eight and six syllable lines.

A *six-line stanza*: sextet or sestet, rhyming aabaab, ababcc, abcabc, abccba, aaabab (Burns stanza).

A *seven-line stanza*: septet; the most famous is rhyme royal, introduced into English poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer, which uses the rhyme scheme ababbcc, the lines having 10 syllables each, i.e. (usually) iambic pentametre.

The rhyme royal (rime royal) or Chaucerian stanza is a seven-line stanza written in iambic pentametre rhyming ababbcc. It was popularised by Geoffrey Chaucer in *Troilus and Creysyde* and in *The Canterbury Tales*. Later King James I of Scotland used it in his poem

King's Quair (The King's Book), hence the name 'rime royal'.

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of Ioye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!
(Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, Book I;
Source Project Gutenberg)

Ottava rima – an eight-line stanza: octave, or octet, rhymes abababcc, the lines being of either 10 or 11 syllables (i.e. iambic pentametre, sometimes with an extra syllable). The most famous example of a poem written in English in ottava rima is George Byron's *Don Juan*.

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan—
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the devil somewhat ere his time.
(George Byron, *Don Juan*, *Canto the First*;
Source: Project Gutenberg)

Originally, ottava rima was developed in Italy by such poets as Torquato Tasso and Lodovico Ariosto. In English poetry it appeared during the Renaissance but it became most popular during the Romantic period. Byron shortened the verse line to 10 syllables in *Don Juan*. W(illiam) B(utler) Yeats used ottava rima in his poem "Sailing to Byzantium."

Sailing to Byzantium

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees
- Those dying generations - at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire

And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.
(William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium" Source: Gutenberg Project)

A nine-line stanza: the Spenserian stanza (after Edmund Spenser, the author of *The Faerie Queene*), which rhymes ababbcbcc, the first 8 lines being pentameters and the last a **hexameter** or **alexandrine**.

Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shepherds weeds,
Am now enforst a far unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to change mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose prayes having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.
(Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queen*; Source: Project Gutenberg)

The Spenserian stanza consists of two iambic pentametre quatrains and a concluding iambic hexametre, rhyming ababbcbcc. It was originated by Edmund Spenser (1552-99) in *Faerie Queen*. Although Spenser's verse form fell into disuse soon after his death, it was revived in the 19th century by several notable poets, including: Lord Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, John Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Percy Bysshe Shelley in *The Revolt of Islam* and *Adonais*, Sir Walter Scott in *The Vision of Don Roderick*, and William Wordsworth in "The Female Vagrant", included in Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*. Also Sir Alfred Tennyson used the Spenserian stanza in *The Lotos-Eaters*.

Verse patterns

Blank verse, also called heroic verse, in unrhymed iambic pentametre, is one of the most common metrical patterns in English poetry. It was introduced into English literature in the 16th century by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. Surrey used blank verse in his translation of the fourth and second books of Virgil's *Aeneid* (1554, 1557). Poems written in blank verse are divided into 'verse paragraphs' of varying lengths. Blank verse was used widely in most Elizabethan dramas. Christopher Marlowe was the first English dramatist to make full use of blank verse in his dramas. Shakespeare's tragedies are written predominantly, though not entirely, in blank verse. Also in comedies William Shakespeare uses blank verse, for example, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in Theseus' speech to Hippolyta:

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name. (5.1.12-17)

After Shakespeare, blank verse was used by John Milton in his epic *Paradise Lost*.

Romantic English poets (William Wordsworth, Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats) revived blank verse as a major form. Also Victorian poets (Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning) wrote poems in blank verse.

3.6. Modern poetry

The term *modern poetry*, usually refers either to contemporary poetry or to poetry which was written from the late 19th century. Modern poetry is often characterised by broken syntax, inverted sentence order, frequent omission of connectives and punctuation.

Free verse

Free verse is a typical form of modern poetry. It usually has no regular stanza and metric pattern.

T(homas) S(tearns) Eliot (1888-1965) was a major innovator in modern English poetry. One of his most famous poems, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915) reflects a total break with the conventions of Romantic poetry. The poem is written in free verse in a form of an interior monologue (the stream of consciousness technique), which is in a way related to Robert Browning’s dramatic monologue. It shows the fragments of thoughts of an average, middle-aged man, Mr Prufrock. Prufrock, the persona in the poem, is a shy, lonely man who attends or is going to a party. The poem describes two sides of Prufrock’s own personality. His romantic personality urges him to approach a woman in the room. However, his repressed or egotistic side tells him to withdraw. Prufrock is afraid of any human contacts. The poem shows the alienation and vacuity of modern life. Consider the beginning of the poem:

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question...
Oh, do not ask, ‘What is it?’
Let us go and make our visit.

As you can notice, this poem has no regular rhythm or rhyme, which is typical of modern poetic diction. The speaker, called a *persona* in modern poetry, does not necessarily reflect the poet himself, as was the case in Romantic poetry. T. S. Eliot objected to the way Romantic poets expressed emotion. He proposed a new way of expressing emotion through so-called objective correlative. In an essay on *Hamlet* Eliot wrote: “The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked”.³³

Concrete poetry

Concrete poetry, also known as visual, pattern or shape poetry, uses letter arrangements to enhance the meaning of a poem. Although concrete poetry developed in the 1950s, its early examples can be found in George Herbert’s (1593-1633) *Temple* and in

³³ T. S. Eliot, “Hamlet and His Problems” (1919), <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/glossary/Objective-correlative.html> (January 2004).

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, in the Chapter titled "A Caucus-Race and a Long Tale" (Chapter III) told by the Mouse. When Alice hears the Mouse's "long and sad tale", she thinks that the Mouse means "tail" and imagines its shape.

'Mine is a long and a sad tale!' said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.
'It is a long tail, certainly,' said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse's tail; 'but why do you call it sad?' And she kept on puzzling about it while the Mouse was speaking, so that her idea of the tale was something like this:—

Fury said to a
mouse, That he
met in the
house,
"Let us
both go to
law: I will
prosecute
you. – Come,
I'll take no
denial; We
must have a
trial: For
really this
morning I've
nothing
to do."
Said the
mouse to the
cur, "Such
a trial,
dear Sir,
With
no jury
or judge,
would be
wasting
our
breath."
"I'll be
judge, I'll
be jury",
Said
cunning
old Fury:
"I'll
try the
whole
cause,
and
condemn
you
to
death."

3.7. Analysis and interpretation of poetry

Analysis

An analysis of a poem aims to help you identify how its particular elements, such as

rhyme, rhythm, metaphor, etc. contribute to the overall meaning of the poem. In analysing a poem you should be able to identify its genre, theme or subject, structure, speaker or persona, imagery, tone, message. Besides, before you start your interpretation of the poem, you should be able to identify its historical context and its links with previous literature (*intertextuality*) and you should know about its author and his outlook (worldview).

Here are seven steps to analysis and interpretation of poetry. You may follow these steps while making your own analysis and interpretation of a poem:

Step 1	Analysis: Identify the type of the poem (epic, lyric, dramatic).
Step 2	Analysis: Describe the form of the poem: 1. stanza arrangement; 2. rhyme scheme; 3. rhythm pattern (foot).
Step 3	Analysis: Find metaphors, similes, epithets, etc. and explain imagery.
Step 4	Analysis: Identify the voice (speaker/persona) of the poem (who is speaking to whom?)
Step 5	Analysis: Identify the subject, theme and tone of the poem (what is said and how?)
Step 6	Analysis: Find out what is implied by the tradition behind the poem (verse form, poetic kind, metrical patterns as reference to particular epoch, movement or style).
Step 7	Interpretation: Provide your own interpretation of the poem (explain to yourself and to your audience what the title, subject and situation suggest).

3.8. Revision questions

1. What makes poetry distinct from other forms of literature, e.g. prose?
2. Discuss the characteristic features of epic and lyric poetry.
3. What are typical features of a ballad?
4. Discuss some popular forms of lyric poetry.
5. What is prosody?
6. What are the stylistic devices in Anglo-Saxon poetry?
7. What is enjambment?
8. What is iambic pentametre?
9. Define briefly: rhythm and rhyme.
10. Define briefly the most popular verse patterns in English poetry.
11. What are the features of pastoral poetry?
12. What do you know about the sonnet?
13. What is blank verse?
14. What is free verse?
15. What are the features of modern poetry?

3.9. Extra assignments

1. Read the medieval ballad "Lord Randal" and find some stylistic devices characteristic of ballads.
2. Read Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and find some analyses of the poem on the Internet and discuss the form and content of the poem in class.
3. Read and compare the form and content of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" by Christopher Marlowe and "The Nymph's Reply" by Walter Raleigh.
4. Read in Polish or in English a few sonnets to Laura by Petrarch. Find on the Internet some information about the Renaissance concepts of love, especially Platonic love. Read Shakespeare's Sonnet 130. Compare the form and content of Shakespeare's sonnets with one of Wyatt's and Spenser's.
5. Make a prosodic analysis of a chosen poem and present it in class.

6. Read Walt Whitman's poem "I Hear America Singing" and discuss its characteristic features of its form and content.
7. Read T.S. Eliot's poem "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and describe the persona, theme and the construction of this poem, discuss its imagery: urban setting, boredom, tedium, nostalgia, monotony; find irony in the poem.

3.10 Supplement

Poems for close reading and analysis

All respectable poetry invites close reading.

I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*

This Supplement contains more poems for analysis, interpretation and appreciation. But above all poetry should be read aloud for enjoyment. Don't hesitate to read poems aloud at home alone or in the classroom. Of course, it is not easy to read poetry aloud in English. It needs some training. Before you start reading poetry aloud, listen to poetry being read by actors. You can hear a lot of poetry recordings on the Internet. When you finally decide to read a poem aloud, try to read it slowly and clearly in a normal relaxed voice. It is necessary to have a general understanding of a poem before you begin to read it aloud. Therefore, if you don't know the pronunciation and/meaning of some words, check them first in your dictionary. Next try to follow the guideline above: "Seven steps to analysis and interpretation of poetry." Learn some poems by heart.

Geoffrey Chaucer
The Canterbury Tales
The General Prologue
(a fragment)

Whan that Aprille with hise shoures sote
The droghte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open iye
(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages):
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seeke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.

(modern version)

When April with his showers sweet with fruit
The drought of March has pierced unto the root
And bathed each vein with liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;
When Zephyr also has, with his sweet breath,
Quickened again, in every holt and heath,
The tender shoots and buds, and the young sun
Into the Ram one half his course has run,
And many little birds make melody
That sleep through all the night with open eye
(So Nature pricks them on to ramp and rage)-
Then do folk long to go on pilgrimage,
And palmers to go seeking out strange strands,

To distant shrines well known in sundry lands.
And specially from every shire's end
Of England they to Canterbury wend,
The holy blessed martyr there to seek
Who helped them when they lay so ill and weal.

(Source of the modern version:

“Medieval Sourcebook at: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/ct-prolog-para.html>)

Notes:

Zephyr - the west wind; holt - plantation; Ram - the first of the twelve signs of the zodiac; palmers - pilgrims who visited the Holy Land and wore two crossed palms to indicate that they had done so; martyr - here Thomas a Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury who was murdered in 1170 and canonised in 1173.

Assignment

1. Listen to the original (Middle English) fragment of Chaucer's General Prologue on the Internet and try remember the medieval pronunciation.
2. How does the narrator describe the return of spring?
3. Why do people want to go to Canterbury on pilgrimage?
4. Identify the stress pattern of this fragment.
5. Discuss the spelling differences between the original and the modern translation.

Western Wind

(Anonymous)

Western wind, when will thou blow,
The small rain down can rain?
Christ! If my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again!

Assignment

1. What is the theme of this short medieval poem?
2. Describe its structure.

Sonnet 63

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn;
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night,
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring:
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life.
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

Assignment

1. Describe the two main themes of the poem.
2. What is the meaning of the final couplet?
3. What do 'knife' and 'night' symbolise?
4. Find more stylistic devices in this sonnet, such as epithet, metaphor, simile, inversion, etc.

Sonnet 130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;
(My mistress when she walks treads on the ground).
And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

Assignment

1. What do the first 12 lines describe?
2. Does the poet idealise the object of his affection?
3. What kind of compensation does the closing couplet bring?
4. What is the connotation of the word 'rare'?
5. What is the rhythmic pattern of the sonnet?
6. What is the rhyme scheme of the sonnet?
7. Find some stylistic devices such as epithets, metaphors, similes, personification, etc.
8. Sonnet 130 is a reaction against the romantic exaggeration of woman's beauty present in many contemporary love lyrics. Comment.

Walter Raleigh What is our life?

What is our life? A play of passion,
Our mirth the music of division;
Our mothers' wombs the tiring-houses be
Where we are dressed for this short comedy;
Heaven the judicious, sharp spectator is,
That sits and marks still who doth act amiss;
Our graves that hide us from the searching sun
Are like drawn curtains when the play is done:
Thus march we, playing to our latest rest,
Only we die in earnest, that's no jest.

Assignment

1. Find and explain similes and metaphors in the poem.
2. Discuss the overall metaphor of the poem contained in the title.
3. Find some relationship between this poem and Shakespeare's idea of human existence.

The Flea by John Donne

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this loss cannot be said
A sin, nor shame, nor loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,

And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh, stay three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, yea more than married are.
The flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to that, self-murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail in blood of innocence?
Wherein could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself, nor me, the weaker now;
'Tis true; then learn how false, fears be;
Just so much honour when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

Assignment

1. What does the flea symbolise?
2. Explain the terms 'conceit' and 'wit'.
3. Analyse the structure of this poem and identify poetic devices employed in it.

Batter My Heart (The Holy Sonnet 14) by John Donne

Batter my heart, three-personed God; for, you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force, to break blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurped town, to another due,
Labour to admit You, but oh, to no end!
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captivated, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain.
I am betrothed unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie, or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

Notes

fain – gladly; to ravish – to rape; violate.

Assignment

1. What does the Speaker mean by "batter" in line 1 and "ravish" in line 14?
2. The poem contains several paradoxes. Can you identify them?
3. What is the rhyme pattern in the poem?
4. Interpret the Speaker's plea to God.

George Herbert
The Collar

I struck the board and cried, 'No more,
I will abroad!
What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there; tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load.'
But as I raved, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, 'Child!'
And I replied, 'My Lord.'

Notes:

Line 1. board: table. 2. I... abroad: I will go out into the world. 5. store: abundance.
still... suit: always petitioning. 14. bays: laurel. 22. rope of sands: church teaching
considered futile by a defiant young man. 29. death's-head: memento of man's mortality.

Assignment

1. Who is the 'I' and 'thou' in this poem?
2. Explain the construction of the conceit.
3. What problem is raised in the poem?
4. What attitude does it express?

Robert Herrick
To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting;
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer,
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times, still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Assignment

1. What 'message' does this poem carry?
2. Find and explain metaphors in the poem.

Robert Burns

O my Luve's like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luv am I;
And I will luv thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luv thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luv!
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luv,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

Assignment

1. Find some stylistic devices in the poem and explain their role.
2. What is the rhyme pattern of the poem?
3. What is the function of similes and hyperboles in the poem?
4. What is the theme of the poem?

William Wordsworth
The Daffodils

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company;
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with daffodils.

Assignment

1. Describe the imagery of the poem.
2. What is the theme of this poem?
3. What is the relationship between the first three stanzas and the last one?

Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Kubla Khan
Or a Vision in a Dream. A Fragment

In Xanadu¹ did Kubla Khan²
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place; as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,

As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced,
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw;
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honeydew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Notes:

1. Xanadu is an indefinite region of the Tartars in Asia.
2. Kubla Khan was a 13th-century Mongol ruler of China.
3. Dulcimer is a musical instrument which has metallic wires played with light hammers.
4. Mount Abora or rather Amara, amountain in Abyssinia. On it, according to tradition, was an earthly paradise, like Kubla Khan's.

Assignment

1. Discuss the imagery of the poem.
2. Identify alliteration, end-line patterns and incomplete rhymes in the poem.
3. Identify sensory perceptions (what the Speaker heard and).
4. Describe the tone and the atmosphere of the poem.

**John Keats
Ode On a Grecian Urn**

I

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal – yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty' – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Explanatory notes:

1. Tempe - a lovely valley in Thessaly, Greece; Tempe - a beautiful valley near Mt. Olympus in Greece; the dales of Arcady - picturesque valleys of Arcadia region in Greece; 3. Attic - pertaining to Attica, a state in ancient Greece; 4. Brede - embroidery; 5. Cold - here immortal.

Assignment

1. What is the theme of this poem?
2. Discuss some stylistic devices used by Keats.
3. What is Keats' conception of art? Why is art superior to nature?
4. Interpret the meaning of the last two lines.

Ode to a Nightingale

by John Keats

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

George Gordon Byron
When We Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half-broken hearted,
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this!

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow;
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,

A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me-
Why wert thou so dear?

They know not I knew thee
Who knew thee too well:
Long, long shall I rue thee
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met:
In silence I grieve
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? -
With silence and tears.

George Gordon Byron
She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, so eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Explanatory note: aspect - countenance.

Assignment

1. How is the woman described in the poem?
2. What is the dominant image in this poem?
3. Find examples of similes, metaphors and personification.
4. Explain the meaning of the last line.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Ode to the West Wind

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palace and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! I even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade by thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has changed and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thought over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished heart
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to awakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Explanatory notes: sister of the Spring - south wind; clarion - a trumpet with a pure tone; angels - messengers; Maenad - a priestess of Bacchus; make me the lyre - Aeolian lyre, a wind harp;

Assignment

1. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?
2. Find similes, metaphors and personification in the poem
3. What is the dominant image in this poem?
4. How do you understand the description of the West Wind as both 'Destroyer and Preserver'?

**Percy Bysshe Shelley
Ozymandias**

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert... Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!
 Nothing beside remains: round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Note. Ozymandias is another name of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II (or Ramses the Great). Ramses was a warrior king and a builder of temples, statues and other monuments. He was pharaoh at the time Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, as recounted in the second book of the Bible.

Assignment

1. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem?
2. What is the metre of the poem?
3. What is the meaning of the ruined statue?
4. What is the theme of the poem?

Christina Rossetti

Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,
 Gone far away into the silent land;
 When you can no more hold me by the hand,
 Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
 Remember me when no more day by day
 You tell me of our future that you plann'd:
 Only remember me; you understand
 It will be late to counsel then or pray.
 Yet if you should forget me for a while
 And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
 For if the darkness and corruption leave
 A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
 Better by far you should forget and smile
 Than that you should remember and be sad.

Edgar Allan Poe

The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
 Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
 While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
 "'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door-
 Only this, and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
 And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
 Eagerly I wished the morrow;- vainly I had sought to borrow
 From my books surcease of sorrow- sorrow for the lost Lenore-
 For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore-
 Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
 Thrilled me- filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;
 So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating,
 "'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door-

Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;-
This it is, and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
"Sir," said I, "or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you"- here I opened wide the door;-
Darkness there, and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"-
Merely this, and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.
"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice:
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore-
Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore;-
'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately raven of the saintly days of yore;
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door-
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door-
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore.
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient raven wandering from the Nightly shore-
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning- little relevancy bore;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blest with seeing bird above his chamber door-
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing further then he uttered- not a feather then he fluttered-
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "other friends have flown before-
On the morrow he will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore-
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never- nevermore'."

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust and door;
Then upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore-
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,
She shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then methought the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee- by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite- respite and nepenthe, from thy memories of Lenore!
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!- prophet still, if bird or devil!
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted-
On this home by horror haunted- tell me truly, I implore-
Is there- is there balm in Gilead?- tell me- tell me, I implore!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil- prophet still, if bird or devil!
By that Heaven that bends above us- by that God we both adore-
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore-
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign in parting, bird or fiend," I shrieked, upstarting-
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!- quit the bust above my door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted- nevermore!

Assignment

1. What are the rhythm and rhyme schemes of the poem?
2. Describe its imagery, tone atmosphere.
3. What story does the poem tell?
4. Divide the poem into parts and explain the function of each part..
5. Characterise the relationship between the speaker and the raven.
6. What does the bird symbolise?
7. Find examples of onomatopoeia, alliteration, metaphor, periphrasis, oxymoron, etc.
8. What is the function of the word 'Nevermore'?

To Helen
by Edgar Allan Poe

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece,
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo, in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand,
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!
(1845)

Assignment

1. Poe compares Helen to Psyche, beloved of Eros (Cupid) in ancient mythology. Find out on the Internet information about the myth of Cupid and Psyche.
2. Analyse and interpret the poem.

Walt Whitman
(1819-1892)

I Hear America Singing

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe
and strong,
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off
work,
The boatman signing what belongs to him in his boat, the
deck-hand singing on the steamboat deck,
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hater singing
as he stands,
The wood-cutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the
morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at
work, or of the girl sewing or washing,
Each singing what belongs to the day - at night
the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

Assignment

1. Who are the 'singers' in the poem? What does 'singing' refer to?
2. What is the tone of this poem.
3. Discuss the construction and the theme of the poem.

O Captain! My Captain

O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done.
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize
we sought is won.
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people
all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel
grim and daring:
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red.
Where on the deck my Captain lies.
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear
the bells:
Rise up – for you the flag is flung –
for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribbon's wreaths –
for you the shores a-crowding.
For you they call, the swaying mass.
their eager faces turning:
Here Captain! dear father!
The arm beneath your head!
It is some dream upon the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are
pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm: he has no
no pulse nor will.
The ship is anchored safe and sound,
its voyage closed and done.
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in
with object won:
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Assignment

1. This poem is dedicated to President Lincoln. Explain its historical background.
2. Analyse its structure and content.

Alfred Tennyson

(1809-1892)

The Lady of Shalott

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road run by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,

Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early,
In among the bearded barley
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly;
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, " 'Tis the fairy
The Lady of Shalott."

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue

The knights come riding two and two.
She hath no loyal Knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the Moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed.
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, burning bright,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;

The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining.
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And around about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance --
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right --
The leaves upon her falling light --
Thro' the noises of the night,
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and Burgher, Lord and Dame,
And around the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? And what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the Knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space

He said, 'he has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

Assignment

1. Describe the setting of the poem.
2. Who is the Lady of Shalott?
3. Why does the Lady of Shalott leave the island?
3. How does the poem end?
4. Discuss the themes and imagery of the poem.

Robert Browning 1812–1889)
Porphyria's Lover

The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me — she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again

Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
 And I untightened next the tress
 About her neck; her cheek once more
 Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
 I propped her head up as before,
 Only, this time my shoulder bore
 Her head, which droops upon it still:
 The smiling rosy little head,
 So glad it has its utmost will,
 That all it scorned at once is fled,
 And I, its love, am gained instead!
 Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
 Her darling one wish would be heard.
 And thus we sit together now,
 And all night long we have not stirred,
 And yet God has not said a word!

Assignment

1. Describe the weather on the night Porphyria was murdered in "Porphyria's Lover." How does the description of the weather reinforce the atmosphere of the poem?
2. What was the murder weapon in "Porphyria's Lover"?
3. Why did Porphyria's lover choose that particular moment to murder her? Identify specific lines in the poem that explain his motivation.
4. The silent listener cannot be easily identified in "Porphyria's Lover." Browning originally published this poem and one other ("Johannes Agricola in Meditation") under the title "Madhouse Cells." In Victorian England insane asylums were much more like prisons than hospitals. At the time there was little understanding of mental illnesses or how to treat them. Mentally disturbed people were frequently locked in their cells. To make the situation even worse, the public was allowed to pay an admission fee and to tour the insane asylum, looking into the various cells at the inmates in the same way we might look at animals in a zoo for entertainment. With the title "Madhouse Cells," perhaps Browning had in mind that the speaker, Porphyria's lover, was in a cell in such an insane asylum. With this knowledge in mind, who do you think might be the silent listener in the poem?

Emily Dickinson
 (1830-1886)

There is No Frigate Like a Book

There is no frigate like a book
 To take us lands away,
 Nor any coursers like a page
 Of prancing poetry.

This traverse may the poorest take
 Without oppress of toll;
 How frugal is the chariot
 That bears a human soul!

Emily Dickinson
I am Nobody

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
 Are you - Nobody - Too?
 Then there's a pair of us?

Don't tell! They'd advertise - you know!
How dreary - to be - Somebody!
How public - like a Frog -
To tell one's name - the livelong June -
To an admiring Bog!

Assignment

1. Discuss the imagery of the two poems

**Gerard Manley Hopkins
God's Grandeur**

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; Bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Assignment

1. What is the structure of the poem?
2. Explain the problem set in the octave and the solution in the sestet.
3. Explain the meaning of the metaphor of God's grandeur as an electric force.

**Ezra Pound
In a Station of the Metro**

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

Assignment

1. Describe the image evoked by this couplet and relate it to the title of the poem.
2. What do you know about Imagism?

Chapter Four

Introduction to drama

In this chapter we shall learn about drama, its origins and structural elements. Next we shall discuss features of tragedy and comedy as well as a few other dramatic forms. You should remember a number of terms related to dramatic literature. Finally, suggestions will be given how to read and analyse a dramatic play.

Suggested reading: William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*; *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Arthur Miller, *The Death of a Salesman*; Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*.

4.1. Drama and theatre

Drama is not literature but theatre; however, a written play is part of literature. The epic deals with the past, the lyric deals with the present, whereas the drama unites the past with the present. Drama as a form of literary composition can be expressed in verse or prose. It presents through action and dialogue: conflict, emotion, tension, crisis and atmosphere. A dramatic play is almost always designed to be acted by actors on a stage before an audience.

The term 'drama' comes from Greek. It means action. Drama is thus imitated human action on a stage. Its aim is to expose some enduring aspects of human existence. The action and the characters (protagonists) are the two main elements of the drama. In the classical drama we see an enormous action which is a manifestation of fate. Characters are struggling against fate in vain. In the modern drama interest is focused rather on characters than fate.

What is then theatre? It is usually a building or outdoor area in which plays and other dramatic performances are given. Martin Esslin, in an essay published in 1976, *An Anatomy of Drama*, wrote: "The theatre is the place where a nation thinks in public in front of itself. [...] Hamlet speaks of the theatre holding a mirror up to nature. I think in fact it is society to which theatre holds up the mirror. The theatre and all drama can be seen as a mirror in which society looks at itself" (101-3).

4.2. The origins of European drama

It seems that drama developed from ritual, first in Greece and then in its revived form in the Middle Ages. The first works of dramatic literature date back to the 6th century BC. The origins of ancient Greek drama can be found in:

1. folk celebrations,
2. myths,
3. seasonal festivals with appropriate symbolic actions.

However, we cannot find continuity between the origins of European drama in the Middle Ages and the drama of ancient Greece and Rome. In the Middle Ages, drama emerged from liturgy. Dramatic performances in vernacular were usually staged inside or outside churches, especially during the Easter season. Dramatic performances, known as miracles, mysteries and moralities, showed the lives of the saints, stories from the Bible, or moral allegories in order to teach or reinforce Church doctrine. Medieval comic drama included interludes and farces.

4.3. The elements of drama

We can distinguish the following elements of drama: story, plot, characters, dialogue,

monologue and soliloquy, theme and motifs, conflict, setting and staging.

Story and plot

A dramatic plot differs from a story of the play. A story is a complete account of events, whereas plot is only what the audience can see and hear on the stage. The same story can be told in many different ways. Thus in drama, plot is a sequence of related events. Quite often a play may have a major plot and a minor plot. The major plot refers to the main action whereas the minor plot develops parallel to the major one but it has secondary importance for the play. We may also distinguish between a physical plot and a psychological plot. The latter is an invisible chain of “mental” events or thoughts occurring in the mind of the protagonist. For example, the psychological plot in *Hamlet* concerns the thoughts of Prince Hamlet. Frequently, the physical and psychological plots are interwoven in a play. Plot in a dramatic play is usually segmented into acts and scenes.

Plot structure. There are several types of dramatic structure. The main two structures are called the climactic structure and the episodic structure. However, we may find a number of traditional dramatic plays which combine the climactic and episodic structure.

Climactic structure. Its plot begins quite late in the story and there are a limited number of characters and scenes. The events have usually a cause-and-effect-structure. Examples of plays with a climactic plot structure include Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Let’s look at the plot of *Hamlet*:

The action of *Hamlet* takes place in Elsinore, the castle of the king of Denmark. The old king Hamlet died quite unexpectedly and his brother Claudius is brought to the Danish throne. Claudius has married the former king’s widow, Gertrude. Prince Hamlet sees the ghost of his father who tells him that he was poisoned by Claudius and orders him to be revenged on his uncle. Hamlet swears vengeance. But Hamlet needs confirmation that Claudius is the murderer and that his mother is an innocent and unaware victim of the terrible crime. The arrival of a company of actors provides him with this opportunity. He asks them to perform an old play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, whose plot is similar to the actual events. Hamlet behaves in an eccentric way which resembles madness. He repulses Ophelia, whom he loves, and stabs Polonius, the court chamberlain and Ophelia’s father, who hides behind the tapestry, probably by mistake, thinking that it was Claudius. Claudius decides to send Hamlet to England where he is to be killed. However, Hamlet escapes and returns to Elsinore. Polonius’s son, Laertes, wants to avenge his father’s death and his sister Ophelia’s madness and subsequent death. Claudius stages a duel between Laertes and Hamlet in which Hamlet’s death will be assured by a poison-tipped sword. The play ends with the death of all protagonists: Gertrude, Laertes, Claudius and Hamlet. Fortinbras, the king of Norway, who invades Denmark, orders a military funeral for Hamlet.

Note that the rising action begins with the ghost telling Hamlet of his murder, and continues with the conflict between Hamlet and Claudius. The highest point of the rising action, or the climax, occurs during the performance of the play within the play (Act III, scene 2). Hamlet is now convinced that Claudius is the murderer of his father. The falling action begins with Hamlet’s failure to kill the king while he is at prayer in the royal chapel. From now on the action leads directly to the tragic catastrophe, which results in the deaths of the protagonist (Hamlet) and the antagonist (Claudius) as well as other characters involved in the tragic events.

Episodic structure involves a plot which covers an extended span of time, numerous locations, a large number of characters, diverse events (including comic and serious episodes) and parallel plots or subplots. An example of a play with episodic structure is Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. The play has two parallel plots: that of King Lear and that of Gloucester and his two sons, Edmund (illegitimate) and Edgar.

Climactic and episodic structure are usually combined in modern drama, e.g. in the plays of Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) and Arthur Miller (1915-2005).

Nontraditional plot structure

Some contemporary drama, however, defies the above definitions – its form is ambiguous. Avant-garde drama often arranges events in a random or illogical way to suggest the chaos or absurdity of life. An example of such a play is Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The setting is in the evening on a country road. Two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, meet near a tree. They talk on various topics and reveal that they are waiting there for a man named Godot.

ESTRAGON: (giving up again). Nothing to be done.

VLADIMIR: (advancing with short, stiff strides, legs wide apart). I'm beginning to come round to that opinion. All my life I've tried to put it from me, saying Vladimir, be reasonable, you haven't yet tried everything. And I resumed the struggle. (He broods, musing on the struggle. Turning to Estragon.) So there you are again.

ESTRAGON: Am I?

VLADIMIR: I'm glad to see you back. I thought you were gone forever.

ESTRAGON: Me too.

VLADIMIR: Together again at last! We'll have to celebrate this. But how? (He reflects.) Get up till I embrace you.

ESTRAGON: (irritably). Not now, not now.

VLADIMIR: (hurt, coldly). May one inquire where His Highness spent the night?

ESTRAGON: In a ditch.

VLADIMIR: (admiringly). A ditch! Where?

ESTRAGON: (without gesture). Over there.

VLADIMIR: And they didn't beat you?

ESTRAGON: Beat me? Certainly they beat me.

VLADIMIR: The same lot as usual?

ESTRAGON: The same? I don't know.

VLADIMIR: When I think of it . . . all these years . . . but for me . . . where would you be . . . (Decisively.) You'd be nothing more than a little heap of bones at the present minute, no doubt about it.

ESTRAGON: And what of it?

VLADIMIR: (gloomily). It's too much for one man. (*Pause. Cheerfully.*) On the other hand what's the good of losing heart now, that's what I say. We should have thought of it a million years ago, in the nineties.

ESTRAGON: Ah stop blathering and help me off with this bloody thing.

VLADIMIR: Hand in hand from the top of the Eiffel Tower, among the first. We were respectable in those days. Now it's too late. They wouldn't even let us up. (Estragon tears at his boot.) What are you doing?

ESTRAGON: Taking off my boot. Did that never happen to you?

VLADIMIR: Boots must be taken off every day, I'm tired telling you that. Why don't you listen to me?

ESTRAGON: (*feebly*). Help me!

VLADIMIR: It hurts?

ESTRAGON: (*angrily*). Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

VLADIMIR: (*angrily*). No one ever suffers but you. I don't count. I'd like to hear what you'd say if you had what I have.

ESTRAGON: It hurts?

VLADIMIR: (*angrily*). Hurts! He wants to know if it hurts!

ESTRAGON: (pointing). You might button it all the same.

VLADIMIR: (stooping). True. (He buttons his fly.) Never neglect the little things of life.

ESTRAGON: What do you expect, you always wait till the last moment.

VLADIMIR: (*musingly*). The last moment . . . (*He meditates.*) Hope deferred maketh the something sick, who said that?

ESTRAGON: Why don't you help me?

VLADIMIR: Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer. (*He takes off his hat, peers inside it, feels about inside it, shakes it, puts it on again.*) How shall I say?

Relieved and at the same time . . . (he searches for the word) . . . appalled. (With emphasis.)

APPALLED. (*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it.*) Funny. (*He knocks on the crown as though to dislodge a foreign body, peers into it again, puts it on again.*) Nothing to be done. (*Estragon with a supreme effort succeeds in pulling off his boot. He peers inside it, feels*

about inside it, turns it upside down, shakes it, looks on the ground to see if anything has fallen out, finds nothing, feels inside it again, staring sightlessly before him.) Well?

ESTRAGON: Nothing.

VLADIMIR: Show me.

ESTRAGON: There's nothing to show.

VLADIMIR: Try and put it on again.

ESTRAGON: (*examining his foot*). I'll air it for a bit.

VLADIMIR: There's man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet. (He takes off his hat again, peers inside it, feels about inside it, knocks on the crown, blows into it, puts it on again.) This is getting alarming. (*Silence. Vladimir deep in thought, Estragon pulling at his toes.*) One of the thieves was saved. (*Pause.*) It's a reasonable percentage. (*Pause.*) Gogo.

ESTRAGON: What?

VLADIMIR: Suppose we repented.

ESTRAGON: Repented what?

VLADIMIR: Oh . . . (*He reflects.*) We wouldn't have to go into the details.

ESTRAGON: Our being born?

Vladimir breaks into a hearty laugh which he immediately stifles, his hand pressed to his pubis, his face contorted. VLADIMIR: One daren't even laugh any more.

ESTRAGON: Dreadful privation.

VLADIMIR: Merely smile. (*He smiles suddenly from ear to ear, keeps smiling, ceases as suddenly.*) It's not the same thing. Nothing to be done. (*Pause.*) Gogo.

ESTRAGON: (*irritably*). What is it?

VLADIMIR: Did you ever read the Bible?

ESTRAGON: The Bible . . . (*He reflects.*) I must have taken a look at it.

VLADIMIR: Do you remember the Gospels?

ESTRAGON: I remember the maps of the Holy Land. Coloured they were. Very pretty. The Dead Sea was pale blue. The very look of it made me thirsty. That's where we'll go, I used to say, that's where we'll go for our honeymoon. We'll swim. We'll be happy.

VLADIMIR: You should have been a poet.

ESTRAGON: I was. (*Gesture towards his rags.*) Isn't that obvious?
Silence.

Assignment

1. Summarise the conversation between Estragon and Vladimir. Does their conversation make sense?
2. What physical actions do they make?
3. Can we learn something about the protagonists from this scene?

Elements of plot structure

Most traditional dramas have the following structure: exposition or character introduction or introduction of conflict, rising action or complication, climax, falling action and solution or denouement. It is represented by the following pyramidal scheme (known as Freytag's pyramid)

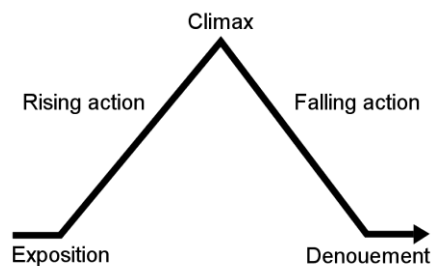


Diagram 1. General plot outline of a drama (Freytag's triangle).

Exposition introduces characters and conflict or complication of action. It usually provides background information about events that have happened before the play begins. In the opening of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the Prologue is a dramatic exposition. *Rising action* is the part of a dramatic plot in which complications occur caused by the conflict of opposing forces. Rising action leads to a *climax*. Climax is the turning point of the play when the audience makes the greatest emotional response. It is the final and most significant crisis or conflict. In the climax the plot of the play is resolved either happily (in comedies) or unhappily with the death of the hero or heroine (in tragedies). In *Romeo and Juliet*, the climax occurs when Juliet stabs herself. *Falling action* follows climax and leads to the catastrophe in a tragedy or *denouement* (unknotting) in a comedy.

4.4. Characters

Characters or *Dramatis Personae* may usually be classified as protagonists and antagonists. We can also distinguish between active (dynamic) and static (passive) characters. The latter are usually stock characters. Characters in a tragedy are as a rule more complex than in a comedy. The visible elements of a dramatic character include physical features, clothing, movements and gestures. However, in attempting to fully understand a dramatic character, we must look into his or her inner traits, such as language and thought.

A dramatic **foil** is a secondary character that is strongly contrasted with another character (usually the protagonist). A dramatic foil usually has some physical or psychological characteristics which are opposite to those of the other character. The purpose of the dramatic foil character is to emphasise the features of the main character by comparison or contrast.

It is believed that the use of the term "foil" in literature comes from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Hamlet says:

I'll be your foil, Laertes: in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star I' the darkest night,
Stick fiery off indeed.

(Act 5 Scene 2)

In *Romeo and Juliet* Mercutio is a comic foil for Hamlet.

4.5. Dialogue, monologue and soliloquy

Dialogue is what characters say to each other. Dialogue is essential in a drama because it (1) advances the plot, (2) reveals characters, their moods, relationships to each other, (3) foreshadows events, etc. Dialogue is often rich in **subtext**.

Sometimes a character makes a comment, known as an *aside*, which other characters are not supposed to hear. A *monologue* is when a character speaks alone. A special kind of monologue in a traditional drama is **soliloquy** when a character steps to the side of the stage to think aloud. The most famous soliloquy is perhaps Hamlet's "To be or not to be."

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep -
No more, and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep -

To sleep, perchance to dream - ay, there's the rub,
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause; there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life:
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his quietus make
 With a bare bodkin; who would fardels bear,
 To grunt and swear under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death,
 The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards [of us all],
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale of cast of thought,
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action. - Soft you now,
 The fair Ophelia. Nymph, in thys orisons
 Be all my sins rememb' red.
 (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, scene I)

Assignment: Paraphrase and interpret this famous soliloquy.

4.6. Theme and motifs

The *theme* or *themes* of a dramatic play may be presented explicitly or implicitly. Sometimes the theme is suggested in the title as in George Bernard Shaw's play, *Mrs Warren's Profession* or Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. A playwright can use many themes and motifs to expand his story.

The major theme of *Hamlet* is usually described as the failure of a young man of poetic temperament to cope with the demands of circumstances. (Hamlet is unable to avenge the death of his father). Other themes in *Hamlet* include spying, action versus thought, madness, conscience, the Oedipal controversy, etc.

The major theme of *Macbeth* is that too much ambition leads to destruction. Another theme is: fate versus free will. Themes and motifs in *King Lear* include: senility, filial responsibility, irrational actions, appearances, deceptions, treason and murder.

4.7. Conflict

Conflict is clash of actions, ideas, desires, or tension raised in the play that must be resolved. Conflict can be physical (external) or psychological (internal), intellectual or ethical. We can further distinguish five types of conflicts in fictional literature (not only in drama): person against person; person against self; person against society; person against fate; person against nature. Conflict often involves a protagonist struggling against an antagonist in order to solve a problem.

4.8. Setting and staging

In a drama *setting* is the locale or place of action. For example, the principal setting of *Hamlet* is the castle of Elsinore in medieval Denmark; the setting of *Macbeth* is medieval Scotland. Staging is a specific realisation of setting on the stage. In medieval drama a multiple setting was used. All scenes were simultaneously performed on several detached locations called ‘mansions’ or ‘houses’. In modern drama multiple setting is achieved by frequent changes in scenery. Staging may thus also refer to the use of scenery and *properties* or *props* in a theatre performance.

4.9. Traditional division of dramatic plays

Traditionally, an act is a main division in a dramatic play. A scene is a smaller unit. Acts are subdivided into scenes. Renaissance plays were usually divided into five acts. Modern plays usually have three acts or only one.

4.10. Types of drama (genres)

Tragedy

Tragedy is the oldest form of drama. It raises significant issues about the nature of human existence or human relationships. Tragedy began probably by improvisations spoken by choral leaders who sang dithyrambs. Some historians believe that tragedy may have derived from lamentations at the tomb of heroes. Aristotle defined tragedy as ‘an imitation of an action that is serious and also, as having magnitude, complete in itself, with incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its *catharsis* of such emotions’. Human will and human action come in conflict with a higher power. This conflict and the final overthrow of the individual make up a tragic drama. Tragedy has a solemn theme and plot. In general, tragedy involves the fall (death) of the leading characters. Tragedy is designed to create sympathy or empathy for this character.

We should make a distinction between ancient Greek and Elizabethan tragedy. Greek tragedy dealt with the destruction of some noble person through fate. Elizabethan tragedy dealt as a rule with the destruction of some noble person through a flaw in his character. Modern tragedy no longer shows the destruction of exceptional characters but rather that of common and weak people.

Tragism is a situation of conflict when agreement is not possible. Tragedy arouses in us both pity and fear. This feeling is called **catharsis**, i.e. purgation. A tragic hero arouses pity or fear if he or she is neither thoroughly evil nor thoroughly good. The protagonist becomes tragic due to what the Greeks called *hamartia*, i.e. the ‘tragic flaw’ or ‘tragic error in judgement’. One of the forms of *hamartia* is *hubris*, i.e. pride or overconfidence which leads a man to overlook a divine warning or to break a moral law. For example, King Lear’s *hubris* is what ultimately strips him of his power.

The tragic hero, who must be superior to the rest of characters, evokes pity when his or her misfortune is greater than he/she has deserved. Spectators feel involved in the action and are affected by the hero’s suffering. We feel fear because we realise that we can be susceptible to a similar misfortune. In tragedy human will or human action comes in conflict with a higher power. This conflict and the final overthrow of the individual make up a tragic drama. The action of a tragic protagonist may be a fatal mistake (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*) or a crime (*Macbeth*), but the end is always tragic. The hero must be aware of his downfall. The effect of the tragedy is to produce pity or fear in the mind of the spectator and sympathy for the victim. The tragedy purifies people’s emotions and teaches them to accept fate or the order of things.

Tragic vision is based on the following interrelated elements:

1. The conclusion is catastrophic and inevitable.
2. The protagonist’s fall is caused by some uncontrollable forces (fate, fortune or

- chance).
3. The protagonist's fall reveals his or her powerlessness and limitations.
 4. Tragedy reveals not only man's liability to suffering but also to greatness and nobility.
 5. Suffering is an enduring and often inexplicable force in human life. The protagonist's suffering often seems disproportionate to his or her culpability.
 6. Suffering is often but not always redemptive, bringing out the capacity for accepting moral responsibility.
 7. Man is responsible for his actions.

In a Greek³⁴ and Elizabethan tragedy, the hero or heroine is an extraordinary person. Antigone, Electra, Oedipus, Agamemnon, Creon, Orestes, Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear and Othello have royal blood. Greek tragedy included *prologos* (exposition), *parodos* (the chorus' ode entrance), *epeisodion* (episode), *stasimon* (choral song). The actors, all male, wore masks and probably chanted much of the play.

The word 'tragedy' appeared in English in 1538 in the subtitle of the play *God's Promises* by John Bale: a 'tragedy or interlude'. The Elizabethan tragedy owed a good deal to medieval miracle, mystery and morality plays, and particularly to the Roman writer, Seneca, whose tragedies dealt mainly with revenge, adultery, incest, murder, mutilation and carnage. Senecan tragedy became a model for Elizabethan 'revenge' tragedy or 'tragedy of blood'. *Gorboduc* by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville is regarded as the first English tragedy. Thomas Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* (1586) contains all elements of Senecan tragedy, i.e. a ghost, insanity, suicide, sensational incidents and a bloody ending. Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet* also contain many favourite subjects of a Senecan tragedy. A variant of the revenge tragedy is the domestic tragedy, which deals with the middle class people. The plot is focused on the effect of a murder on a member of a family. An example of the domestic tragedy is *Arden of Faversham* (1592). It deals with the successful attempt of Mistress Arden and her lover to murder Arden.

In a modern tragedy (since the 19th century) heroes or heroines are not kings or queens; they are ordinary people, e.g. Willy Loman in *Death of Salesman* by Arthur Miller, Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams.

Comedy

Comedy is a literary work that takes a cheerful view of life. It usually begins in adversity and ends in prosperity and happiness.

Comedy is based on comic characters or comic situations or on both and it usually has a happy ending. The origin of comedy was *komos*, a folk celebration for Bacchus, god of joyful life and ecstasy. Erotic and obscene songs were sung during fertility rituals. They dramatised the joy of being reborn. As tragedy was often written in verse, comedy - in turn - preferred prose.

Aristophanes is the father of Greek comedy. His comedies had the following structure: an introduction (*parodos*) in which the basic intrigue is introduced and developed; the parabasis in which the chorus, sometimes represented as animals, interrupted the action in order to address the audience on the topics of current interest. A desirable element in comedy is the improbable because surprise evokes laughter. Comedy often reveals the absurdity of man's ideas of himself and the world. It often emphasises wit, intelligence and sympathy. Comic plays often lack plausibility; they are usually based on coincidences, improbable disguises, mistaken identities, etc. The purpose of comedy is to make the audience laugh and – at the same time – to reveal human nature and human weaknesses. Accidental discovery, an act of unexpected intervention (*deus ex machina*) or sudden reform are common comedic devices.

³⁴ The most important Greek tragedies include: Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, *Prometheus Bound*; Sophocles' *Oedipus*, *Antigone*, *Electra*; Euripides' *Medea*, *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

Comic characters are usually simpler than tragic ones. They try to overcome the difficulties which temporarily beset them. In fact, they are generally types or even caricatures of actual human beings. Caricature is a tendency to simplify characters in an extreme way.

The word 'comedy' first appeared in England in 1527 in the subtitle of John Rastell's play *Calisto and Melebea*. It was described as a 'new commedye in English manner of an interlude'. The first full-length English comedy was perhaps *Ralph Roister Doister* (1551) written by the schoolmaster Nicholas Udall (1505-1556). This play, written in short rhymed doggerel, reveals the influence of the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terence. Another early comedy is *Gammer Gurton's Needle* which was first performed at Christ's College, Cambridge in 1566. Its authorship is uncertain.

The plot of this comedy reflects some aspects of rural life in Tudor England. The old grandma (Gammer) Gurton lost her needle. Her servant Hodge has torn his breeches and they are hardly presentable. The Gammer suspects that her neighbour Dame Chat stole the needle, while the latter suspects the Gammer that she stole her cock. The two women begin to fight with their fists and the curate has to be called in order to restore peace. However, the curate is also beaten when he tries to investigate the theft of the needle. At last the needle is found by Hodge himself when he sits on it accidentally. The Gammer was repairing his breeches but when she saw the cat stealing milk she ran after it forgetting the needle.

Comic characters are usually reduced to types, such as lawyer, doctor, student, housewife, etc. A character who often appeared in a Renaissance comedy was a buffoon, a rough and noisy character. One of the most famous buffoons is Falstaff, who appears in several plays of William Shakespeare. Comedies may be romantic or satiric. They usually show man as a social creature - a member of a group.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle said that comedy depicts 'people as worse than they are'. According to Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586), a comedy is "an imitation of the common errors of our life, which representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be; so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one".³⁵ Contrary to the above-mentioned opinions, Shakespeare's comedies reveal many positive features, such as humanity, enjoyment of life, focus on emotions and lack of open didacticism.

Other types of comedy

Comedy of humours focuses on one or more characters, each of whom has one dominant trait or 'humour' that characterises their personality and conduct. This comic technique was used by Ben Jonson and George Chapman in the late sixteenth century. The comedy of humours merged with the comedy of manners in the 17th century.

The origins of the English comedy of manners, which satirises the attitudes and behavior of a particular social group, often of fashionable society, can be traced in the Restoration period. William Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) and *The Way of the World* (1700) as well as Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775) and *The School for Scandal* (1777) are regarded as the best achievements of the English comedy of manners. At the turn of the 19th century, Oscar Wilde revived the comedy of manners. His play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is a comedy of manners that ridiculed late Victorian respectability and dandyism.

Pastoral comedy presents idyllic images of country living. William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is an example of pastoral comedy. It shows the contrast between the corrupt court life and the idealized Forest of Arden, in which the banished Duke Senior and his followers live a happy and carefree life.

³⁵Philip Sidney, *Defence of Poesie*. <http://www.uoregon.edu/~rbear/defence.html> (January 2004).

Romantic comedy is a loose term which refers to comic plays about a love story that ends happily. Elizabethan romantic comedies include Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*. Contemporary romantic comedies can be seen mostly in the cinema, e.g. *Pretty Woman*, *When Harry Met Sally*, etc.

Satiric comedy exposes and criticises human faults and dramatises the discrepancy between the ideal and the reality. The Greek playwright Aristophanes (c. 446 – c. 386 BC) was the first author satiric comedies, such as *The Wasps* and *The Frogs*. In Jacobean England Ben Jonson's *Volpone* is a satiric comedy. One of the most famous satiric comedies is *The Inspector General* by the Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852).

Farce is a type of comedy that relies entirely on highly improbable actions and situations which involve ridiculous complications without regard for human values. Farce as a distinct type of comedy dates from the 19th century (the works of French authors Eugène Labiche and Georges Feydeau). In Britain, Sir Arthur Pinero (1855-1934) wrote a successful farce *The Magistrate* (1885). Brandon Thomas (1856-1914) wrote a highly popular farce *Charley's Aunt*. Examples of modern farce include Woody Allen's *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982) and the British television sitcom *Fawlty Towers* (1975).

Tragicomedy is a blending of tragic and comic elements. Unlike comedy, tragicomedy reveals deep emotions and deals with the problems of human suffering, mortality and death. Unlike tragedy, tragicomedy rejects the inevitability of catastrophe, the need for heroism and sacrifice, and the role of destiny. Tragicomedy flourished during the Renaissance. Shakespeare's late plays, *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline* are tragicomic romances. In modern times the plays of Henrik Ibsen and Anton Chekhov have often been interpreted as tragicomic.

Modern tragicomedy. In the 20th century, many theorists do not make a sharp distinction between the comic and the tragic. Modern tragicomedy and the *Theatre of the Absurd* have blurred the traditional distinction between the two dramatic genres. Tragicomic elements can be seen in modern drama, in the plays of Samuel Beckett, Eugène Ionesco, Harold Pinter, Sławomir Mrożek.

Melodrama is difficult to define because it combines a wide group of plays and films which contain exaggerated or simplified characters who are faced with constant perils, tension or fearsome adventures. In a melodrama characters are usually 'too good' or 'too evil'. Melodrama often provides good entertainment but hardly ever any literary value. Outstanding examples of modern melodramas would include, for example, Erich Segal's *Love Story*, including its movie adaptation. In melodrama plot is more important than characters.

It should be remembered that melodrama was an independent literary genre which flourished in the 19th century. It usually had a complicated plot revolving around some violent or malevolent incident. In the 20th century melodrama became a literary convention employed in various works of fiction, films and plays.

4.11. Television drama

Drama is one of the oldest genres of shows in television. A vast majority of television dramas are adaptations of literature. The early television drama was little more than "photographed stage plays", but in the 1950s television began to show a number of ambitious television dramas. Apart from single drama shows, soon serial drama became very popular with the audience. Popular television drama genres include soap opera, science fiction, medical drama, sitcoms and police series.

4.12. Other forms of dramatic literature of historic interest

Masque was a kind of court theatrical entertainment popular in England in the late 16th and 17th centuries. It dramatised a mythological episode with allusions to an honoured person, e.g. a king, queen or noble man, including songs, dances and startling stage effects. John Milton (1608-1674) wrote a popular masque entitled *Comus* which was performed in 1634.

Heroic drama was specific to the Restoration period. It was written in blank verse and presented exaggerated characters and situations. The style of heroic drama was bombastic. According to John Dryden, a heroic play ought to be an imitation of a heroic poem; and consequently love and valour ought to be the subject of it. An example of a heroic drama is John Dryden's *All for Love or the World Lost* (1678).

Closet drama is a dramatic play written to be read rather than performed in the theatre. Closed dramas are often called "dramatic poems". Outstanding examples of closet dramas in English literature include John Milton's *Samson Agonistes* and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, George Byron's *Manfred*, Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes*.

Well-made plays ('pièces bien faite') were popular in France in the 19th century. They had a precisely constructed plot. The formula for constructing a 'well-made play' was developed about 1825 by Eugène Scribe and later it was improved by his follower Victorien Sardou. The plot of a well-made play is usually based upon a secret known only to some of the characters, usually about the play's hero. The revelation of this secret provides the turning point of the play. The "well-made" are often farces.

Problem play or drama of ideas are dramas of social criticism which expose social, economic, or political problems by means of a dramatic play. Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), the Norwegian dramatist revived tragedy in the late 19th century in his problem plays or dramas of ideas. The protagonist of his plays was the victim of a general social problem, e.g. the subjugation of women in a middle-class family in the 19th century (Ibsen's *A Doll's House*). In Britain, George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) also wrote problem plays, dealing with such problems as the morality of prostitution in a capitalist society (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*).

4.13. Analysis and interpretation of drama

Step 1	Identify the form and style of the dramatic play (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, etc.); Is the play classical, romantic, symbolist, realistic, expressionistic, absurdist?
Step 2	Describe the structure of the play and its particular elements: 1. division in to acts; 2. plot and story; 3. theme (meaning or central idea); 4. dialogue (what is said and how it is said).
Step 3	Identify the conflict in the play. Explain imagery and symbols.
Step 4	Identify the characters of the play (What happens to characters and why? What makes characters act as they do? Do the characters change as a result of their actions? What aspect of human nature is reflected in the characters?). Identify setting.
Step 5	Identify the subject, theme and tone of the play (what is said and how? who said? when and where? who heard it?).
Step 6	Find out what is implied by the tradition behind the play (form, theme reference to particular epoch, movement or style).
Step 7	Provide your own interpretation of the play (explain to yourself what the title, subject and situation suggest).

4.14. Revision questions

1. How do you understand the definition that drama is imitated human action?

2. What are the origins of drama?
3. What were the medieval dramatic genres?
4. What are the main elements of a dramatic play?
5. Explain the difference between the climactic and episodic structure of a dramatic play.
6. What are the components of dramatic plot?
7. What is the difference between monologue and soliloquy?
8. What is the difference between setting and staging?
9. What are the features of tragedy?
10. What are the features of comedy?
11. What are the features of melodrama?
12. What are the features of a tragicomedy?
13. Define the following critical terms and provide examples, if possible: antagonist, aside; catastrophe, catharsis, climax; character; comedy; comic relief, complication, conflict, protagonist, antagonist, soliloquy, stock character, tragic flaw, the unities.

4.15. Extra assignment

1. Read *Romeo and Juliet* and find primary and secondary plots in the play. Discuss its theme (or themes, motifs and subject matter. What kinds of conflict are shown in the play? Find some symbols and other stylistic devices in the play.
2. Discuss the various aspects of the tragic vision in *Romeo and Juliet*.
3. Read Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and discuss tragicomic elements in the play.

4. 16 Supplement
Exploring a piece of literature in depth
Romeo and Juliet
(two fragments)

[First, see the two videos in KAMPUS]

SCENE V. A Hall in Capulet's House.

ROMEO.

[To Juliet.] If I profane with my unworhiest hand
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this,
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

JULIET.

Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

ROMEO.

Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

JULIET.

Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

ROMEO.

O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

JULIET.

Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO.

Then move not while my prayer's effect I take.
Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purg'd.
[Kissing her.]

JULIET.

Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO.

Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urg'd!
Give me my sin again.

JULIET.

You kiss by the book.

Assignment

1. How does Romeo explain to Juliet that he wants to kiss her?
2. How does Juliet tease Romeo to kiss him again?
3. Summarise the scene.

Act II, scene 2 of *Romeo and Juliet* is commonly known as the "balcony scene". Read and analyse the explicit plot points and the subtle foreshadowing contained in this scene. Examine the use of stylistic

devices, particularly metaphors.

Close reading is the most important skill you need for any form of literary studies. It means paying especially close attention to what is printed on the page. It is a much more subtle and complex process than the term might suggest.

Close reading is a very important part of literary study. It enables you to understand the overall meaning; it will also make you sensitive to connotations of language, i.e. the ideas or feelings it expresses. While reading and re-reading this scene, note the relationship of any elements of the text to outside reality, i.e. the historical, cultural and literary context of the play. Try to describe how setting, imagery, dialogue, metaphors contribute to the overall meaning of this scene. What is the key moment of this scene?

SCENE II. Capulet's orchard.

Enter ROMEO

ROMEO

He jests at scars that never felt a wound.

(JULIET appears above at a window)

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

Who is already sick and pale with grief,

That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her maid, since she is envious;

Her vestal livery is but sick and green

And none but fools do wear it; cast it off.

It is my lady, O, it is my love!

O, that she knew she were!

She speaks yet she says nothing: what of that?

Her eye discourses; I will answer it.

I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes

To twinkle in their spheres till they return.

What if her eyes were there, they in her head?

The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven

Would through the airy region stream so bright

That birds would sing and think it were not night.

See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand!

O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!

JULIET

Ay me!

ROMEO

She speaks:

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art

As glorious to this night, being o'er my head

As is a winged messenger of heaven

Unto the white-upturned wondering eyes

Of mortals that fall back to gaze on him

When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds

And sails upon the bosom of the air.

JULIET

O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;

Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

ROMEO

[Aside] Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

JULIET

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name which is no part of thee
Take all myself.

ROMEO

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

JULIET

What man art thou that thus bescreen'd in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO

By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

JULIET

My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo and a Montague?

ROMEO

Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

JULIET

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

ROMEO

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls;
For stony limits cannot hold love out,
And what love can do that dares love attempt;
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

JULIET

If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

ROMEO

Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye
Than twenty of their swords: look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

JULIET

I would not for the world they saw thee here.

ROMEO

I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

JULIET

By whose direction found'st thou out this place?

ROMEO

By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel and I lent him eyes.
I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the farthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

JULIET

Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke: but farewell compliment!
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say 'Ay,'
And I will take thy word: yet if thou swear'st,
Thou mayst prove false; at lovers' perjuries
Then say, Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully:
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my 'havior light:
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,
My true love's passion: therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered.

ROMEO

Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear
That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops –

JULIET

O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

ROMEO

What shall I swear by?

JULIET

Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.

ROMEO

If my heart's dear love –

JULIET

Well, do not swear: although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be
Ere one can say 'It lightens.' Sweet, good night!
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast!

ROMEO

O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

JULIET

What satisfaction canst thou have to-night?

ROMEO

The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

JULIET

I gave thee mine before thou didst request it:
And yet I would it were to give again.

ROMEO

Wouldst thou withdraw it? for what purpose, love?

JULIET

But to be frank, and give it thee again.
And yet I wish but for the thing I have:
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,
The more I have, for both are infinite.

Nurse calls within

I hear some noise within; dear love, adieu!
Anon, good nurse! Sweet Montague, be true.
Stay but a little, I will come again.

Exit, above

ROMEO

O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard.
Being in night, all this is but a dream,
Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honourable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

Nurse
[Within] Madam!

JULIET
I come, anon. – But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee –

Nurse
[Within] Madam!

JULIET
By and by, I come: –
To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief:
To-morrow will I send.

ROMEO
So thrive my soul –

JULIET
A thousand times good night!

Exit, above

ROMEO
A thousand times the worse, to want thy light.
Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from
their books,
But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.

Retiring

Re-enter JULIET, above

JULIET
Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice,
To lure this tassel-gentle back again!
Bondage is hoarse, and may not speak aloud;
Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies,
And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine,
With repetition of my Romeo's name.

ROMEO
It is my soul that calls upon my name:
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET
Romeo!

ROMEO
My dear?

JULIET

At what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO

At the hour of nine.

JULIET

I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then.
I have forgot why I did call thee back.

ROMEO

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

JULIET

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.

ROMEO

And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget,
Forgetting any other home but this.

JULIET

'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone:
And yet no further than a wanton's bird;
Who lets it hop a little from her hand,
Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,
And with a silk thread plucks it back again,
So loving-jealous of his liberty.

ROMEO

I would I were thy bird.

JULIET

Sweet, so would I:
Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.
Good night, good night! parting is such
sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

Exit above

ROMEO

Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!
Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet to rest!
Hence will I to my ghostly father's cell,
His help to crave, and my dear hap to tell.

Source: [<http://www.shakespeare-literature.com>]

Notes

her vestal livery: chaste appearance or virginal dress; sick and green: pale and sickly; wherefore: why? doff: discard; enmity: hatred; prorogued: delayed; postponed; perjuries - the breaking of promises; Jove: king of the Roman gods; reserved: aloof; the god of my idolatry: the object of my excessive devotion; tassel: gentle; bondage is hoarse and may not speak aloud: at home, Juliet is under her father's strict discipline and must whisper as though she is hoarse to avoid detection; a wanton's bird: an undisciplined, spoiled child; hap: good luck or news.

Quiz

1. To what does Juliet not want Romeo to swear his love?

- A) a light in the dark B) the sun C) the moon D) a rose
2. Who is the first to mention marriage?
A) Romeo B) Juliet
 3. Romeo compares Juliet's beauty to the....
A) Sun B) Moon C) stars D) Earth
 4. Why is Juliet concerned that Romeo is at her house?
A) She has no makeup on B) If he is found he will be killed C) That he is stalking her
D) She will fall in love with him
 5. What "satisfaction" does Romeo want from Juliet tonight?
A) A piece of her hair B) To spend a night with him C) Her kiss
D) Her pledge of love to him

Assignment

1. Summarise this scene.
2. What does Romeo say about Juliet's beauty?
3. Identify some stylistic devices, symbols and images in the "Balcony Scene".
4. Which phrases from this scene would you like to memorise?

Chapter Five

An introduction to prose fiction

In this chapter we shall examine the structure and organisation of prose fiction; basic forms, styles and strategies used in prose fiction, considering such interrelated elements as narration, narrator, point of view, plot, characters, setting, dialogue, etc. A brief overview of the features of the novel and the short story will be presented and suggestions on how to read critically and interpret prose fiction will be given at the end.

Suggested reading: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*; Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*; Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*; Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*; Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Henry James, *Daisy Miller*; Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*; Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*; Francis Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*; Ernest Hemingway's "Cat in the Rain"; John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

5.1. What is prose fiction?

Prose fiction, or simply *fiction*, is a kind of writing which is based on the writer's imagination. It is the general term for invented stories. Depending on length and complexity as well as subject matter, the following forms of prose fiction can be distinguished: novel, short story, novella, romance, tale, confession, myth, legend, fable, satire, etc. Prose fiction is distinguished from poetry because it is not arranged in patterns of lines and of sounds into metrical form.

Prose fiction has been increasingly popular since the early 18th century. In our times we can observe the mass production of fictions in the form of novels, short stories, romances, as well as audio and visual fictions in the form of photo-novels, audio novels, radio and television serials and narrative films.

5.1.1. The purpose of fiction

According to views dominant in the 18th century, prose fiction was the result of intellectually primitive attempts to explain the world in terms of fancy. It would appeal to immature people and its consequences could be dangerous. Reading prose fiction might distract individuals from serious study, affect their sensibility and moral view. Girls and young ladies were thought to be particularly susceptible to the influence of novels and romances. It was feared that these could stimulate in female readers excessive imagination and desires which could not be satisfied in reality. Some Victorian moralists, preachers, theologians and physicians lamented that the reading of romances by young ladies might produce in them sexual stimulation which could make them unfit for their future roles of mothers and housewives. However, female readers defended fiction and especially sentimental novels arguing that they promote compassion, humanness and sensitivity to other people. For a long time writing and reading fiction was considered undignified or even vulgar. However, since the 19th century the popularity of prose fiction has rapidly increased.

We read fiction because we want to know more about ourselves, our world, about places, things, experiences and ideas, the past and future events and about the sense of life in general. Fiction gives us certain messages, i.e. subjective or objective statements about the human condition which we (the readers) are unable to formulate in such a persuasive way. Some critics believe that reading fiction may help readers understand various problems of existence. We also read fiction for pure entertainment.

5.2. The main elements of narrative fiction

There are certain basic elements that can be distinguished in almost every work of narrative fiction: narration, narrator, point of view, plot, characters, setting, dialogue, description, commentary, tone.

5.3. Narration

Narration or narrative, is the process of relating a sequence of events. It is important to know what is and what is not a narrative. For example, when I say “My dog has fleas,” it is not a narrative but a description. But when I say “My dog was beaten by a flea,” it is a short piece of narration because an event is described.³⁶ Narration is distinguished from other kinds of writing, i.e. dialogue, description, commentary which may be included in the narrative telling of some true or fictitious events. Narrative technique is thus the method of telling stories. Of course, narration is not limited to prose fiction merely. We may speak of narrative poetry, i.e. the class of poems including ballads, epics, and verse romances that tell a certain story. It should be remembered that literature is rarely pure fiction. Much of it is based on facts. Writers often combine fact and fiction in such a way that readers may find it difficult to tell the difference.

5.3.1. Narrator

The **narrator** is the one who tells the story (narration). The narrator is the imagined “voice” transmitting the story to the reader. We should not confuse the narrator with the **author** or the **implied author** of a work of fiction, who does not tell the story but is understood as the one who invented the narrator. It should be remembered that the opinions of a narrator are not always those of the author.

Traditionally, we speak of the first-person narrator and the third-person narrator. The narrator may take different roles within a literary work: he may be the protagonist in the action described – a witness of events, the reader’s informer or a character (first-person narrator).

The narrator is an indispensable agent of narrative fiction. Narration may be limited and told from the point of view of one character in either third person or in first person; or it may be omniscient, in which the narrator knows everything, and represents the author or a persona for the author. When we read a novel or a short story it is not really the author who is telling it but someone whom we call a narrator.

The *omniscient narrator* knows everything about the characters, including their thoughts and feelings. When a narrator allows the reader to make his or her own judgments about characters or the events, it is called neutral omniscience. When the narrator has omniscient knowledge about one or two characters, but not all, we call it limited omniscience.

The omniscient narrator is usually an *intrusive narrator*, who in addition to reporting the events, provides the reader with his own comments on characters and events or general comments on life. These comments are sometimes presented as brief digressions interrupting the narrative. Such an intrusive narrator may be found in Henry Fielding’s novel *Tom Jones* (1749). The omniscient narrator was typical of the late 18th and 19th century fiction. An omniscient narrator sometimes reappears in 20th century fiction. For example, John Fowles parodies such an omniscient narrator in his popular novel, *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*

³⁶ The example is taken from H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 13.

(1969). The omniscient narrator is usually omnipresent, i.e. being able to be everywhere.

In some narrative fiction the third-person narrator may have a limited knowledge of events and characters. For example, he cannot know their thoughts. He stands outside the events, but has some privileges, such as the knowledge of events occurring in different places. In some modern fictions the narrator is not heard (e.g. in some short stories and novels of Ernest Hemingway). However, in the novels of William Faulkner, the narrator is always present (*omnipresent* and *omniscient narrator*).

The first-person narrator appears as “I” in the story, and he knows only the facts he has seen or heard of. He is involved either as a witness or as participant in the events of the story. Such a narrator is usually the central character. Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) employed the first-person point of view, whereas Charles Dickens in *Pickwick Papers* (1836) employed the unlimited third-person point of view. In Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) or in Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1861), the narrator is also the central character telling his or her own story. The first-person narrator has also the so-called **narratee** – the imaginary subject to whom the narration is directed.

In some works, particularly in **polyphonic narratives**, more than one narrator is used. These works of fiction have **multiple narrators**, e.g. William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* and Graham Swift’s *Last Orders*. The postmodern multiple narrator techniques derive mainly from Joseph Conrad’s *Nostramo*.

Although *Nostramo* is narrated by a third person omniscient narrator, its plot is revealed through the perspectives of various characters, and often the same episode is presented through the different points of view. In *Nostramo*, Conrad "adopts a complex and multi-perspective mode of narration that is equally revolutionary and modern and allows even for a greater flexibility and the potential inclusion of many points of view" (Lord 220).

A specific first-person narrator appears in so-called **skaz narratives**. The term *skaz* derives from the Russian verb “skazat” (to tell, to narrate) and it appears in such Russian words as “rasskaz” (short story) and “skazka” (fairy tale). The skaz narrator employs specific linguistic expression characteristic of colloquial, spontaneous or regional speech. The first-person skaz narrator appears in Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and in J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*. According to David Lodge, Martin Amis’s novel *Money* has a skaz narrator.³⁷

We can also distinguish between a *reliable* and *unreliable narrator*. The former is one whose accounts of events are trustworthy. The latter may be partial, ill-informed, misleading, or having limited knowledge, e.g. Nelly in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847). In general, the third-person narrator is reliable, whereas many first-person narrators are not always reliable, e.g. Gulliver in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). However, Robinson, who is the first-person narrator, can be trusted to be telling the truth about his adventures and, therefore, he seems to be reliable.

An unreliable narrator is sometimes a first-person *naive narrator*, a character within the story who describes events and circumstances but fails to understand them. A good example of such a narrator the idiot Benjy in William Faulkner’s novel *The Sound and the Fury*.

5.3.2. Levels of narration

Structuralism offers an interesting classification of the various levels of narratorial discourse (**diegesis**). We distinguish the following levels of narration:

1. retrospective (past tense) narration (e.g. literary texts, such as novels, short stories,

³⁷ David Lodge, *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1990) 24.

- epics);
2. simultaneous narration (e.g. narration of sports events);
 3. anterior narration (about future events, e.g. prophetic books, Apocalypsis, etc).

In literary texts we usually find retrospective narration, and we can distinguish the following types of narrator, according to Genette:³⁸

Extradiegetic narrator tells the story from the outside of the story. He or she is the imagined voice but he or she is never a participant of the narrated events, e.g. the narrator in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*:

I have told my reader, in the preceding chapter, that Mr. Allworthy inherited a large fortune; that he had a good heart, and no family. (Chapter III)³⁹

Intradiegetic narrator is the narrator who is both outside and inside the events being narrated. For example, in Kazuo Ishiguro's novel, *The Remains of the Day*, Stevens, the ageing butler of Darlington Hall, is an intradiegetic narrator. He relates a motoring holiday into the West Country which also takes him into his past:

It seems increasingly likely that I really will undertake the expedition that has been preoccupying my imagination now for some days. An expedition, I should say, which I will undertake alone, in the comfort of Mr Farraday's Ford; an expedition which, as I foresee it, will take me through much of the finest countryside of England to the West Country, and may keep me away from Darlington Hall for as much as five or six days.⁴⁰

Homodiegetic narrator: The narrator appears as a character in the story told by him/her, e.g. Robinson in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*:

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, though not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade, lived afterwards at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but, by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called—nay we call ourselves and write our name—Crusoe; and so my companions always called me.⁴¹

Heterodiegetic narrator: the narrator does not belong to the set of characters in the story. He or she tells the story about somebody else, e.g. Nick Carraway in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The narrator tells the tragic history of the bootlegger, Jay Gatsby and his great dream:

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed, and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago."⁴²

³⁸ Gérard Genette is a French literary theorist, associated in particular with the structuralist movement and such figures as Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Genette developed his theory of narratology in *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980).

³⁹ Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones. A Foundling* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1999) 5.

⁴⁰ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1989) 3.

⁴¹ Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994) 8.

⁴² F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Popular Classics, 1994)

Another aspect of focalisation can be seen in the concept of **figural narrative**, the story is told either through a narrator who functions as a teller (a third person, omniscient narrator, or a first person non-omniscient narrator), or through the consciousness of a **reflector character**, who functions as a disguised narrator.⁴³

5.4. Point of view

Another important aspect of a work of fiction is its point of view. It is the narrator's relationship to his story. *Point of view* is the perspective from which the story is being told by the narrator. Point of view depends on:

- 1) the degree of the narrator's knowledge
- 2) the degree of the narrator's understanding
- 3) the degree of the narrator's participation.

Henry James (1843-1916) developed the theory of point of view. He tried to eliminate the traditional omniscient narrator. In his novels and short stories events are told not from the point of view of the omniscient narrator but from the point of view of the characters. Likewise, in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900) the main events of the novel, such as the abandonment of the ship "Patna" by Jim, is not told by the narrator. The story is told by Jim himself, Captain Marlow and other characters from their points of view. The narrator is not heard; he is hidden behind the characters who give their own subjective accounts of the events. Thus the novel has not one point of view but many. Lack of one point of view requires that the reader should form his own interpretation of the events told in the story.

Generally, we can distinguish the following types of point of view in narrative literature:

- a) an objective point of view: the narrator remains a detached observer and never discloses anything about what the characters think or feel;
- b) a third person point of view: the narrator does not participate in the action of the story, but tells what the characters think and feel;
- c) a first person point of view: the narrator participates in the action of the story (as a character) and tells the story from his or her point of view;
- d) an omniscient point of view: the narrator knows everything about all the characters;
- e) a limited omniscient point of view: the narrator's knowledge is limited to that of one character;

In Genette's narratology, i.e. the theory of narrative texts, the point of view from which a story is told is called **focalisation**. Focalisation is both perception and manipulation of information conveyed in the narrative by the focaliser (the central consciousness in the story or focal character. Focalisation is thus the product of what the focaliser sees and knows. Three types of focalisation can be distinguished:

- a) zero focalisation is characteristic of classic narratives with the omniscient narrator and no focaliser (e.g. *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding);
- b) external focalisation is the type of focalisation where the information conveyed by the focaliser is mostly limited to what the characters say and do, with little or no direct indication of what they think or feel (e.g. *The Great Gatsby* by Scott Fitzgerald);
- c) internal focalisation is the type of focalisation where the information

⁴³ Franz K. Stanzel, the Austrian literary theorist, developed the concept of **figural narrative** (*A Theory of Narrative*, 1984), which introduces a **reflector character** as a distinctive narrative situation separate from first-person and "authorial" narrative.

conveyed in the narrative by the focaliser reveals what he/she thinks, knows or feels (e.g. in Henry James's *Daisy Miller* the narrator thinks, sees and knows only what the central intelligence thinks, sees and knows).

5.5. Narrative techniques

A narrative technique is the method of telling stories. The main elements of a narrative (plot) include time and space (setting), conflict or confrontation, continuity and change, motives for change, narrator, characters and relationships among characters. Besides, as in poetry and drama, we shall always find some formal and rhetorical elements in fiction, e.g. repetition, parallels, metonymy, metaphors, symbols, motifs, etc.

Plot is the sequence of events in a narrative and structure is the pattern in which the plot is presented. Narrative structure is an important element of storytelling. We can distinguish linear and non-linear narrative structures.

Linear narrative is a story line which is shown in chronological order. The linear narrative usually consists of exposition, setting up the setting and the characters, conflict or complications, climax and resolution. A lot of 19th century novels have the linear narrative structure.

Nonlinear narrative or *disrupted narrative* is a narrative technique which does not present events in chronological order. Modernist novelists, such as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner experimented with nonlinear narrative. However, examples of nonlinear narratives can be found in Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* (1759-67) and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847). More recent experimental and postmodern fiction makes a frequent use of the nonlinear or disruptive narrative technique. The characteristic examples include Flan O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, and J.G. Ballard's *The Atrocity Exhibition*.

One of the interesting narrative structures is **frame narrative** or **frame story**. It is a story which is contained within another story. The best examples of this technique are *Arabian Nights*, Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. Frame is thus a narrative structure that provides a setting and exposition for the main narrative and the story within story is often called **inset narrative**. It is a literary technique in which one story is told during the action of another story. An example of inset narrative can be found in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, in chapters when Tom meets the man of Mazard Hill.

The purpose of frame narration is to give the reader a freedom of opinion. In *Wuthering Heights* the author does not make comments in the way Henry Fielding did in *Tom Jones* of Jane Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility*. Thus the narration in *Wuthering Heights* provides a greater objectivity.

Free indirect discourse is a form of third-person narration which uses some of the characteristics of third-person along with the essence of first-person direct speech. It is also referred to as free indirect speech or free indirect style. Free indirect discourse involves both a character's speech and the narrator's comments. Jane Austen used free indirect discourse in her novels. On a more sophisticated level free indirect discourse is used by James Joyce in *Ulysses*, wherein the thoughts of the narrator and the thoughts of a character are difficult to separate.

Stream-of-consciousness or *interior monologue* is a narrative technique characteristic of the modern novel. The term, *stream of consciousness* was created by the American psychologist William James in *Principles of Psychology* (1890). With reference to the novel, it denotes the flow of thoughts and feelings which pass through a character's mind. James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* are written in the stream-of-consciousness technique. Here is a fragment of Mr Bloom's interior monologue in Joyce's *Ulysses*:

A cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly. Grey. Far. No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste. Volcanic lake, the dead sea: no fish, weedless, sunk deep in the earth. No wind would lift those waves, grey metal, poisonous foggy waters. Brimstone they called it raining down: the cities of the plain: Sodom, Gomorrah, Edom. All dead names. A dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. Old now. It bore the oldest, the first race. A bent hag crossed from Cassidy's clutching a noggin bottle by the neck. The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now. Now it could bear no more. Dead: an old woman's: the grey sunken cunt of the world. Desolation.

Parallel narrative is narrative technique in which the main narrative is split into two or even more separate stories with different narrators. The only physical things that link them may be a character, a setting or an event. Michael Cunningham's novel, *The Hours* (1998), has three parallel narratives featuring respectively the real modernist writer Virginia Woolf, who is writing her novel *Mrs Dalloway*, and the two fictional young women, Laura Brown, who longs to escape from her boring suburban marriage in Los Angeles in the nineteen-forties while she reads *Mrs Dalloway*, and a middle-aged woman Clarissa, who arranges a party for her former lover dying of Aids in New York. at the end of the twentieth century.

Split narrative is a technique when parts of the same story are told from different perspectives, e.g. in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* where the story is contained not only in Captain Walton's letters but also in Frankenstein's and the monster's accounts. The contemporary American author Toni Morrison uses split narrative in her novel *Love*, where lives of several women and their relationships to the late Bill Cooney are narrated.

Reverse narrative chronology is a method of story-telling whereby the plot is revealed in reverse order, e.g. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë.

Finally, it should be remembered that narration can be authorial and non-authorial. An authorial narration is usually present when the narrator is external (a third-person omniscient narrator). The narrative is mediated through a non-participant observer that both sees and tells the story from an outside position. For example, the omniscient narrator in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* can be identified with the author, whereas in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* or *Heart of Darkness* (1902) the narrator is Marlow, an imagined character, who cannot be identified with the author.

5.6. Plot

The structure of the action is called *plot*. Plot is the blueprint of every work of fiction. It usually includes exposition (introductory information needed to understand a story), conflict or complication, tension or rising action, climax (the turning point in the story that occurs when characters try to resolve the complication or conflict), and falling action or resolution (a set of events that bring the story to an end). A well-designed traditional plot contains incidents which are carefully selected and arranged in a cause-and-effect relationship.

Plots may be unitary or episodic, i.e. they tell one story or many stories in a novel. Similarly, plots may be single or multiple, i.e. one action or many actions are recounted at the same time. A traditional (19th century) novel has multiple plots.

Aristotle in his *Poetics*, referring to tragedy, defined plot as the ordering of events. In other words, plot is the structuring of events or action into a cause-and-effect sequence. Plot, according to Aristotle, is essentially *mimesis*, i.e. imitation of human action; the Aristotelian emphasis on plot as the main structuring element in a literary work had exerted a great influence on the development of the novel.

Great masters of plot development in the early history of the English novel were Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) and Henry Fielding (1707-1754). In the classical realist novel of the 19th century plot usually was built upon the description of the personality of the main character and a chain of complicated events. Plot was as a rule linear and it obeyed the principle of cause and effect. Events were gradually accumulated. In the 20th century the

linearity of plot vanished and plot itself ceased to be the most important element of fiction.

It is important to make a distinction between the main plot (major plot) and subplots (minor plots). Novels may have any kind of plot: tragic, comic, satiric, or romantic.

We can distinguish the following elements of plot structure in a classical realist novel or short story. Like in a drama, exposition introduces characters, time and place of action. Rising action involves events that complicate the situation and intensify or complicate the conflict. Turning point or climax is the utmost complication of the story. Falling action is the reverse movement leading to a catastrophe or solution.

Apart from these elements of the plot structure, we should also mention *foreshadowing* and *flashback*, which are often used in linear narratives. Foreshadowing is the technique of giving the reader a hint of what is to come sometime later in the story, while flashback is an interruption in the action of a story to show an episode that happened at an earlier time. In Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, the graveyard scene describing a meeting between Pip and the escaped convict Magwitch foreshadows the future events in the novel. A flashback provides background information necessary to an understanding of the characters or the plot. An extended flashback is a narrative technique which can be found in a number of novels, e.g. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* (1950).

5.7. Characters

Characters are invented persons in a work of fiction. According to David Lodge, "(c)haracter is arguably the most important single component of the novel" (Lodge, 67). The author may describe his characters' physical traits and personality. He may also give the opinions of other characters toward one particular character. He may show the character's inward thoughts and feelings. Characters are presented to the reader by the narrator through a direct description, the surface description of physical appearance and details of dress, characters' actions and speeches (what and how they do and say), characters' consciousness (what they think and feel). Characters are usually classified as major and minor or dynamic and static ones. Another distinction classifies characters as 'round' and 'flat'. Flat characters may also be called stock characters or types. The flat or stock character reveals one simple idea or quality. For example, Mr Collins is one many flat characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. He is pathetic and he remains unchanged until the end of the novel.

A specific type of character is **foil**. The role of the foil is to emphasise the traits of the main character by comparison or contrast. A foil serves as a counterparts for another character, usually the protagonist. Thus Mr Collins serves a a foil for Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. In *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, Edgar Linton serves as a foil for Heathcliff.

The relationship between characters is often based on contrast and conflict, however, in some fictions the struggle occurs within a character's self. This struggle is called internal conflict and involves a decision the character must make.

The speciality of the novel is that the writer can talk about his characters as well as through them or can arrange for us to listen when they talk to each other. The characters in a novel perform various functions. For example, they may:

1. advance the action,
2. reveal the action to the reader,
3. appear as symbols,
4. create atmosphere or verisimilitude,
5. transmit ideas, opinions, attitudes, etc.

While reading a narrative work you should always keep in mind the following:

1. Who is (are) the central character/s?
2. What are the relationships between them?
3. Are the characters static or do they develop throughout the story?
4. How do we get to know characters? By their actions, their own thoughts and feelings; through the author's description; through meaningful names and physical characteristics; or through symbols?

5.8. Theme

As stated earlier, theme is the unifying idea of a literary work. It is a central idea or statement that unifies and controls a literary work. The theme can take the form of a simple idea or a comprehensive vision of life. It may be a single idea such as "romantic love," "revenge", or "jealousy" . The theme may also be a more complicated doctrine, such as the theme or rather themes in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. A theme is the author's way of communicating and sharing ideas, perceptions, and feelings with readers, and it may be directly stated in the book, or it may only be implied. Themes may attract the reader's interest in works of literature on a more-emotional level by making the message more universal and accessible.

In fiction the theme is rarely presented in a straightforward way. For example, the predominant theme in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) is the critique of the American Dream, which Fitzgerald presents in a symbolic way. This theme leads on to the idea of America as a moral and spiritual waste land, a motif which Fitzgerald derived from T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land" (1922).

5.9. The novel

The only reason for the existence of a novel is
that it does attempt to represent life.
Henry James

The *novel* is an extended fictional narrative in prose. Of course, apart from narrative elements, the novel may contain commentary and description. The novel, much more than any other literary genre, can give a sense of the uniqueness and mysteriousness of the human personality. It is a record of the consciousness of a writer who attempts in an anthropomorphic way (i.e. with man as the centre of interest) to imitate and recreate reality. The novel combines the characteristics of other forms of writing, such as travel accounts, memoirs, histories, letters, religious, political, and philosophical essays. It offers a direct communication between writer and reader, and it has become the most important genre since the 19th century. Some critics claim that the novel is not an independent work of art but it combines features of other literary genres. The novel has been compared to a 'bag' for different literary styles and techniques.

The novel may contain, apart from the fictional plot, the author's own commentary about the events s/he relates as well as factual and historical information. For example, the novel by Herman Melville *Moby Dick* provides a lot of information about whaling. Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* contains comments on history. Likewise, John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* provides factual information on Victorian society. Other characteristic features of the novel include the love of detail and of verisimilitude (i.e. the exclusion of improbability). In Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* we find actual names of towns near London. The novelist tries to convince the reader that the adventures of the characters are probable. The novel differs from the prose romance or fable in that it contains a greater degree of realism, and it usually describes a secular social world. Moral instruction and entertainment were the two imperatives of the classical realist novel. The French writer

Stendhal⁴⁴ (1783-1824) wrote that the novel is a ‘mirror on the road’; its aim is to reflect the reality of life. The novel of the 20th century has radically changed its scope and objectives. We may say that in comparison to the 19th century novel it has ‘shrunk’ and disintegrated. The classical realist novel, such as *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy aimed at providing a plethora of detailed information on geography, history, politics, sociology, psychology, manners, etc. The novel in the 20th century generally restricted its repertory of information.

The English word ‘novel’ stems from the Italian *novella* which is equivalent to ‘news’. Therefore, the novel suggests a kind of narrative that claims to be informative and true. It is widely agreed that the history of the English novel really begins with the publication of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719. *Robinson Crusoe* is regarded as an archetypal Puritan novel which combines the Puritan faith in Providence with the Puritan work ethic. Defoe created a kind of primitive realism which aimed at imitating nature. The development of the novel reflects a growing interest in realistic rendering of the everyday experience of people. The novel is mostly concerned with the problems of ordinary people in ordinary situations in society. Even the novels which have animals as central characters, for example, George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, deal indirectly with man in the social world. The novel, contrary to a short story, is usually a long piece of fiction with a great amount of details which describes the complex reality of the characters or events in the story.

Components of a novel

A novel consists of four primary components: plot, character, theme and style. A novel may have all or some these formal components: title and possibly a subtitle, preface, foreword or introduction, chapters or sections or books; a chapter may have a heading (title), conclusion (finale), postscript.

The novel's beginning

A novel contains thousands of sentences, but, it seems, none is as deeply important as the opening sentences. The opening sentences are usually meant to inform the reader what to expect in terms of plot and character. Here are some examples of the beginnings of famous novels.

”It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.”
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”
Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (1877)

“Stately, plump Buck Mulligan came from the stairhead, bearing a bowl of lather on which a mirror and a razor lay crossed.”
James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922)

“Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.”
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)

“Scarlett O’Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were.”
Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With The Wind* (1936)

⁴⁴ Stendhal is the pen name of Marie Henri Beyle (1783-1842), a French novelist and critic who influenced the development of the modern novel with his psychological romances, such as *Le Rouge et le Noir* (*The Red and the Black*, 1830).

“Lolita. Light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul.”
Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955)

“You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino’s new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*.”
Italo Calvino, *If on a winter's night a traveler* (1979)

Components of a novel's ending

There are several techniques of ending a novel.

1. A happy ending is a finale when everything ends in the best way for the protagonist. *Poetic Justice* is a type of a happy ending where good characters are rewarded and bad characters are punished.
2. A *cliffhanger* is the technique of ending the plot at a point where the reader is left in suspense. The term probably originates from Thomas Hardy's serial novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). One of the characters, Henry Knight, slips and falls over the edge of a precipice. He cannot ascend because the ground is slippery. In order to help Henry, the female protagonist, Elfride, removes all her extensive Victorian underclothes and weaves a rescue-rope.
3. A *twist ending* is an unexpected finale that gives an entirely new vision on the entire plot. Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* (originally titled *Ten Little Niggers*, 1939) is a classic twist ending novel.
4. *Deus ex machina* a device dating back to ancient Greek theatre, where the conflict is resolved through a means that seem unrelated to the story. This allows the author to end the story as desired without following the logic and continuity of the story.

The self-conscious or self-reflexive novel

A self-conscious or self-reflexive novel is one whose author openly reflects upon his or her own process of literary composition. The most characteristic features of self-conscious or self-reflexive novels are: the narrator is visibly engaged in the act of composition, the narrator addresses the readers directly. The relationship between fiction and reality is one of the predominant concerns. Examples include John Fowles’ *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* and Ian McEwan’s *Atonement*.

The role of coincidence in the novel

Coincidence is a frequent device in narrative fiction. Coincidence in fiction is a structural tool that allows to create interesting connections between characters in the plot, or move the plot along by a sequence of fortuitously linked events. As a literary device, coincidence is the interference of the author in the plot, who acts like an ancient Greek god directing events. Authors use coincidence to drive the plot forward, to create and resolve conflicts, or to create a humorous situation or to startle the reader. Sometimes, coincidence is a sign of poor plotting.

In Thomas Hardy’s novel coincidence and chance play a significant role. In *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* coincidences have a tremendous effect on Tess’s life. The most significant coincidence is when Tess slips her letter to Angel through the door under the carpet, and as a result Angel does not read it and is not aware of her past.

5.9.1. Stages of the development of the novel

The novel evolved gradually from a variety of narrative forms. The two most important forms which contributed significantly to the early development of the novel were the epic and romance, both written in verse. The picaresque story, originated in Spain in the 17th century added a new dimension to the new genre. The picaresque story, such as the famous

Lazarillo de Tormes (1554), was realistic, episodic and satiric. It described the adventures of a merry urchin who is always on the run. François Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-1564) and Miguel Cervantes's *Don Quichote* (1605-1615) are also regarded as important antecedents of the novel.

18th century prose fictions of Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, *Roxana* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* combined elements of travel account and romance. The characteristic feature of these fictions was so-called **formal realism**, i.e. an attempt to achieve verisimilitude by use of real personal and geographical names. Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Tobias Smollett are credited for having written the first novels.

The next stage in the development of the novel as a genre was the emergence of the classical realist novel of the 19th century (Jane Austen, Charles Dickens in England, Honoré de Balzac in France, Leo Tolstoy and Ivan Turgenev in Russia). Towards the end of the 19th century the realist novel underwent a serious transformation. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Henry James and Joseph Conrad contributed to the development of the modern novel by omitting the omniscient narrator and linear plot.

The modernist novel was shaped by new developments in science and philosophy. It marked a distinctive break with Victorian realism and outlook. It now presented a pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray. Modernist writers treated the novel as the book of life, i.e. they believed that the novel, more than any other literary form, can offer a synthetic treatment of human existence. Under the influence of the psychologist William James and the French philosopher Henri Bergson, a new type of the novel was developed – the stream-of-consciousness novel, whose most outstanding representatives are James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of modernist narratives is the unreliable and non-omniscient narrator. This major change in narrative strategy was due, among others, to a growing distrust in authority, a drift toward subjectivity, modern psychology and social reform movements. Traditional authority was challenged in different ways by Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. The first example of an unreliable narrative might be found in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's⁴⁵ *Notes from the Underground* (1864), where the narrator is a poor, unlikeable, clerk, who is full of self-loathing and at the same time contemptuous, a braggart and a liar. Henry James's *Maisie* (*What Maisie Knew*, 1897) is unreliable because she is too young to understand how her selfish parents are competing for her affection.

In the essay *The Art of Fiction* (1884), James believed that the novel is the best form of art for expressing the truth of life. He attacked Victorian sentimentality and naive didacticism. James modified narrative technique. The key elements in his novels are the invisible narrator and different points of view. James's narrator reveals the characters' subjective consciousness. In his novels James was less concerned with external events but his main aim was to explore the characters' psyche. Henry James developed the restricted point of view in his novels, which influenced such diverse writers as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and Graham Greene. Other writers who exerted the greatest influence on the development of the English novel in the 20th century include D(avid) H(erbert) Lawrence (1885-1930) and Aldous Huxley (1894-1963).

In recent decades we could watch the emergence of a new trend in literature and the arts called Postmodernism. The postmodernist novel questions the traditional concepts of literature; literature is reduced to a library of texts, its social and cultural role is undermined and literary texts are compared to combinatorial games. Indeterminacy, fragmentarisation, hybridisation, extreme tolerance, open form, metanarratives (stories that account for and give meaning to everything in a culture or in a discipline), radical shifts in perspectives, disturbing and clashing mixtures of style, collage (bits and pieces of different, often

⁴⁵ Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) was a Russian novelist and philosopher, considered as a precursor of 20th-century existentialism. He who wrote about human suffering with great psychological insight. His most important novels are *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

unrelated texts, brought within the same frame) and intertextuality are the characteristic features of the postmodernist novel.

5.9.2. Types of novels

The novel can be divided into numerous subclasses and categories. Some of these subclasses overlap, i.e. a realist novel may also be a social or a psychological novel. Below we shall present a few characteristic types of novels.

Adventure novel has a fast-paced plot and focuses on exciting action involving risk and physical danger, e.g. Alexandre Dumas' *The Three Musketeers* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*; Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. An adventure novel may overlap with other novel genres, e.g. historical novels, war novels, crime novels, etc.

Autobiographical novel, or semi-autobiographical novel, is based partly or wholly on the author's life experience for its plot, e.g. Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* or James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Other notable examples of semi-autobiographical novels include Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* (1934), Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963) and Martin Amis's *Experience: A Memoir* (2000).

Campus novel is usually set within the enclosed world of a university or a college and mocks the follies of academic life. Some of the most famous campus novels are Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* (1957), David Lodge's *Changing Places* (1975) and *Small World* (1984), and Malcolm Bradbury's *The History Man* (1975). A *varsity novel* is also set in and around the campus of a university but focuses on students rather than faculty like in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945).

Christian novel reflects Christian faith and often contains a plot that revolves around the Christian life, evangelism or conversion. The plot may be directly religious, allegorical or symbolic. Examples: Henryk Sienkiewicz's, *Quo Vadis* (1896), G(ilbert) K(eith) Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), Par Lagerkvist's *Barabbas* (1950). A peculiar type of Christian novels were written by Graham Greene, e.g. *The Power and the Glory*, which shows how difficult it is to be Christian in a world of oppressive dictatorship. The tradition of Christian novel is continued by Muriel Spark.

Detective novel describes a mystery, often involving a murder, which is solved by a professional or amateur detective. A good detective novel displays excellent logic of reasoning in unravelling the mystery or crime. It is generally agreed that Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) was the first writer of detective stories, which include: *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *Purloined Letter*, and *The Mystery of Marie Roget*. In Britain Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) continued the new genre referred to as the novels of sensation. His most successful novels were *The Woman in White* (1860), a mystery novel, and *The Moonstone* (1868), credited as the first English detective novel. However, Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) is the most famous English writer of detective stories. His best known books are a collection of stories entitled *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892) and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902). Doyle created the immortal detective Mr Sherlock Holmes and his friend, Dr Watson. Another famous English writer of detective fiction was Agatha Christie (1890-1976), who wrote a great number of thrilling novels. In her first book she introduced Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective, who appeared in many of her later novels. Her other detective was the elderly spinster Miss Marple. Christie's best detective novels include *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death on the Nile* (1937) and *Ten Little Niggers* (1939).

In the United States Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) had a great stylistic influence on the modern detective novel. His protagonist, Philip Marlowe, is synonymous with "tough but honest private detective". Chandler's most famous detective novels include *The Big Sleep* (1939) and *Farewell, My Lovely* (1940).

Dystopian novel is an anti-utopian novel, where unlike the utopian novel, the

attempt to create a perfect society has gone wrong. The word 'dystopia' literally means 'bad place'. In terms of a literary genre it is sometimes used as the opposite of 'utopia'. The dystopian novel usually portrays a future world where technical progress causes serious ethical, moral and social concerns. Some characteristic topics of dystopian novels include a conscienceless totalitarian government (Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *1984*), or a society terrorised by violent and uncontrollable youth (Anthony Burgess's *Clockwork Orange*). The dystopian novel is a 20th century phenomenon, but its antecedents can be found in the fiction of H. G. Wells (1866-1946). The purpose of dystopian novels is to present a disguised critique of the present-day society.

Epistolary novel, or novel of letters, is written in the form of letters. Examples of early epistolary novels are Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748). The form of the epistolary novel was particularly popular in the second half of the 18th century. In the early 19th century, Mary Shelley used the epistolary form in her Gothic novel *Frankenstein* (1818). In recent time, the American writer Alice Walker employed the epistolary form in *The Color Purple* (1982). The epistolary novel allows a writer to include multiple narrators in the story. Much of Stephen King's novel *Carrie* (1974) is written in an epistolary form, through newspaper clippings, magazine articles, letters, and excerpts from books.

Ethnic or multicultural novel is written by a member of or about an ethnic minority group, e.g. Jews, Blacks, Hindus, etc. Examples include Isaac Bashevis Singer's *The Penitent*, James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Fantasy novel is written in an unrealistic manner, describing a non-existent world, such as that on another planet, in the far future or in a fairyland. Modern fantasy developed from the Gothic romances of the later 18th century, the novels of Lewis Carroll and some early science fiction novels. The characters in fantasy novels often search for a magic object which will help overcome evil. A fantasy novel should be distinguished from horror fiction. Two Poles, Stanisław Lem and Andrzej Sapkowski are among the most famous fantasy authors.

Gothic novel was the product of a superficial interest in the Middle Ages. Gothic elements included the supernatural, the weird and the mysterious. They first appeared with the works of Horace Walpole (e.g. *The Castle of Otranto*, 1765), William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), Matthew Gregory Lewis (*Monk*, 1796), Ann Radcliffe (*Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794), Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*, 1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Gothic novels or stories contain scenes of mystery, horror and wonder. The atmosphere is dark and ghastly. Edgar Allan Poe developed the Gothic style in his short stories. Charles Dickens also employed elements of the Gothic style in his novels, e.g. in *The Bleak House* and in *Great Expectations*. The setting of a Gothic novel was often a gloomy castle with ghosts, dungeons and supernatural events.

Historical novel is set in the past, i.e. its plot refers to historical events. Its main subdivisions include:

1. the historical novel proper, which gives a realistic representation of historical events mixed with elements of fiction (e.g. Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*); the historical figures play a minor role whereas the main characters are fictitious. However, there has been a tendency in recent time that a historical figure plays a prominent part in the historical novel (e.g. Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*).
2. the period novel which gives a detailed representation of past events at a given period (e.g. George Eliot's *Middlemarch*; E. M. Forster's *A Room With a View* and *Howards End*, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind*); and
3. the historical romance, which is the subgenre of two literary genres, the romance novel and the historical novel, depicts adventures in the past. The pioneer of the historical romance in England was Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), who wrote *Waverley* (1814), *Rob Roy* (1817), *Ivanhoe* (1819) and many other historical romances.

Nouveau roman (anti-novel) ignores almost completely plot, dialogue and human interest. Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* was perhaps the first English 'anti-novel'. The author had anticipated many innovations of the postmodernist fiction of the second half of the 20th century. In the 20th century, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf broke off with the traditional story-telling and form of the novel. The anti-novel developed particularly in France (e.g. Nathalie Sarraute's *Tropisms*, 1939; Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy*, 1957; Michel Butor's *Passing Time*, 1957, and *Degrees*, 1960).

Novel of apprenticeship (**Bildungsroman**) deals with upbringing and education. Its prototype can be found in Johann Wolfgang Goethe's work, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*, which describe the experiences of a young sensitive man while he travels the country. An early example of the novel of apprenticeship is Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*. Other examples include Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* and James Joyce's *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, although the latter also belongs to the subcategory of *Kunstlerroman* (the novel about the development of an artist).

Novel of manners is a form of a realistic novel which deals with aspects of behaviour, language, customs and values characteristic of a particular class of people in a specific historical context. The novel of manners often shows a conflict between individual aspirations or desires and the accepted social codes of behaviour. Examples of the novels of manners include: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*; William Makepeace Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*.

Panoramic novel has a loose plot and does not have main characters as a rule. Characters are types rather than individuals. The panoramic plot is not so logical as the dramatic plot (e.g. John Dos Passos' *U.S.A.*).

Pastoral novel shows the pleasures of the simple rural life and disgust with urban stresses. The remote predecessor of the pastoral novel is Thomas Lodge's (1558-1625) *Rosalynde* (1590), a pastoral romance which became an inspiration for Shakespeare's comedy *As You Like It*. In the late 19th century Thomas Hardy wrote a number of novels which contained the pastoral theme, e.g. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874). In the early 20th century D. H. Lawrence wrote novels which have some qualities of pastoral fiction, e.g. *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).

Picaresque novel is an episodic novel about the adventures of a rogue or picaro (a person of low social status). Picaresque novels are characterised by verisimilitude achieved by use of real names and description of petty details. Examples include Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* and Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*.

Roman a clef (French for a novel that needs a key) is a novel in which the characters are based on real people whose names have been changed (e.g. James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, Aldous Huxley's *Point Counter Point*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*).

Realist novel is one of the most popular subgenres of the novel. Realism is a vague term and so is the idea of reality. The term realism was introduced in 1835 as an aesthetic definition to distinguish Rembrandt's 'realistic' paintings from neoclassical 'idealistic' painting. Later realism became a literary term. We may speak about realism as a certain relationship between reality and literature. Realistic fiction began to become a dominant form in the 19th century. It laid emphasis on the importance of reproducing the external conditions of human life and social laws.

Realism may be regarded as a way of writing that gives the impression of recording or reflecting faithfully an actual life. Realism is not always a direct or simple reproduction of reality ('a slice of life'), but a system of conventions producing lifelike illusion of some 'real' world outside the text by processes of selection, exclusion, description, and manners of addressing the reader. In philosophy the term 'realism' is usually opposed to 'idealism'. In literature, realistic fiction is opposed to romance, allegory, parable, etc. Realism is thus the way reality is presented in fiction.

Realism may also be found in many kinds of writing before the 19th century, e.g. in the works of Boccaccio, Dante, or Chaucer). One of the characteristic features of the early realistic novels in the 18th century was the use of real names of characters, e.g. Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Tom Jones, Tristram Shandy, etc. This feature is known as “formal realism”. Another feature of realism was the principle of individualisation, i.e. characters are individuals and not types.

Realistic fiction is characterised by love of detail and verisimilitude, i.e. the exclusion of improbability. However, it was in the 19th century that realism became a dominant literary trend in the novel.

The outstanding works of 19th century realism include: Honoré de Balzac’s⁴⁶ *Illusions perdues*, Gustave Flaubert’s⁴⁷ *Madame Bovary*, George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871-1872), Leo Tolstoy’s⁴⁸ *War and Peace* (1869) and *Anna Karenina* (1877) and many others.

Romance novel is, according to Pamela Regis, the most popular and least respected literary genre. It is a form of popular fiction whose primary focus is on the relationship and romantic love between two people. As a rule, it has an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending. The narrative structure of romance novels includes, as a rule, “a definition of society, always corrupt, that the romance novel will reform; the meeting between the heroine and the hero, an account of their attraction for each other, the barrier between them; the point of ritual death; the recognition that fells the barrier; the declaration of the hero and the heroine that they love each other, and their betrothal.”⁴⁹ One of the most famous classic romance novels is Margaret Mitchell’s (1900-1949) *Gone with the Wind*.

Modern romances are commercially subdivided into two main varieties: category or series romances, e.g. Harlequin series, and single-title romances. Romance novels include many subgenres, e.g. contemporary, historical, science fiction, romantic suspense or romantic thriller, and paranormal romance novels.

Barbara Cartland (1901-2000) was one of the most successful English authors of this genre. She published over 700 romance novels!

The American author Danielle Steel is another widely-read romance fiction writer. Her 65 romance novels have been published in over 500 million copies in English and in translation in 50 countries. Love and betrayal are the main themes of Steel’s romances. Her first novel, *Going Home* (1973) is about a young girl, Gillian Forrester, who falls in love with a villain who treats her badly. After experiencing betrayal, pregnant and rejected she flees to New York where she begins an exciting career and a new love. However, her new-found happiness is destroyed, too. Gillian must finally learn to deal with loss and live with it.

Romantic novel should be distinguished from a romance novel. Anita Brookner writes: “The true Romantic novel is about delayed happiness. [...] In the genuine Romantic novel there is a confrontation with truth and in the ‘romance’ novel a similar confrontation with a surrogate, plastic version of the truth.”⁵⁰ The romantic novel aims to arouse emotions rather than reflect reality. It should be noted that romantic fiction survived the Romantic Age and is still written. In the 20th century the best examples of that type of fiction include Daphne du Maurier’s *Jamaica Inn* (1936) and *Rebecca* (1938); Erich Segal’s *Love Story*.

Semi-autobiographical novel, see autobiographical novel.

Sentimental novel is a type of the novel, especially popular in the 18th century,

⁴⁶ Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) was a French novelist who portrayed the 19th century French society in such novels as *Eugénie Grandet* (1833), *Le Père Goriot* (*Father Goriot*, 1835) and others titled collectively *La Comédie humaine* (*The Human Comedy*).

⁴⁷ Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) was a French novelist, regarded as one of the greatest masters of the realistic novel.

⁴⁸ Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was an outstanding Russian novelist and short-story writer. His ideas on nonviolent resistance exerted a profound influence on such eminent twentieth-century figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

⁴⁹ Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) 14.

⁵⁰ From an interview with Anita Brookner in *Paris Review* (2005) 15. Also accessible at: http://www.theparisreview.org/media/2630_BROOKNER2.pdf (April 2009).

that excessively emphasises emotion. Examples include Oliver Goldsmith's (1730-1774) *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) and Henry Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* (1771).

Social novel (social problem novel, social concern novel, condition of England novel) studies the effect of economic and social conditions upon human behaviour during a given period of time. The novel of social concern includes the so-called problem novel which deals with a specific social problem, e.g. divorce, race prejudice, drunkenness, etc.

A subgenre of the social novel is the *condition of England novel* which gives a portrait of English society, especially of lower parts of society, dealing with and criticising the living conditions created by industrial, or recently, postindustrial development. The condition of England novels are polemical in principle and contain, apart from their fictional plots, a debate about the current state of English society; they are also instruments of social analysis and a platform for reform messages. The canonical (Victorian) condition of England novels include Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby* and *Sybil*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son* and *Hard Times*, Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* and Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*.

Utopian novel presents a perfect society where the problems of poverty, crime etc. have been eliminated. The word 'utopia' means 'no place' in Greek. It is the title of Sir Thomas More's political essay written in Latin, *Utopia* (1516).

Examples of utopian novels include Samuel Butler's *Erewhon* (1872), Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1891), H(erbert) G(eorge) Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1905) and *Men Like Gods* (1925).

5.10. The short story

The short story is frequently thought to be an American creation which appeared in the 19th century. Of course, short prose forms existed before the 19th century, e.g. stories from the Bible, short tales included in Giovanni Boccaccio's (1313-1375) *Decameron* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. However, the first writer who tried to formulate the poetics of the short story as a new literary genre was Edgar Allan Poe. He recommended that a short story should encompass 'a certain unique or single effect'. A short story can be read in one sitting because it usually consists of not more than 3,000 to 5,000 words. The term short story usually refers to short fiction written since the mid 19th century.

A short story differs from the novel by the fact that it is much shorter in length. This limitation in length also imposes differences in the organisation of the narrative and selection of elements of fiction. A short story introduces a limited number of characters. As a rule, it has one central character and very few others.

A short story usually has a premise (idea), development, complication, and denouement (conclusion, which is often the twist in the tale, i.e. a surprising end). Exposition and the details of setting are minimised. Frequently, a short story is limited to a single episode and the denouement is sometimes described in a few sentences. There is a distinct climax in a short story. Conflict in a short story is usually shown as a discord between characters, ideas, interests and opinions. Man can be in conflict with the forces of nature, like Santiago in Hemingway's "long" short story *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The most important names associated with the short story in Britain and Ireland include Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, Joseph Conrad, Somerset Maugham, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Katherine Mansfield, A(lfred) E(dgar) Coppard and others. In the USA the short story was developed by Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Katherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, Bernard Malamud and others.

5.11. Early forms of fiction

The habit of telling stories is characteristic of both primitive and civilised societies. At the outset, tales were passed from generation to generation in an oral form and subsequently, with the development of writing they were written down. Early forms of prose fiction include: legends, fables, tales and parables.

Legend is an old story, handed down from generation to generation both in oral and written form. It tells about great events and heroes. A legend is usually a blend of historical fact and myth. Examples include the legend of ancient Troy, St. George and the Dragon, Robin Hood, King Arthur.

Fables (from Latin 'fabula' – 'telling') are short allegorical stories about animals and objects which have human and mysterious qualities. They contain a distinct moral message, e.g. they illustrate the consequences of human weaknesses or foils, such as greed, envy, laziness, etc. Fables usually have two levels of meaning. On the surface level, the fable tells about animals, but on the hidden level, these animals stand for types of people or ideas.

The European fables descend from tales attributed to a Greek slave called Aesop who lived in the 6th century BC. In the Middle Ages Marie de France (*fl.* 1160-90) created a collection of over 100 tales in which she mingled beast fables with Greek and Roman tales. The fable form was revived in the 17th century in France by Jean de La Fontaine, who published his fables following the Aesopian pattern. Ivan Krylov in Russia and Hans Christian Andersen in Denmark wrote a great number of popular fables and stories for children.

A number of important fairy tales were published in England in the 1860s: Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies* (1863), Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* (1862), and the most famous of all English fairy tales – Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1872).

Other best-known authors of fables for children include Oscar Wilde (*The Happy Prince and Other Stories*), Rudyard Kipling (*Just So Stories*), Kenneth Grahame, Hilaire Belloc and Beatrix Potter. In the United States James Thurber published *Fables for Our Time*, which were also addressed to an adult audience.

Fairy tales are traditional stories with elements of fantasy. They are usually set in a fantasy land and present stock characters such as 'a princess', 'a cruel stepmother', 'the greedy king', a 'good' or 'bad' giant, as well as supernatural objects, such as the magic tablecloth, golden egg etc. We can distinguish two narrative types: the folk fairy tale, best known in the West through the works of the Brothers Grimm and the literary fairy tale, which became popular in Europe from the early 18th century. Fairy tales frequently present a violent conflict with the use of magic.

The French poet and critic Charles Perrault (1628-1703) is the author of *Contes de ma mere l'oie*, or *Mother Goose Tales* (1697; Eng. trans., 1729), included such familiar tales as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood*, *Puss in Boots*, and *Hop o' My Thumb*. Later the fairy tale was popularised in Germany by Johann Goethe and Ernst Theodor A(madeus) Hoffman, and in England by John Ruskin, Charles Kingsley and Oscar Wilde.

The Danish writer, Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75), has probably remained the most popular author of fairy tales. These stories, such as *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Emperor's New Clothes* and *The Ugly Duckling* have become classic treasures told to children all over the world. Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, who lived in Germany in the 19th century published some of the most memorable stories for children, e.g. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Parables are short didactic tales, but contrary to fables, the characters are human. Their content is serious and the moral is implied rather than stated outright as in fables. Parables usually aim to teach spiritual and religious lessons.

5.12. Other forms of fiction

Romance is a fictional narrative which deals with a supernatural or unreal world. In the Middle Ages the word romance meant a narrative written in a vernacular, or 'romance' language, derived from Latin, such as French. The term soon began to denote an adventure story. Many English medieval romances dealt with the adventures of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Medieval romances influenced some Elizabethan writers. In the 19th century romance was revived by Sir Walter Scott in England and Nathaniel Hawthorne in America. Hawthorne's novels and tales, especially *The Marble Faun* (1860), contain elements of romance.

It is important to recognise the difference between the novel and the romance. The main difference is in the way in which they view reality. The novel tends to show reality "as it is", i.e. with *verisimilitude*. By contrast the romance focuses on action which is far from known reality. Characters in the romance are usually two-dimensional types. They are shown in idealised situations. Sometimes characters are symbolic, as in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.

Science fiction is a subcategory of prose fiction which is described as literature of the fantastic. It also includes horror and **fantasy**. Science fiction deals with the imaginary future effects of technological progress; it is often concerned with space travel and alien civilisations. Science fiction has many progenitors in earlier literature, namely: 1) travel accounts, 2) stories of ideal societies such as Thomas More's *Utopia*, and 3) gothic novels. One of the most popular early science fiction writers is the French author, Jules Verne (1828-1905), who wrote about the fascinating adventures of Captain Nemo in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1869). Other examples include H. G. Wells' *The Invisible Man*, Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*.

The *nonfiction novel* is a form of radical **verism**. Examples of the nonfiction novel include William Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965), Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968), *Marilyn* (1974), *The Executioner's Song* (1979). Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* reports the savage murder of a Kansas farm family by two psychopaths, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock. Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* is a thorough reconstruction of the crimes and death of a notorious murderer, Gary Gilmore. The antecedents of the nonfiction novel can be found in the texts written in the early 20th century, e.g. Ida Tarbell's *The History of Standard Oil* (1904), Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of Cities* (1904).

The series novel or 'sagas'. Several novels related to each other by plot, setting and characters. Some of these multi-volume novels are called 'sagas'. Examples include James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Anthony Trollope's Barsetshire novels, Lucy M(aud) Montgomery's Anne of Avonlea novels, John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*.

Confession is a literary form now found in popular literature, especially 'colour' magazines. It includes personal narrative, usually highly romantic.

5.13. Analysis and interpretation of prose fiction

The analysis of prose fiction has many similarities to the analysis of poetry and drama. When reading a novel or a short story, pay attention to the following elements of fiction: discourse features (language), theme and subject matter, narration, narrator, plot, characters and characterisation, setting, imagery, genre and tradition. Besides, you should learn about the author and his outlook (worldview). Basically, your analysis and interpretation of prose fiction should include the following steps:

Step 1	Background questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When was the novel or short story first published? 2. What do you know about its author? 3. What are the literary relations of the author?
Step 2	Questions on the content. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the theme or central idea of the novel/short story? 2. What events, setting, or actions are used to support the central idea? 3. What is the setting of the novel/story? 4. Who are the main characters? 5. If there is more than one leading character, what are their relations to each other? 6. Has the story one or more plots? 7. What is the climax of the story?
Step 3	Questions on the form. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is the novel/story structured? What narrative format is used? 2. What is the literary subgenre of the novel (e.g. gothic story, historical romance, novel of manners, psychological novel, stream-of-consciousness novel, etc. 3. Describe the narrator and point of view (e.g. omniscient narrator, first-person narrator, unreliable narrator, etc.). Who is telling the story (narrator) and to whom (the audience)? Is the narrative point of view effective in conveying the message? 4. Does the story move forward chronologically? If not, how? 5. Is the story realistic, allegoric, symbolic or something else?
Step 4	Interpretation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the title of the novel suggest something about its content? 2. What is your impression of the novel / story? 3. What is the significance of the novel / short story? 4. Examine the use of symbolism, foreshadowing, manipulation of the time, internal monologue, wit, humor, irony, and others. 5. What parts of the novel / story are most vivid for you? Why? 6. Discuss literary and historical implication of the novel / short story.

Revision questions

1. What is the purpose of prose fiction?
2. What are the main elements of prose fiction?
3. Can you distinguish various categories of narrator?
4. What is frame narrative?
5. What is the stream-of-consciousness technique?
6. What are the elements of plot structure?
7. What is the difference between the dynamic ('round') and static ('flat') characters?
8. What are the features of the novel of manners?
9. What is realism?
10. What is narration? What is narrative technique? Narrator and narratee. Different types of narrators. Omniscient and omnipresent; reliable and unreliable narrators. Polyphonic and *skaz* narratives. What is narrative technique? The main elements of a narrative. Linear and nonlinear narrative structures, frame narrative, free indirect discourse, stream-of consciousness narrative, parallel and split narratives, reverse narrative chronology.
11. What is diegesis? Discuss the three types of narration: retrospective, simultaneous and anterior narration. Discuss the differences between the extradiegetic,

- intradiegetic, homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator.
12. What is point of view in a narrative? Discuss the five types of point of view. What is focalisation?
 13. What is plot? elements of plot structure; main and minor plot (subplot); multiple plot; linear and nonlinear plots; foreshadowing (prolepsis) and flashback.
 14. Types of characters (major and minor) and the function of characters in prose fiction. What is the function of foil?
 15. What are the features of the short story?
 16. What are the features of a novel? Components of a novel. A novel's beginning and ending.
 17. The self-conscious or self-reflexive novel.
 18. The role of coincidence in the novel.
 19. Discuss a few stages of the development of the novel.
 20. Discuss a few types of novels: the novel of manners, the Bildungsroman, the dystopian novel.

Extra assignments

1. Read *Wuthering Heights* and discuss the major and minor plots in the novel
2. Analyse narrative strategy in *Wuthering Heights*.
3. Read *The Great Gatsby* and then discuss in class the conflict in the novel: an idealistic dream and the realities of the world. Consider: the significance of Gatsby's past; the view of the upper classes; the role of money in society; use of imagery and colour, the metaphor of the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg.
4. Read Ernest Hemingway's short story *Cat in the Rain* and discuss its form and content.
5. Read the fragment below from *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and discuss what much of the conversation is about. Give examples of the peculiarities of language games in this fragment.

5.16 Supplement

Exploring a piece of literature in depth

Close reading allows for a sustained interpretation of a brief passage of a literary text. While reading the excerpts below, pay close attention to individual words, syntax, the order in which sentences and ideas unfold as they are read. Then comment on points of style and on your reactions as a reader. The technique of close reading was introduced by I.A. Richards and his student William Empson, and later it was developed by the New Critics of the mid-twentieth century. It is now a fundamental method of modern criticism.

The Life and Adventures of *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

CHAPTER XV – FRIDAY’S EDUCATION

I found it was not so easy to imprint right notions in his mind about the devil as it was about the being of a God. Nature assisted all my arguments to evidence to him even the necessity of a great First Cause, an overruling, governing Power, a secret directing Providence, and of the equity and justice of paying homage to Him that made us, and the like; but there appeared nothing of this kind in the notion of an evil spirit, of his origin, his being, his nature, and above all, of his inclination to do evil, and to draw us in to do so too; and the poor creature puzzled me once in such a manner, by a question merely natural and innocent, that I scarce knew what to say to him. I had been talking a great deal to him of the power of God, His omnipotence, His aversion to sin, His being a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity; how, as He had made us all, He could destroy us and all the world in a moment; and he listened with great seriousness to me all the while. After this I had been telling him how the devil was God’s enemy in the hearts of men, and used all his malice and skill to defeat the good designs of Providence, and to ruin the kingdom of Christ in the world, and the like. “Well,” says Friday, “but you say God is so strong, so great; is He not much strong, much might as the devil?” “Yes, yes,” says I, “Friday; God is stronger than the devil—God is above the devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our feet, and enable us to resist his temptations and quench his fiery darts.” “But,” says he again, “if God much stronger, much might as the wicked devil, why God no kill the devil, so make him no more do wicked?” I was strangely surprised at this question; and, after all, though I was now an old man, yet I was but a young doctor, and ill qualified for a casuist or a solver of difficulties; and at first I could not tell what to say; so I pretended not to hear him, and asked him what he said; but he was too earnest for an answer to forget his question, so that he repeated it in the very same broken words as above.

Source: *Project Gutenberg*

Assignment

1. Describe the relations between Robinson and Friday.
2. Was Robinson successful in instilling Christian faith in Friday?

GULLIVER’S TRAVELS into several REMOTE NATIONS OF THE WORLD BY JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D., dean of st. patrick’s, dublin. [First published in 1726–7.] PART I. A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT.

CHAPTER I.

My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire: I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies; but the charge of maintaining me, although I had a very scanty allowance, being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with

whom I continued four years. My father now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be, some time or other, my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father: where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden: there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master, Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the Swallow, Captain Abraham Pannel, commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts. When I came back I resolved to settle in London; to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jewry; and being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton, hosier, in Newgate-street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion.

But my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language; wherein I had a great facility, by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jewry to Fetter Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the Antelope, who was making a voyage to the South Sea. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699, and our voyage was at first very prosperous.

Source: *Project Gutenberg*

Assignment

1. Describe Gulliver's youth and family background.

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

By Jane Austen

Excerpt from Chapter 1

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do you not want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take

possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know, they visit no newcomers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these last twenty years at least."

"Ah, you do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

Source: *Project Gutenberg*

Assignment

1. Paraphrase the opening sentence of the novel.
2. Discuss how Austen depicts Mr. Bennet and Mrs Bennet.
3. What is Mr Bennet's opinion of his daughters?

Go to YouTube and listen to the audiobook:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8qKPRR5y_w&ab_channel=StoryEnglishwithSubtitles

Wuthering Heights
by Emily Brontë
Excerpt from Chapter III

In this excerpt Mr Lockwood, the tenant, describes his nightmare dream in which he sees Catherine's ghost.

This time, I remembered I was lying in the oak closet, and I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard, also, the fir bough repeat its teasing sound, and ascribed it to the right cause: but it annoyed me so much, that I resolved to silence it, if possible; and, I thought, I rose and endeavoured to unhasp the casement. The hook was soldered into the staple: a circumstance observed by me when awake, but forgotten. 'I must stop it, nevertheless!' I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! The intense horror of nightmare came over me: I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, 'Let me in—let me in!' 'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. 'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of Linton? I had read Earnshaw twenty times for Linton)—'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!' As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window. Terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!' and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear. 'How can I!' I said at length. 'Let me go, if you want me to let you in!' The fingers relaxed, I snatched mine through the hole, hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer. I seemed to keep them closed above a quarter of an hour; yet, the instant I listened again, there was the doleful cry moaning on! 'Begone!' I shouted. 'I'll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.' 'It is twenty years,' mourned the voice: 'twenty years. I've been a waif for twenty years!' Thereat began a feeble scratching outside, and the pile of books moved as if thrust forward. I tried to jump up; but could not stir a limb; and so yelled aloud, in a frenzy of fright. To my confusion, I discovered the yell was not ideal: hasty footsteps approached my chamber door; somebody pushed it open, with a vigorous hand, and a light glimmered through the squares at the top of the bed. I sat shuddering yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead: the intruder appeared to hesitate, and muttered to himself. At last, he said, in a half-whisper, plainly not expecting an answer, 'Is any one here?' I considered it best to confess my presence; for I knew Heathcliff's accents, and feared he might search further, if I kept quiet. With this intention, I turned and opened the panels. I shall not soon forget the effect my action produced.

Assignment:

1. Summarise this episode.
2. What does the ghost want?
3. What is Mr Lockwood's reaction?

THE PICKWICK PAPERS
by Charles Dickens
Excerpt from CHAPTER XII

'Mrs. Bardell,' said Mr. Pickwick, at last, as that amiable female approached the termination of a prolonged dusting of the apartment.

'Sir,' said Mrs. Bardell.

'Your little boy is a very long time gone.'

'Why it's a good long way to the Borough, sir,' remonstrated Mrs. Bardell.

'Ah,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'very true; so it is.' Mr. Pickwick relapsed into silence, and Mrs. Bardell resumed her dusting.

'Mrs. Bardell,' said Mr. Pickwick, at the expiration of a few minutes.

'Sir,' said Mrs. Bardell again. 'Do you think it a much greater expense to keep two people, than to keep one?'

'La, Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Bardell, colouring up to the very border of her cap, as she fancied she observed a species of matrimonial twinkle in the eyes of her lodger; 'La, Mr. Pickwick, what a question!'

'Well, but do you?' inquired Mr. Pickwick.

'That depends,' said Mrs. Bardell, approaching the duster very near to Mr. Pickwick's elbow which was planted on the table. 'That depends a good deal upon the person, you know, Mr. Pickwick; and whether it's a saving and careful person, sir.'

'That's very true,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'but the person I have in my eye (here he looked very hard at Mrs. Bardell) I think possesses these qualities; and has, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the world, and a great deal of sharpness, Mrs. Bardell, which may be of material use to me.'

'La, Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Bardell, the crimson rising to her cap-border again.

'I do,' said Mr. Pickwick, growing energetic, as was his wont in speaking of a subject which interested him—I do, indeed; and to tell you the truth, Mrs. Bardell, I have made up my mind.'

'Dear me, sir,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell.

'You'll think it very strange now,' said the amiable Mr. Pickwick, with a good-humoured glance at his companion, 'that I never consulted you about this matter, and never even mentioned it, till I sent your little boy out this morning—eh?'

Mrs. Bardell could only reply by a look. She had long worshipped Mr. Pickwick at a distance, but here she was, all at once, raised to a pinnacle to which her wildest and most extravagant hopes had never dared to aspire. Mr. Pickwick was going to propose—a deliberate plan, too—sent her little boy to the Borough, to get him out of the way—how thoughtful—how considerate!

'Well,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'what do you think?'

'Oh, Mr. Pickwick,' said Mrs. Bardell, trembling with agitation, 'you're very kind, sir.'

'It'll save you a good deal of trouble, won't it?' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Oh, I never thought anything of the trouble, sir,' replied Mrs. Bardell; 'and, of course, I should take more trouble to please you than, than ever; but it is so kind of you, Mr. Pickwick, to have so much consideration for my loneliness.'

'Ah, to be sure,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'I never thought of that. When I am in town, you'll always have somebody to sit with you. To be sure, so you will.'

'I am sure I ought to be a very happy woman,' said Mrs. Bardell.

'And your little boy—' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Bless his heart!' interposed Mrs. Bardell, with a maternal sob.

'He, too, will have a companion,' resumed Mr. Pickwick, 'a lively one, who'll teach him, I'll be bound, more tricks in a week than he would ever learn in a year.' And Mr. Pickwick smiled placidly.

'Oh, you dear—' said Mrs. Bardell.

Mr. Pickwick started.

'Oh, you kind, good, playful dear,' said Mrs. Bardell; and without more ado, she rose from her chair, and flung her arms round Mr. Pickwick's neck, with a cataract of tears and a chorus of sobs.

'Bless my soul,' cried the astonished Mr. Pickwick; 'Mrs. Bardell, my good woman—dear me, what a situation—pray consider.—Mrs. Bardell, don't—if anybody should come—'

'Oh, let them come,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell frantically; 'I'll never leave you—dear, kind, good soul;' and, with these words, Mrs. Bardell clung the tighter.

'Mercy upon me,' said Mr. Pickwick, struggling violently, 'I hear somebody coming up the stairs. Don't, don't, there's a good creature, don't.' But entreaty and remonstrance were alike unavailing; for Mrs. Bardell had fainted in Mr. Pickwick's arms; and before he could gain time to deposit her on a chair, Master Bardell entered the room, ushering in Mr. Tupman, Mr. Winkle, and Mr. Snodgrass.

Mr. Pickwick was struck motionless and speechless. He stood with his lovely burden in his arms, gazing vacantly on the countenances of his friends, without the slightest attempt at recognition or explanation. They, in their turn, stared at him; and Master Bardell, in his turn, stared at everybody.

The astonishment of the Pickwickians was so absorbing, and the perplexity of Mr. Pickwick was so extreme, that they might have remained in exactly the same relative situations until the suspended animation of the lady was restored, had it not been for a most beautiful and touching expression of filial affection on the part of her youthful son. Clad in a tight suit of corduroy, spangled with brass buttons of a very considerable size, he at first stood at the door astounded and uncertain; but by degrees, the impression that his mother must have suffered some personal damage pervaded his partially developed mind, and considering Mr. Pickwick as the aggressor, he set up an appalling and semi-earthly kind of howling, and butting forward with his head, commenced assailing that immortal gentleman about the back and legs, with such blows and pinches as the strength of his arm, and the violence of his excitement, allowed.

'Take this little villain away,' said the agonised Mr. Pickwick, 'he's mad.'

'What is the matter?' said the three tongue-tied Pickwickians.

'I don't know,' replied Mr. Pickwick pettishly. 'Take away the boy.' (Here Mr. Winkle carried the interesting boy, screaming and struggling, to the farther end of the apartment.) 'Now help me, lead this woman downstairs.'

'Oh, I am better now,' said Mrs. Bardell faintly.

'Let me lead you downstairs,' said the ever-gallant Mr. Tupman.

'Thank you, sir—thank you,' exclaimed Mrs. Bardell hysterically. And downstairs she was led accordingly, accompanied by her affectionate son.

'I cannot conceive,' said Mr. Pickwick when his friend returned—'I cannot conceive what has been the matter with that woman. I had merely announced to her my intention of keeping a man-servant, when she fell into the extraordinary paroxysm in which you found her. Very extraordinary thing.'

'Very,' said his three friends.

'Placed me in such an extremely awkward situation,' continued Mr. Pickwick.

'Very,' was the reply of his followers, as they coughed slightly, and looked dubiously at each other.

This behaviour was not lost upon Mr. Pickwick. He remarked their incredulity. They evidently suspected him.

'There is a man in the passage now,' said Mr. Tupman.

'It's the man I spoke to you about,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'I sent for him to the Borough this morning. Have the goodness to call him up, Snodgrass.'

Mr. Snodgrass did as he was desired; and Mr. Samuel Weller forthwith presented himself.

'Oh—you remember me, I suppose?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'I should think so,' replied Sam, with a patronising wink. 'Queer start that 'ere, but he was one too many for you, warn't he? Up to snuff and a pinch or two over—eh?'

'Never mind that matter now,' said Mr. Pickwick hastily; 'I want to speak to you about something else. Sit down.'

'Thank'ee, sir,' said Sam. And down he sat without further bidding, having previously deposited his old white hat on the landing outside the door. 'Tain't a verry good 'un to look at,' said Sam, 'but it's an astonishin' 'un to wear; and afore the brim went, it was a verry handsome tile. Hows'ever it's lighter without it, that's one thing, and every hole lets in some air, that's another—ventilation gossamer I calls it.' On the delivery of this sentiment, Mr. Weller smiled agreeably upon the assembled Pickwickians.

'Now with regard to the matter on which I, with the concurrence of these gentlemen, sent for you,' said Mr. Pickwick.

'That's the pint, sir,' interposed Sam; 'out vith it, as the father said to his child, when he swallowed a farden.'

'We want to know, in the first place,' said Mr. Pickwick, 'whether you have any reason to be discontented with your present situation.'

'Afore I answers that 'ere question, gen'l'm'n,' replied Mr. Weller, 'I should like to know, in the first place, whether you're a-goin' to purwidge me with a better?'

A sunbeam of placid benevolence played on Mr. Pickwick's features as he said, 'I have half made up my mind to engage you myself.'

'Have you, though?' said Sam.

Mr. Pickwick nodded in the affirmative.

'Wages?' inquired Sam.

'Twelve pounds a year,' replied Mr. Pickwick.

'Clothes?'

'Two suits.'

'Work?'

'To attend upon me; and travel about with me and these gentlemen here.' 'Take the bill down,' said Sam emphatically. 'I'm let to a single gentleman, and the terms is agreed upon.'

'You accept the situation?' inquired Mr. Pickwick. 'Cert'nly,' replied Sam. 'If the clothes fits me half as well as the place, they'll do.'

'You can get a character of course?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Ask the landlady o' the White Hart about that, Sir,' replied Sam.

'Can you come this evening?'

'I'll get into the clothes this minute, if they're here,' said Sam, with great alacrity.

'Call at eight this evening,' said Mr. Pickwick; 'and if the inquiries are satisfactory, they shall be provided.'

With the single exception of one amiable indiscretion, in which an assistant housemaid had equally participated, the history of Mr. Weller's conduct was so very blameless, that Mr. Pickwick felt fully justified in closing the engagement that very evening. With the promptness and energy which characterised not only the public proceedings, but all the private actions of this extraordinary man, he at once led his new attendant to one of those convenient emporiums where gentlemen's new and second-hand clothes are provided, and the troublesome and inconvenient formality of measurement dispensed with; and before night had closed in, Mr. Weller was furnished with a grey coat with the P. C. button, a black hat with a cockade to it, a pink striped waistcoat, light breeches and gaiters, and a

variety of other necessities, too numerous to recapitulate.

'Well,' said that suddenly-transformed individual, as he took his seat on the outside of the Eatanswill coach next morning; 'I wonder whether I'm meant to be a footman, or a groom, or a gamekeeper, or a seedsman. I looks like a sort of compo of every one on 'em. Never mind; there's a change of air, plenty to see, and little to do; and all this suits my complaint uncommon; so long life to the Pickwicks, says I!'

Source: *Project Gutenberg*

Assignment

Discuss some of the comic devices used by Dickens in this episode.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll Chapter VII "A Mad Tea-Party"

*In Alice's Adventures in Wonderland Lewis Carroll uses many types of word play (pun) and allusions. Lewis's prose is often called **nonsense literature**, which is distinct from fantasy because the former uses allogical and distorted language. A characteristic feature of the book is that it has no central theme and logical plot. Instead the book is full of mockery, puzzles and language games.*

There was a table set out under a tree in front of the house, and the March Hare and the Hatter were having tea at it: a Dormouse was sitting between them, fast asleep, and the other two were using it as a cushion, resting their elbows on it, and talking over its head. 'Very uncomfortable for the Dormouse,' thought Alice; 'only, as it's asleep, I suppose it doesn't mind.'

The table was a large one, but the three were all crowded together at one corner of it: 'No room! No room!' they cried out when they saw Alice coming. 'There's plenty of room!' said Alice indignantly, and she sat down in a large arm-chair at one end of the table.

'Have some wine,' the March Hare said in an encouraging tone.

Alice looked all round the table, but there was nothing on it but tea. 'I don't see any wine,' she remarked.

'There isn't any,' said the March Hare.

'Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it,' said Alice angrily.

'It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited,' said the March Hare.

'I didn't know it was your table,' said Alice; 'it's laid for a great many more than three.'

'Your hair wants cutting,' said the Hatter. He had been looking at Alice for some time with great curiosity, and this was his first speech.

'You should learn not to make personal remarks,' Alice said with some severity; 'it's very rude.'

The Hatter opened his eyes very wide on hearing this; but all he said was, 'Why is a raven like a writing-desk?'

'Come, we shall have some fun now!' thought Alice. 'I'm glad they've begun asking riddles. – I believe I can guess that,' she added aloud.

'Do you mean that you think you can find out the answer to it?' said the March Hare.

'Exactly so,' said Alice.

'Then you should say what you mean,' the March Hare went on.

'I do,' Alice hastily replied; 'at least – at least I mean what I say – that's the same thing, you know.'

'Not the same thing a bit!' said the Hatter. 'You might just as well say that "I see what I eat" is the same thing as "I eat what I see"!''

Hatter engaging in rhetoric

'You might just as well say,' added the March Hare, 'that "I like what I get" is the same thing as "I get what I like"!''

'You might just as well say,' added the Dormouse, who seemed to be talking in his sleep, 'that "I breathe when I sleep" is the same thing as "I sleep when I breathe"!''

'It is the same thing with you,' said the Hatter, and here the conversation dropped, and the party sat silent for a minute, while Alice thought over all she could remember about ravens and writing-desks, which wasn't much.

The Hatter was the first to break the silence. 'What day of the month is it?' he said, turning to Alice: he had taken his watch out of his pocket, and was looking at it uneasily, shaking it every now and

then, and holding it to his ear.

Alice considered a little, and then said 'The fourth.'

'Two days wrong!' sighed the Hatter. 'I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!' he added looking angrily at the March Hare.

'It was the best butter,' the March Hare meekly replied.

'Yes, but some crumbs must have got in as well,' the Hatter grumbled: 'you shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife.'

The March Hare took the watch and looked at it gloomily: then he dipped it into his cup of tea, and looked at it again: but he could think of nothing better to say than his first remark, 'It was the best butter, you know.'

Alice had been looking over his shoulder with some curiosity. 'What a funny watch!' she remarked. 'It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!'

'Why should it?' muttered the Hatter. 'Does your watch tell you what year it is?'

'Of course not,' Alice replied very readily: 'but that's because it stays the same year for such a long time together.'

'Which is just the case with mine,' said the Hatter.

Alice felt dreadfully puzzled. The Hatter's remark seemed to have no sort of meaning in it, and yet it was certainly English. 'I don't quite understand you,' she said, as politely as she could.

'The Dormouse is asleep again,' said the Hatter, and he poured a little hot tea upon its nose.

The Dormouse shook its head impatiently, and said, without opening its eyes, 'Of course, of course; just what I was going to remark myself.'

'Have you guessed the riddle yet?' the Hatter said, turning to Alice again.

'No, I give it up,' Alice replied: 'what's the answer?'

'I haven't the slightest idea,' said the Hatter.

'Nor I,' said the March Hare.

Alice sighed wearily. 'I think you might do something better with the time,' she said, 'than waste it in asking riddles that have no answers.'

'If you knew Time as well as I do,' said the Hatter, 'you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's him.'

'I don't know what you mean,' said Alice.

'Of course you don't!' the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. 'I dare say you never even spoke to Time!'

'Perhaps not,' Alice cautiously replied: 'but I know I have to beat time when I learn music.'

'Ah! that accounts for it,' said the Hatter. 'He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: you'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one, time for dinner!'

('I only wish it was,' the March Hare said to itself in a whisper.)

'That would be grand, certainly,' said Alice thoughtfully: 'but then – I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know.'

'Not at first, perhaps,' said the Hatter: 'but you could keep it to half-past one as long as you liked.'

'Is that the way you manage?' Alice asked.

The Hatter shook his head mournfully. 'Not I!' he replied. 'We quarrelled last March – just before he went mad, you know –' (pointing with his tea spoon at the March Hare,) '– it was at the great concert given by the Queen of Hearts, and I had to sing

"Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
How I wonder what you're at!"

You know the song, perhaps?'

'I've heard something like it,' said Alice.

'It goes on, you know,' the Hatter continued, 'in this way:–

"Up above the world you fly,
Like a tea-tray in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle—"

Here the Dormouse shook itself, and began singing in its sleep 'Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle –' and went on so long that they had to pinch it to make it stop.

'Well, I'd hardly finished the first verse,' said the Hatter, 'when the Queen jumped up and bawled out, "He's murdering the time! Off with his head!"'

'How dreadfully savage!' exclaimed Alice.

'And ever since that,' the Hatter went on in a mournful tone, 'he won't do a thing I ask! It's always six o'clock now.'

A bright idea came into Alice's head. 'Is that the reason so many tea-things are put out here?' she asked.

'Yes, that's it,' said the Hatter with a sigh: 'it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles.'

'Then you keep moving round, I suppose?' said Alice.

'Exactly so,' said the Hatter: 'as the things get used up.'

'But what happens when you come to the beginning again?' Alice ventured to ask.

'Suppose we change the subject,' the March Hare interrupted, yawning. 'I'm getting tired of this. I vote the young lady tells us a story.'

'I'm afraid I don't know one,' said Alice, rather alarmed at the proposal.

'Then the Dormouse shall!' they both cried. 'Wake up, Dormouse!' And they pinched it on both sides at once.

The Dormouse slowly opened his eyes. 'I wasn't asleep,' he said in a hoarse, feeble voice: 'I heard every word you fellows were saying.'

'Tell us a story!' said the March Hare.

'Yes, please do!' pleaded Alice.

'And be quick about it,' added the Hatter, 'or you'll be asleep again before it's done.'

'Once upon a time there were three little sisters,' the Dormouse began in a great hurry; 'and their names were Elsie, Lacie, and Tillie; and they lived at the bottom of a well –'

'What did they live on?' said Alice, who always took a great interest in questions of eating and drinking.

'They lived on treacle,' said the Dormouse, after thinking a minute or two.

'They couldn't have done that, you know,' Alice gently remarked; 'they'd have been ill.'

'So they were,' said the Dormouse; 'very ill.'

Alice tried to fancy to herself what such an extraordinary ways of living would be like, but it puzzled her too much, so she went on: 'But why did they live at the bottom of a well?'

'Take some more tea,' the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

'I've had nothing yet,' Alice replied in an offended tone, 'so I can't take more.'

'You mean you can't take less,' said the Hatter: 'it's very easy to take more than nothing.'

'Nobody asked your opinion,' said Alice.

'Who's making personal remarks now?' the Hatter asked triumphantly.

Alice did not quite know what to say to this: so she helped herself to some tea and bread-and-butter, and then turned to the Dormouse, and repeated her question. 'Why did they live at the bottom of a well?'

The Dormouse again took a minute or two to think about it, and then said, 'It was a treacle-well.'

'There's no such thing!' Alice was beginning very angrily, but the Hatter and the March Hare went 'Sh! sh!' and the Dormouse sulkily remarked, 'If you can't be civil, you'd better finish the story for yourself.'

'No, please go on!' Alice said very humbly; 'I won't interrupt again. I dare say there may be one.'

'One, indeed!' said the Dormouse indignantly. However, he consented to go on. 'And so these three little sisters – they were learning to draw, you know –'

'What did they draw?' said Alice, quite forgetting her promise.

'Treacle,' said the Dormouse, without considering at all this time.

'I want a clean cup,' interrupted the Hatter: 'let's all move one place on.'

He moved on as he spoke, and the Dormouse followed him: the March Hare moved into the Dormouse's place, and Alice rather unwillingly took the place of the March Hare. The Hatter was the only one who got any advantage from the change: and Alice was a good deal worse off than before, as the March Hare had just upset the milk-jug into his plate.

Alice did not wish to offend the Dormouse again, so she began very cautiously: 'But I don't understand. Where did they draw the treacle from?'

'You can draw water out of a water-well,' said the Hatter; 'so I should think you could draw treacle out of a treacle – well – eh, stupid?'

'But they were in the well,' Alice said to the Dormouse, not choosing to notice this last remark.

'Of course they were,' said the Dormouse; '– well in.'

This answer so confused poor Alice, that she let the Dormouse go on for some time without interrupting it.

'They were learning to draw,' the Dormouse went on, yawning and rubbing its eyes, for it was getting

very sleepy; ‘and they drew all manner of things – everything that begins with an M –’
‘Why with an M?’ said Alice.
‘Why not?’ said the March Hare.

Alice was silent.

The Dormouse had closed its eyes by this time, and was going off into a doze; but, on being pinched by the Hatter, it woke up again with a little shriek, and went on: ‘– that begins with an M, such as mouse-traps, and the moon, and memory, and muchness-- you know you say things are “much of a muchness” – did you ever see such a thing as a drawing of a muchness?’

‘Really, now you ask me,’ said Alice, very much confused, ‘I don’t think –’
‘Then you shouldn’t talk,’ said the Hatter.

This piece of rudeness was more than Alice could bear: she got up in great disgust, and walked off; the Dormouse fell asleep instantly, and neither of the others took the least notice of her going, though she looked back once or twice, half hoping that they would call after her: the last time she saw them, they were trying to put the Dormouse into the teapot.

‘At any rate I’ll never go there again!’ said Alice as she picked her way through the wood. ‘It’s the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life!’

Just as she said this, she noticed that one of the trees had a door leading right into it. ‘That’s very curious!’ she thought. ‘But everything’s curious today. I think I may as well go in at once.’ And in she went.

Once more she found herself in the long hall, and close to the little glass table. ‘[Now, I’ll manage better this time,’ she said to herself, and began by taking the little golden key, and unlocking the door that led into the garden. Then she went to work nibbling at the mushroom (she had kept a piece of it in her pocket) till she was about a foot high: then she walked down the little passage: and then – she found herself at last in the beautiful garden, among the bright flower-beds and the cool fountains.

Source: *Project Gutenberg*

Assignment

1. Describe the setting of this chapter.
2. Describe the anthropomorphic creatures which sit together with Alice at the party.
3. Identify examples of literary absurdity and nonsense in the passage.
4. Lewis Carroll was fond of puns and the interplay between language and logic. Find some examples which illustrate his predilection for language games.

A ROOM WITH A VIEW

By E. M. Forster

Chapter I: The Bertolini

“The Signora had no business to do it,” said Miss Bartlett, “no business at all. She promised us south rooms with a view close together, instead of which here are north rooms, looking into a courtyard, and a long way apart. Oh, Lucy!”

“And a Cockney, besides!” said Lucy, who had been further saddened by the Signora’s unexpected accent. “It might be London.” She looked at the two rows of English people who were sitting at the table; at the row of white bottles of water and red bottles of wine that ran between the English people; at the portraits of the late Queen and the late Poet Laureate that hung behind the English people, heavily framed; at the notice of the English church (Rev. Cuthbert Eager, M. A. Oxon.), that was the only other decoration of the wall. “Charlotte, don’t you feel, too, that we might be in London? I can hardly believe that all kinds of other things are just outside. I suppose it is one’s being so tired.”

“This meat has surely been used for soup,” said Miss Bartlett, laying down her fork.

"I want so to see the Arno. The rooms the Signora promised us in her letter would have looked over the Arno. The Signora had no business to do it at all. Oh, it is a shame!"

"Any nook does for me," Miss Bartlett continued; "but it does seem hard that you shouldn't have a view."

Lucy felt that she had been selfish. "Charlotte, you mustn't spoil me: of course, you must look over the Arno, too. I meant that. The first vacant room in the front—" "You must have it," said Miss Bartlett, part of whose travelling expenses were paid by Lucy's mother—a piece of generosity to which she made many a tactful allusion.

"No, no. You must have it."

"I insist on it. Your mother would never forgive me, Lucy."

"She would never forgive me."

The ladies' voices grew animated, and—if the sad truth be owned—a little peevish. They were tired, and under the guise of unselfishness they wrangled. Some of their neighbours interchanged glances, and one of them—one of the ill-bred people whom one does meet abroad—leant forward over the table and actually intruded into their argument. He said:

"I have a view, I have a view."

Miss Bartlett was startled. Generally at a pension people looked them over for a day or two before speaking, and often did not find out that they would "do" till they had gone. She knew that the intruder was ill-bred, even before she glanced at him. He was an old man, of heavy build, with a fair, shaven face and large eyes. There was something childish in those eyes, though it was not the childishness of senility. What exactly it was Miss Bartlett did not stop to consider, for her glance passed on to his clothes. These did not attract her. He was probably trying to become acquainted with them before they got into the swim. So she assumed a dazed expression when he spoke to her, and then said: "A view? Oh, a view! How delightful a view is!"

"This is my son," said the old man; "his name's George. He has a view too."

"Ah," said Miss Bartlett, repressing Lucy, who was about to speak.

"What I mean," he continued, "is that you can have our rooms, and we'll have yours. We'll change."

The better class of tourist was shocked at this, and sympathized with the new-comers. Miss Bartlett, in reply, opened her mouth as little as possible, and said "Thank you very much indeed; that is out of the question."

"Why?" said the old man, with both fists on the table.

"Because it is quite out of the question, thank you."

"You see, we don't like to take—" began Lucy. Her cousin again repressed her.

"But why?" he persisted. "Women like looking at a view; men don't." And he thumped with his fists like a naughty child, and turned to his son, saying, "George, persuade them!"

"It's so obvious they should have the rooms," said the son. "There's nothing else to say."

He did not look at the ladies as he spoke, but his voice was perplexed and sorrowful. Lucy, too, was perplexed; but she saw that they were in for what is known as "quite a scene," and she had an odd feeling that whenever these ill-bred tourists spoke the contest widened and deepened till it dealt, not with rooms and views, but with—well, with something quite different, whose existence she had not realized before. Now the old man attacked Miss Bartlett almost violently: Why should she not change? What possible objection had she? They would clear out in half an hour.

Miss Bartlett, though skilled in the delicacies of conversation, was powerless in the presence of brutality. It was impossible to snub any one so gross. Her face reddened with displeasure. She looked around as much as to say, "Are you all like this?" And two little old ladies, who were sitting further up the table, with shawls hanging over the backs of the chairs, looked back, clearly indicating "We are not; we are genteel."

"Eat your dinner, dear," she said to Lucy, and began to toy again with the meat that she had once censured.

Lucy mumbled that those seemed very odd people opposite.

"Eat your dinner, dear. This pension is a failure. To-morrow we will make a change."

Hardly had she announced this fell decision when she reversed it. The curtains at the end of the room parted, and revealed a clergyman, stout but attractive, who hurried forward to take his place at the table, cheerfully apologizing for his lateness. Lucy, who had not yet acquired decency, at once rose to her feet, exclaiming: "Oh, oh! Why, it's Mr. Beebe! Oh, how perfectly lovely! Oh, Charlotte, we must stop now, however bad the rooms are. Oh!"

Miss Bartlett said, with more restraint:

"How do you do, Mr. Beebe? I expect that you have forgotten us: Miss Bartlett and Miss Honeychurch, who were at Tunbridge Wells when you helped the Vicar of St. Peter's that very cold Easter."

The clergyman, who had the air of one on a holiday, did not remember the ladies quite as clearly as they remembered him. But he came forward pleasantly enough and accepted the chair into which he was beckoned by Lucy.

"I AM so glad to see you," said the girl, who was in a state of spiritual starvation, and would have been glad to see the waiter if her cousin had permitted it. "Just fancy how small the world is. Summer Street, too, makes it so specially funny."

"Miss Honeychurch lives in the parish of Summer Street," said Miss Bartlett, filling up the gap, "and she happened to tell me in the course of conversation that you have just accepted the living—"

"Yes, I heard from mother so last week. She didn't know that I knew you at Tunbridge Wells; but I wrote back at once, and I said: 'Mr. Beebe is—'"

"Quite right," said the clergyman. "I move into the Rectory at Summer Street next June. I am lucky to be appointed to such a charming neighbourhood."

"Oh, how glad I am! The name of our house is Windy Corner." Mr. Beebe bowed.

"There is mother and me generally, and my brother, though it's not often we get him to ch— The church is rather far off, I mean."

"Lucy, dearest, let Mr. Beebe eat his dinner."

"I am eating it, thank you, and enjoying it."

He preferred to talk to Lucy, whose playing he remembered, rather than to Miss Bartlett, who probably remembered his sermons. He asked the girl whether she knew Florence well, and was informed at some length that she had never been there before. It is delightful to advise a newcomer, and he was first in the field. "Don't neglect the country round," his advice concluded. "The first fine afternoon drive up to Fiesole, and round by Settignano, or something of that sort."

"No!" cried a voice from the top of the table. "Mr. Beebe, you are wrong. The first fine afternoon your ladies must go to Prato."

“That lady looks so clever,” whispered Miss Bartlett to her cousin. “We are in luck.”

And, indeed, a perfect torrent of information burst on them. People told them what to see, when to see it, how to stop the electric trams, how to get rid of the beggars, how much to give for a vellum blotter, how much the place would grow upon them. The Pension Bertolini had decided, almost enthusiastically, that they would do. Whichever way they looked, kind ladies smiled and shouted at them. And above all rose the voice of the clever lady, crying: “Prato! They must go to Prato. That place is too sweetly squalid for words. I love it; I revel in shaking off the trammels of respectability, as you know.”

The young man named George glanced at the clever lady, and then returned moodily to his plate. Obviously he and his father did not do. Lucy, in the midst of her success, found time to wish they did. It gave her no extra pleasure that any one should be left in the cold; and when she rose to go, she turned back and gave the two outsiders a nervous little bow.

The father did not see it; the son acknowledged it, not by another bow, but by raising his eyebrows and smiling; he seemed to be smiling across something.

She hastened after her cousin, who had already disappeared through the curtains—curtains which smote one in the face, and seemed heavy with more than cloth. Beyond them stood the unreliable Signora, bowing good-evening to her guests, and supported by ‘Enery, her little boy, and Victorier, her daughter. It made a curious little scene, this attempt of the Cockney to convey the grace and geniality of the South. And even more curious was the drawing-room, which attempted to rival the solid comfort of a Bloomsbury boarding-house. Was this really Italy?

Miss Bartlett was already seated on a tightly stuffed arm-chair, which had the colour and the contours of a tomato. She was talking to Mr. Beebe, and as she spoke, her long narrow head drove backwards and forwards, slowly, regularly, as though she were demolishing some invisible obstacle. “We are most grateful to you,” she was saying. “The first evening means so much. When you arrived we were in for a peculiarly mauvais quart d’heure.”

He expressed his regret.

“Do you, by any chance, know the name of an old man who sat opposite us at dinner?”

“Emerson.”

“Is he a friend of yours?”

“We are friendly—as one is in pensions.”

“Then I will say no more.”

He pressed her very slightly, and she said more.

“I am, as it were,” she concluded, “the chaperon of my young cousin, Lucy, and it would be a serious thing if I put her under an obligation to people of whom we know nothing. His manner was somewhat unfortunate. I hope I acted for the best.”

“You acted very naturally,” said he. He seemed thoughtful, and after a few moments added: “All the same, I don’t think much harm would have come of accepting.”

“No harm, of course. But we could not be under an obligation.”

“He is rather a peculiar man.” Again he hesitated, and then said gently: “I think he would not take advantage of your acceptance, nor expect you to show gratitude. He has the merit—if it is one—of saying exactly what he means. He has rooms he does not value, and he thinks you would value them. He no more thought of putting you under an obligation than he thought of being polite. It is so difficult—at least, I find it difficult—to understand people who speak the truth.”

Lucy was pleased, and said: "I was hoping that he was nice; I do so always hope that people will be nice."

"I think he is; nice and tiresome. I differ from him on almost every point of any importance, and so, I expect—I may say I hope—you will differ. But his is a type one disagrees with rather than deplures. When he first came here he not unnaturally put people's backs up. He has no tact and no manners—I don't mean by that that he has bad manners—and he will not keep his opinions to himself. We nearly complained about him to our depressing Signora, but I am glad to say we thought better of it."

"Am I to conclude," said Miss Bartlett, "that he is a Socialist?"

Mr. Beebe accepted the convenient word, not without a slight twitching of the lips.

"And presumably he has brought up his son to be a Socialist, too?"

"I hardly know George, for he hasn't learnt to talk yet. He seems a nice creature, and I think he has brains. Of course, he has all his father's mannerisms, and it is quite possible that he, too, may be a Socialist."

"Oh, you relieve me," said Miss Bartlett. "So you think I ought to have accepted their offer? You feel I have been narrow-minded and suspicious?"

"Not at all," he answered; "I never suggested that."

"But ought I not to apologize, at all events, for my apparent rudeness?"

He replied, with some irritation, that it would be quite unnecessary, and got up from his seat to go to the smoking-room.

"Was I a bore?" said Miss Bartlett, as soon as he had disappeared. "Why didn't you talk, Lucy? He prefers young people, I'm sure. I do hope I haven't monopolized him. I hoped you would have him all the evening, as well as all dinner-time."

"He is nice," exclaimed Lucy. "Just what I remember. He seems to see good in everyone. No one would take him for a clergyman."

"My dear Lucia—"

"Well, you know what I mean. And you know how clergymen generally laugh; Mr. Beebe laughs just like an ordinary man."

"Funny girl! How you do remind me of your mother. I wonder if she will approve of Mr. Beebe."

"I'm sure she will; and so will Freddy."

"I think everyone at Windy Corner will approve; it is the fashionable world. I am used to Tunbridge Wells, where we are all hopelessly behind the times."

"Yes," said Lucy despondently.

There was a haze of disapproval in the air, but whether the disapproval was of herself, or of Mr. Beebe, or of the fashionable world at Windy Corner, or of the narrow world at Tunbridge Wells, she could not determine. She tried to locate it, but as usual she blundered. Miss Bartlett sedulously denied disapproving of any one, and added "I am afraid you are finding me a very depressing companion."

And the girl again thought: "I must have been selfish or unkind; I must be more careful. It is so dreadful for Charlotte, being poor."

Fortunately one of the little old ladies, who for some time had been smiling very benignly, now

approached and asked if she might be allowed to sit where Mr. Beebe had sat. Permission granted, she began to chatter gently about Italy, the plunge it had been to come there, the gratifying success of the plunge, the improvement in her sister's health, the necessity of closing the bed-room windows at night, and of thoroughly emptying the water-bottles in the morning. She handled her subjects agreeably, and they were, perhaps, more worthy of attention than the high discourse upon Guelfs and Ghibellines which was proceeding tempestuously at the other end of the room. It was a real catastrophe, not a mere episode, that evening of hers at Venice, when she had found in her bedroom something that is one worse than a flea, though one better than something else.

"But here you are as safe as in England. Signora Bertolini is so English."

"Yet our rooms smell," said poor Lucy. "We dread going to bed."

"Ah, then you look into the court." She sighed. "If only Mr. Emerson was more tactful! We were so sorry for you at dinner."

"I think he was meaning to be kind."

"Undoubtedly he was," said Miss Bartlett.

"Mr. Beebe has just been scolding me for my suspicious nature. Of course, I was holding back on my cousin's account."

"Of course," said the little old lady; and they murmured that one could not be too careful with a young girl.

Lucy tried to look demure, but could not help feeling a great fool. No one was careful with her at home; or, at all events, she had not noticed it.

"About old Mr. Emerson—I hardly know. No, he is not tactful; yet, have you ever noticed that there are people who do things which are most indelicate, and yet at the same time—beautiful?"

"Beautiful?" said Miss Bartlett, puzzled at the word. "Are not beauty and delicacy the same?"

"So one would have thought," said the other helplessly. "But things are so difficult, I sometimes think."

She proceeded no further into things, for Mr. Beebe reappeared, looking extremely pleasant.

"Miss Bartlett," he cried, "it's all right about the rooms. I'm so glad. Mr. Emerson was talking about it in the smoking-room, and knowing what I did, I encouraged him to make the offer again. He has let me come and ask you. He would be so pleased."

"Oh, Charlotte," cried Lucy to her cousin, "we must have the rooms now. The old man is just as nice and kind as he can be."

Miss Bartlett was silent.

"I fear," said Mr. Beebe, after a pause, "that I have been officious. I must apologize for my interference."

Gravely displeased, he turned to go. Not till then did Miss Bartlett reply: "My own wishes, dearest Lucy, are unimportant in comparison with yours. It would be hard indeed if I stopped you doing as you liked at Florence, when I am only here through your kindness. If you wish me to turn these gentlemen out of their rooms, I will do it. Would you then, Mr. Beebe, kindly tell Mr. Emerson that I accept his kind offer, and then conduct him to me, in order that I may thank him personally?"

She raised her voice as she spoke; it was heard all over the drawing-room, and silenced the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. The clergyman, inwardly cursing the female sex, bowed, and departed with her message.

“Remember, Lucy, I alone am implicated in this. I do not wish the acceptance to come from you. Grant me that, at all events.”

Mr. Beebe was back, saying rather nervously:

“Mr. Emerson is engaged, but here is his son instead.”

The young man gazed down on the three ladies, who felt seated on the floor, so low were their chairs.

“My father,” he said, “is in his bath, so you cannot thank him personally. But any message given by you to me will be given by me to him as soon as he comes out.”

Miss Bartlett was unequal to the bath. All her barbed civilities came forth wrong end first. Young Mr. Emerson scored a notable triumph to the delight of Mr. Beebe and to the secret delight of Lucy.

“Poor young man!” said Miss Bartlett, as soon as he had gone.

“How angry he is with his father about the rooms! It is all he can do to keep polite.”

“In half an hour or so your rooms will be ready,” said Mr. Beebe. Then looking rather thoughtfully at the two cousins, he retired to his own rooms, to write up his philosophic diary.

“Oh, dear!” breathed the little old lady, and shuddered as if all the winds of heaven had entered the apartment. “Gentlemen sometimes do not realize—” Her voice faded away, but Miss Bartlett seemed to understand and a conversation developed, in which gentlemen who did not thoroughly realize played a principal part. Lucy, not realizing either, was reduced to literature. Taking up Baedeker’s Handbook to Northern Italy, she committed to memory the most important dates of Florentine History. For she was determined to enjoy herself on the morrow. Thus the half-hour crept profitably away, and at last Miss Bartlett rose with a sigh, and said:

“I think one might venture now. No, Lucy, do not stir. I will superintend the move.”

“How you do do everything,” said Lucy.

“Naturally, dear. It is my affair.”

“But I would like to help you.”

“No, dear.”

Charlotte’s energy! And her unselfishness! She had been thus all her life, but really, on this Italian tour, she was surpassing herself. So Lucy felt, or strove to feel. And yet—there was a rebellious spirit in her which wondered whether the acceptance might not have been less delicate and more beautiful. At all events, she entered her own room without any feeling of joy.

“I want to explain,” said Miss Bartlett, “why it is that I have taken the largest room. Naturally, of course, I should have given it to you; but I happen to know that it belongs to the young man, and I was sure your mother would not like it.”

Lucy was bewildered.

“If you are to accept a favour it is more suitable you should be under an obligation to his father than to him. I am a woman of the world, in my small way, and I know where things lead to. However, Mr. Beebe is a guarantee of a sort that they will not presume on this.”

“Mother wouldn’t mind I’m sure,” said Lucy, but again had the sense of larger and unsuspected issues.

Miss Bartlett only sighed, and enveloped her in a protecting embrace as she wished her good-night. It gave Lucy the sensation of a fog, and when she reached her own room she opened the window and

breathed the clean night air, thinking of the kind old man who had enabled her to see the lights dancing in the Arno and the cypresses of San Miniato, and the foot-hills of the Apennines, black against the rising moon.

Miss Bartlett, in her room, fastened the window-shutters and locked the door, and then made a tour of the apartment to see where the cupboards led, and whether there were any oubliettes or secret entrances. It was then that she saw, pinned up over the washstand, a sheet of paper on which was scrawled an enormous note of interrogation. Nothing more.

“What does it mean?” she thought, and she examined it carefully by the light of a candle. Meaningless at first, it gradually became menacing, obnoxious, portentous with evil. She was seized with an impulse to destroy it, but fortunately remembered that she had no right to do so, since it must be the property of young Mr. Emerson. So she unpinned it carefully, and put it between two pieces of blotting-paper to keep it clean for him. Then she completed her inspection of the room, sighed heavily according to her habit, and went to bed.

Assignment

1. Why aren't Lucy Honeychurch and her chaperon satisfied with their rooms at Pensione Bertolini in Florence?
2. What kind of offer does Mr Emerson make to the two ladies?
3. Why is Miss Bartlett offended?
4. Do they finally accept Mr Emerson's offer?

Go to YouTube and listen to the audiobook:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8kt_rWVgGU&ab_channel=AudiobookAudiobooks

John Fowles *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Study questions

Adapted in part from: <https://www.gradesaver.com/the-french-lieutenants-woman>

1. Why did Mrs. Poulteney take Sarah on as a companion?
2. Where do Charles and Sarah Woodruff first meet?
3. Sarah and Charles have a tumultuous relationship, which the author describes with lots of different recurring images. Comment on these images, and what they reveal about the relationship between the two protagonists.
4. Sarah is an unusual character, and is referred to in the novel as a 'modern woman' more than once. What makes her a modern woman? What symbols or imagery does Fowles use to highlight her anachronistic nature? What is the effect of her modernity on the other characters and on the novel as a whole?
5. What is a central difference between Ernestina and Sarah?
6. What does Dr. Grogan think is the best course of action for Charles to take regarding Sarah in Chapter 27?
7. How is Charles changed by his romance with Sarah? Is it a change for the better or for the worse?
8. Why does Sarah decide to leave Charles after consummating their relationship?

9. Who is the real protagonist of this novel? Is it Sarah, Charles, both, or neither? What does the author say about this? What is the effect of the possible uncertainty of who the protagonist is?
10. Which of the three endings of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* do you prefer, and why? Which best illuminates the story's central themes, and which is truest to the characters and their relationships? Which best fits the tone of the novel?

Chapter Six

Introduction to the history of English literature

English literature has developed continuously for over 15 centuries from the Anglo-Saxon Period to the present time. The term 'English literature' should be distinguished from the term 'literature in the English language', which includes other national literatures that are written in English, e.g. American literature, Australian literature, Canadian literature in English, Indian literature in English, etc. For ease of study, scholars divide the history of literature into segments referred to as 'periods'.

A literary period is a stretch of time with a beginning and an end, but not always of measured length. It is characterised by certain distinct features. Literary periods or their subdivisions may overlap. Within each literary period there may exist several literary movements, trends or schools, and certain genres may be dominant. A literary trend or movement is a system of literary tendencies expressed in a number of works of literature.

This selection of authors and literary works reflects a view of literature which can be described as canonical, i.e. it lists an English literary canon or in other words, all those literary works which are widely included in anthologies and taught in academic courses. Following M. H. Abrams, we can distinguish the following periods of English literature

Periods of English literature

450-c.1450	The Middle Ages
c. 5th century -1066	The Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) Period
1066-c. 1450	The Middle English Period
c. 1450 -1660	The Renaissance
1485-1603	The Tudor Period
1558-1603	The Elizabethan Age
1603-1625	The Jacobean Age
1625-1649	The Caroline Age
1649-1660	The Commonwealth Period (or Puritan Interregnum)
late 17th – late 18th century	The Enlightenment
1660-1700	The Restoration
1660-1780	The Neoclassical Period
1700-1745	The Augustan Age (or the Age of Pope)
1745-1785	The Age of Sensibility (or the Age of Johnson)
late 18th century – 1832	Romanticism
1832-1901	The Victorian Period
c. 1830 - c. 1880	The High Victorian Period (including: 1848-1860 The Pre-Raphaelites)
c. 1880-1901	The Late Victorian Period (including: 1880-1901 Aestheticism and Decadence)
1901-to date	The Modern Period
1901-1914	The Edwardian Period
1910-1936	The Georgian Period
1914-1945	Modernism
1945- to date	The Contemporary Period (including the Post-war Period and Postmodernism)

(Adapted from Abrams, 250, 251)

6.1. Medieval literature

The Middle Ages are subdivided into the Early Middle Ages, to 900 or 1000; the High Middle Ages, from then to about 1300; and the Later Middle Ages, the 14th and 15th centuries. Medieval English literature is usually divided into the Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) and Middle English Periods.

6.1.1 The Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) Period

English literature begins with Old English or Anglo-Saxon literature. It is a product of two traditions: Germanic and Latin. Its beginnings date back to the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions of Britain in the 6th-8th centuries. The earliest Anglo-Saxon literature was oral, i.e. it was composed, memorised and recited rather than written. Poems have strong rhythms, end-stopped but unrhymed lines and abundant **alliteration**.

The greatest single work of Old English literature is *Beowulf*, which is the only complete **heroic epic poem** preserved from Anglo-Saxon pagan poetry; it is based on legends and myths that originated among the northern Germanic tribes before the conquest of Britain in the 5th century.

The king of Danes named Hrothgar has built a banquet-hall called Heorot, where his warriors gather. However, a terrible monster Grendel who lives in the nearby fen comes to the hall at night and carries away thirty sleeping warriors. Later he devours them in his den. When Beowulf, a fearless warrior and advocate of freedom and justice, arrives at the hall, the king asks him for help. A terrible fight begins between Beowulf and Grendel as a result of which the latter is defeated. The warriors can have their feasts in the hall again. However, when night falls, Grendel's mother, a huge monster, comes to the hall to avenge the death of her son. She kills several warriors.

Beowulf sets out to combat her. He plunges into the dreary waters and after a long struggle below the surface he slays the hideous monster. Hrothgar has no more enemies and Beowulf can now return to his kingdom (Geatland) in fame. When fifty years pass, Beowulf is an old king who has wisely ruled his country. But a dragon comes to plunder his land. The old hero goes to fight the enemy. All his warriors run away when they see the monster. Beowulf fights single-handed. At last, one young warrior, Wiglaf, returns and helps the old king to kill the fire dragon, but Beowulf is mortally wounded. He is buried with honours.

Beowulf, a Scandinavian hero, personified Anglo-Saxon ideals, such as love of personal freedom, allegiance to lord and king, repression of emotions, and love of glory as the main motive of a noble life. The poem contains numerous allusions to Germanic myths and legends and historical events. Besides, there are many Christian interpolations (inclusions) in the poem. For example, the monster, Grendel, is referred to as a descendant of Cain. His actions are also interpreted in accordance with Christian faith.

The form of *Beowulf* deserves mention because it is characteristic of almost all Anglo-Saxon poetry. The line is the unit of measure. A **caesura** divides the line into two parts. Alliteration joins the two parts of the line. There is no end rhyme. The poem contains various stylistic devices. One of them is the **kenning** (a kind of simple metaphor, metonymy or synecdoche, e.g. 'soul's prison' – body; 'swan's road' – sea; 'sky's candle' – sun; 'sword-play' – battle; 'ring-giver' – king). The poem also contains epithets, which are characteristic of oral poetry, e.g. the 'foam-necked boat'.⁵¹

Written poetry appeared in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon (also known as Old English)

⁵¹ Watch a film about Beowulf on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgOi1YEU7TU>

in about the 8th century. Two poets of the Old English Period are known by name: Caedmon and Cynewulf. **Caedmon's** (fl. 670) famous "Hymn" is addressed to God. The poem contains typical features of Old English poetry; verses of four stresses and a medial caesura, with its two or three alliterations per line, and kennings.

Kevin Kiernan writes: "Caedmon was a layman who worked on an estate near the monastery of Whitby in Northumbria. Sometimes at parties (in convivio) his fellow workers would agree among themselves to liven things up by singing songs in turn. Yet whenever he saw the cithara coming his way, Caedmon would always duck out, not knowing any songs whatsoever. One night, when it is his turn anyway to take care of the cattle, he escapes to the stables, where he falls asleep and is urged by a visitor in a dream to sing about Creation. He complies, and Bede gives us a Latin paraphrase of his "Hymn": "Nunc laudare debemus auctorem regni caelestis, potentiam Creatoris," and so on. Before resuming the story, Bede makes it clear that he is giving "the sense but not the order of the words which [Caedmon] sang as he slept. "For," Bede says, "it is not possible to translate verse, however well composed, literally from one language to another without some loss of beauty and dignity." Following this somewhat academic intermezzo, Caedmon wakes up with the "Hymn" on his mind and, poetically inspired, adds some more verses to it. Caedmon then tells his boss the reeve about his gift, and the reeve takes him to Abbess Hild at the monastery for advice. After determining that God had granted him a special grace, Hild persuades Caedmon to join the monastery, where he launches a productive career, in the cloistered context of Whitby, as an oral composer of devout verse."⁵²

Caedmon's Hymn

Nu sculon herigean / heofonrices Weard
 [Now must we praise / heaven-kingdom's Guardian,]
 Meotodes mehte / and his modgeþanc
 [the Measurer's might / and his mind-plans,]
 weorc Wuldor-Fæder / swa he wundra gehwæs
 [the work of the Glory-Father, / when he of wonders of every one,]
 ece Drihten / or onstealde
 [eternal Lord, / the beginning established.]
 He ærest sceop / ielda bearnum
 [He first created / for men's sons]
 heofon to hrofe / halig Scyppend
 [heaven as a roof, / holy Creator;
 ða middangeard / moncynnes Weard
 [then middle-earth / mankind's Guardian,]
 ece Drihten / æfter teode
 [eternal Lord / afterwards made –]
 firum foldan / Frea ælmihtig.
 [for men earth, / Master almighty.]⁵³

Like other Anglo-Saxon religious poetry, it suggests both the pagan heritage and the strong faith of a recently converted people.

Cynewulf (late 8th or early 9th century) is the author of at least four religious poems, 'Juliana', 'The Fates of the Apostles', 'Christ' and 'Elene' and a number of others are attributed to him.

Another significant Old English religious poem is **The Dream of the Rood**.⁵⁴ It is a long lyrical meditation that anticipates Middle English dream vision poetry. Like other Anglo-Saxon religious poetry, it reflects both the pagan heritage and the strong faith of a recently converted people. The poem is narrated in the first person, with two speakers: the

⁵² Kevin Kiernan, "Reading Caedmon's 'Hymn' with Someone Else's Glosses," *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, edited by Roy Liuzza (Yale University Press, 2002) 103-124.

⁵³ Bede. "From An Ecclesiastical History of the English People." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. I. 8th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006) 24-27.

⁵⁴ Watch the lecture about 'The Dream of the Rood' on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TZSvsnQn4Yk>

dreamer (first part), the Cross (second part) and again the poet (third part). The Crucifixion story told by the Cross can be interpreted as an allegory of Christian life. An interesting feature of this poem is that Christ is presented as a young Anglo-Saxon warrior. A stylistic device called **prosopopoeia** (personification) is used in the poem.

The surviving secular Old English poetry includes, apart from *Beowulf*, such elegiac verses as 'Widsith' 'The Wife's Lament', 'Deor's Lament', 'The Ruin', 'The Seafarer' and the 'The Wanderer'. Anglo-Saxon poetry has been preserved chiefly in four manuscripts:

- a) The *Beowulf* manuscript (British Museum, London);
- b) The Junius manuscript (Bodleian Library, Oxford);
- c) The Vercelli manuscript (monastery at Vercelli, Italy; containing *The Dream of the Rood*);
- d) The Exeter Book (in Exeter cathedral; containing *The Wanderer*, *Deor's Lament*, short verse forms called charms written in runic alphabet and riddles).
- e) *The Battle of Brunanburgh* and *The Battle of Maldon* are part of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*;
- f) Caedmon's *Hymn*, recorded in the Venerable Bede's *History*.

Old English prose was written mostly in Latin and concerned religious matters. The most important work of that kind was *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentes Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) written by the Venerable **Bede** in 731. Bede provides a semi-legendary history of England in which he mentions the poet Caedmon.

The Venerable Bede (c. 672-735) was the most important Anglo-Saxon church historian. He was a monk at the Northumbrian monastery of Saint Peter at Wearmouth (today part of Sunderland), and of its daughter monastery, Saint Paul's, in modern Jarrow. Bede's most famous work is *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*), which gained him the title "The father of English History." Bede also wrote on many other topics, from music and metrics to scripture commentaries. Recorded by the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Caedmon's 'Hymn' is the oldest extant work in the Old English language. It was probably composed during the latter half of the 7th century.⁵⁵

King Alfred (842?-899), who reigned in Wessex, translated into Old English the famous work of the Roman philosopher Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*). This work had a great influence on the development of English literature.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The spread of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) as one of the most significant factors in the formation of national literature and culture.
2. The transition from the pagan heroic values to Christian values – the faith in Almighty God – reflected in poetry and prose.
3. The development of two types of vernacular poetry based on strong rhythms, kennings and alliteration: religious and lay (heroic epic tales and elegies).
4. The Venerable Bede's *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is one of the few primary sources of information about Britain in the Anglo-Saxon period.

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. The historical and cultural background of Old English literature.
2. Define and give examples of the main genres of Anglo-Saxon literature.
3. Discuss the significance *Beowulf*.

⁵⁵ Watch the lecture about the Venerable Bede:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMjQEiD72hE>

4. Discuss some Anglo-Saxon ideals reflected in Old English poetry.
5. The coexistence of Christian ideology and Anglo-Saxon heroic culture as reflected in *Beowulf* and other Anglo-Saxon texts.
6. The heroic code of the Anglo-Saxon warrior in *Beowulf*.
7. Monsters in *Beowulf*: discuss and explain their role in the poem.
8. Christian and pagan elements in Anglo-Saxon literature.
9. The use of allegory in 'The Dream of the Rood'.
10. Features of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

6.1.2. The Middle English Period

Medieval English poetry developed from the Norman conquest of Britain in 1066 until c. 1450, when the standard literary language, derived from the dialect of the London area, evolved into modern English. Middle English poetry is much more diversified than Old English poetry. The Old English alliterative form almost disappeared and was succeeded by a fairly uniform couplet.

The Owl and the Nightingale (c. 1225) is an early Middle English poem written in octosyllabic couplets. It is a debate (a favourite Latin genre) between the serious owl and the easy-going nightingale on human nature. At the outset the owl represents traditional Christian values whereas the nightingale is in favour of **courtly love**.

Medieval English poetry can be roughly classified into historical verses, religious poetry, secular poetry and romances. Historical poetry (of little literary merit) includes a large number of rhymed chronicles. *The Brut*, a long historical poem written around the year 1200, relates the legendary origin of the English kingdom. The poem makes the first mention of King Arthur, Cymbeline and Lear.

One of the most outstanding examples of religious poetry is *Piers Plowman* by **William Langland** (1330-1400). It is an allegorical poem written in the convention of dream vision, protesting against the plight of the poor and the avarice of the rich. It propagates a Christian vision of life in unity with God under the rule of a purified Church.

Another allegorical poem, *Pearl*, written by an unknown author, is an ecstatic elegy for the death of a small girl, which shows an image of heaven where only pure and innocent souls like those of children can go. Other poems similar in style and diction, although artistically less successful, are *Purity* and *Patience*.

The didactic, homiletic poem *Purity* promotes the virtue of purity through cleanliness of body and delights of married love. *Patience* demonstrates in a humorous way the dangers of impatience and the nobility of an allegorical Patience.

The secular theme of courtly love emerged in English medieval poetry under the influence of the songs and poems of French troubadours, who wrote about love with a passion which was previously reserved for religion only. Medieval English romances include popular courtly stories in verse which deal with giants, dragons, wizards, legendary kings and heroes, such as King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, especially Lancelot, Gawain and Galahad.

One of the most famous medieval romances is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and *Sir Tristram*. This poem expresses the chivalric code of conduct based on courage, courtesy and honour.

The story of the poem, written in alliterative verse in the second half of the 14th century concerns Sir Gawain, an ideal Christian knight. The poem consists of four parts (Fitts). In Fitt 1 King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table are celebrating the New Year at Camelot when a huge man disguised in green twigs and leaves appears, carrying an axe. He challenges the knights to have his head cut off on condition that after a year he will do the same. Only Gawain accepts the challenge and cuts the stranger's head off. Miraculously, he picks his head up and leaves the castle.

In Fitt 2 Gawain sets off a year later on a lonely journey to find the mysterious knight and

have a duel with him. He arrives at a castle where he is received by the lord of the castle and his attractive wife, who is described in the following way:

*Hir body was stumpy and squat,
Hir buttoks bukging and wide;
More pleasure a man could plot
With the sweet one at her side.*

(verses 966-969)

The lord of the castle and Gawain agree that they will exchange everything they received on the previous day. The lord goes hunting to the forest while Gawain stays in the castle with the young hostess, who makes amorous proposals to the guest. In Fitt 3 the lord hunts for three consecutive days and the lady gives Gawain one kiss on the first night, two on the second night and on the third night – three kisses and a magic green girdle which will protect him against death. Each evening Gawain exchanges kisses with the lord of the castle for animals which he has killed in the hunt, but he has hidden the girdle for himself. In Fitt 4 Gawain goes to the green knight's chapel where his head is to be cut off.

However, he is only slightly wounded in the neck. The green knight tells him that he has broken the deal with him by hiding the girdle. Gawain returns to Camelot with mixed feelings. He is no longer sure that he is a perfect knight because he could not fully resist the temptation. However, the knights of the Round Table appreciate his conduct. The poem re-examines the validity of the chivalric code of truth, courage, and honour.

The most beautiful examples of secular medieval lyrics include: *Alison* and *Sumer Is Icyumen In*. Another genre which developed particularly during the Late Middle Ages was the ballad. English medieval ballads deal chiefly with popular themes of love and death, war and adventure. Thanks to the anonymous ballads the legend of Robin Hood was kept alive for centuries.

The most outstanding writer of the late medieval period was **Geoffrey Chaucer** (c.1340-1400), regarded as the father of English poetry. *The Canterbury Tales*, his best but unfinished work, one of the highest achievements of English literature, is a collection of stories told by pilgrims on their way to Thomas à Becket's shrine at Canterbury. The characters, such as the Parson, the Summoner, the Friar, the Pardoner, the Nun, the Knight, the Squire, the Yeoman, the Franklin, the Miller, the Plowman, the Physician, the Wife of Bath (a clothmaker), the Innkeeper, the Student, etc., are chosen from all ranks of English society - thus providing a panorama of contemporary life – and they are described in the *General Prologue* by a combination of typical traits and individual details. Irony and satire are characteristic features of Chaucer's style.

Each pilgrim is to tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two more on the way back. The teller of the best story wins a free supper at an inn. Twenty-four tales are told by the different pilgrims, including two told by Chaucer himself. The tales include various types of medieval literature: **romance**, **exemplum**, **fabliau**, **sermon**, **saint's legend**, etc. The *Prologue*⁵⁶ describes the pilgrims as they meet at the Tabard inn in Southwark.

The Knight's Tale is a romance based on Boccaccio. The story concerns two noble youths, Palamon and Arcite, who are imprisoned by Theseus, duke of Athens. They both fall in love in beautiful Emelye, whom they see from their prison's window. Arcite is released from prison on condition that he will never return to Athens. Soon Palamon escapes from the prison. Arcite returns to Athens in disguise and take service in Theseus's household. Meanwhile Palamon hides in the nearby wood. When they meet, they begin a deadly duel. However, Theseus, who is hunting in the wood together with his wife Hippolita and Emily, stops the fighting men. When the ladies plead for the lives of the youths, Theseus agrees and arranges a tournament during which the two young men will be able to fight for the love of Emelye. Palamon prays to the goddess Venus to grant him Emily, while Arcite prays to Mars for victory. Palamon is defeated and Arcite rides his horse through

⁵⁶ Watch YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahuT-JwxIa8>

the arena in triumph, but he is suddenly thrown down by his horse and dies. Palamon and Emelye are married after a prolonged mourning for Arcite.

The Miller's Tale, told by a drunken character, describes the cuckolding of an Oxford carpenter by a clerk named Nicholas, who tells him that Noah's flood is about to occur again, and the carpenter decides to sleep in a wooden tub suspended under the rafters, which leaves his pretty wife, Alisoun, free to sleep with the young man.

The Nun's Priest's Tale is a mock-heroic account of a cock, Chauntecleer and his favourite hen, Pertelote. Chauntecleer is trapped by a fox and carried away, but the cock tricks him into speaking and then he can escape.

The Wife of Bath gives an account of her eventful life with five husbands. This tale is about woman's mastery over men. The hero, lying in bed with his newly-married wife, is asked whether he would prefer her to be ugly and faithful or to be beautiful and faithless; he allows her to choose, and is rewarded with a beautiful and faithful wife.

The Canterbury Tales is written mostly in heroic couplets, i.e. verses rhyming in pairs. Each verse has five feet arranged in **iambic pentameter**.

In the 15th century, a number of poets imitated Chaucer. However, the medieval themes were by now exhausted. Only Sir **Thomas Malory's** (c.1400-1471) *Le Morte d'Arthur* (c. 1451-71) has sustained its remarkable charm. This work in prose, written in the tradition of Arthurian romance, contains stories of various knights of the Round Table, including King Arthur and Sir Galahad, and the guilty love of Sir Lancelot for Queen Guinevere, Arthur's wife.

6.1.3. Early English drama

The medieval English drama developed from simple ritual ceremonies within the churches. The early history of English drama begins with the dialogic representation of the ecclesiastical liturgy. Dramatic scenes from the life of Christ were known as **tropes**. One of the earliest known dramatic performances or tropes comes from the 10th century. It is a dialogue between the three Marys and the angel at Christ's tomb. The dramatic dialogue in Latin is known as the '*Quem Quaeritis?*' ('Whom do you seek?'):

'Whom do ye seek in the sepulchre?' [...]
'Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified.' [...]
'He is not here. He is risen as He foretold; go and tell how
He is risen from the tomb'.

The "*Quem Quaeritis?*" trope is believed to be the earliest instance of medieval drama.

Eventually (the 14th century), dramatic representations, which were called miracle and mystery plays, moved out of the church into the marketplace, where they were performed under the supervision of craft guilds. Almost complete texts of mystery cycles have been preserved from performances in the English cities of York, Wakefield, Coventry and Chester. The Chester cycle contains 25 representations of the Bible stories from the Fall of Lucifer, through the Creation, the Fall of Man, Noah, to the Day of Judgment. Similar cycles were also produced elsewhere in Europe. Mystery plays were primarily devoted to portraying the life and passion of Christ, his resurrection and appearances to his disciples and to the two Marys, and his ascension. The subject of miracle plays was usually the life and martyrdom of a saint.

Morality plays or *moralties* were medieval dramatic plays which dealt allegorically with the fall of man and human vices. The most famous morality play, *Everyman* (c. 1500) dramatises Everyman, who is summoned by Death to account for his sins. Everyman asks his trusted companions, Fellowship, Beauty, Strength, Discretion and Five Wits to

accompany him on his last journey. They all refuse, but Good Deeds decides to remain with him:

GOOD DEEDS: Nay, Everyman; I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

Medieval and early Renaissance comic drama also included *interludes*. As its name implies (from Latin, 'between the play'), the interlude was a short play performed in the intervals of feasts or dramatic presentations, e.g. mystery, miracle or morality plays. Interludes had a light character. One of the greatest masters of English interludes was **John Heywood** (1497?-1580?), who wrote *The Four P's*, a dramatised debate. A palmer, a pardoner, a potycary (apothecary) and a pedlar, compete who will tell the biggest lie. The winner is the Palmer, who says that has never seen a woman out of patience.

Interludes were also introduced into serious plays. For example, some fragments of *The Tempest*, *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Midsummer Night's Dream* are interludes.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The spread of literacy after the Norman invasion in 1066 and an increased need for written documents; the transition from oral culture to written culture.
2. The extensive influence of French literature and the subsequent introduction of classical learning.
3. Development of new verse forms in poetry and revival of native verse forms (Alliterative Revival and dream vision convention).
4. Development and subsequent decay of romances in prose and verse (tales of chivalry and adventure).
5. The emergence of drama.
6. *The Canterbury Tales* as the most important work of the period.
7. A shift from religious to secular themes and the emergence of new genres: exemplum, debate, romance, fabliau.
8. The dominant literary genres in the Middle English Period: romance (elevated and heroic style, representation of chivalric ideals); fabliau (obscene and comic style, representation of the middle classes).
9. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* exhibits literary techniques typical of the alliterative revival.
10. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* exemplifies the medieval romance genre; it also reveals vestiges of paganism in a society dominated by Christianity. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* illustrates two concepts important to medieval nobility: chivalry and courtly love.

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. Cultural and historical background of Middle English literature.
2. Explain the terms: medieval romance, exemplum, debate, fabliau, the dream vision convention, the Alliterative Revival, miracle, mystery and morality plays.
3. Courtly love and its literary expression.
4. Discuss features of medieval English literature.
5. Geoffrey Chaucer as the most prominent writer of the Middle English period.
6. *The Canterbury Tales* as a panorama of medieval England. Name the different genres of *The Canterbury Tales*, illustrating them with examples.
7. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* as a reflection of Arthurian legends.
8. The function of allegory in medieval English literature.
9. Describe the features of medieval ballads. Analyse one ballad.
10. Mystery plays and the mystery cycles: their themes and staging.
11. The themes and characters of morality plays. Discuss *Everyman* as an example of a morality play.

6.2. The Renaissance (c. 1450-1660)

The term Renaissance describes the period of European history from the early 14th to the late 16th century. The word *renaissance* is derived from the French word for rebirth and originally referred to the revival of the values and artistic styles of classical antiquity. The Renaissance Period marked the decline of scholasticism and the introduction of the new humanist culture inspired by moral and intellectual revival. Renaissance literature focused on man, humanism and love of life. In England the Renaissance was characterised by the end of the domination of the Catholic Church and the beginning of the Reformation – a new way of thinking about religion and God. Calvin (Jean Cauvin), who saw the Bible as the literal word of God, inspired the English Puritans. They recognised the Bible as the only authority on religious matters. The effect of Reformation in England was a new national identity, distinct from the rest of Europe.

The most outstanding representatives of the literature of the English Renaissance are William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Ben Jonson, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, John Donne, John Milton and others.

The English Renaissance, which began and finished later than the Italian Renaissance, can be subdivided into four distinct ‘Ages’: The Tudor Period, including the Elizabethan Age, the Jacobean Age, the Caroline Age, and the Commonwealth Period (which is also known as the Puritan Interregnum). The English Renaissance embraces the following literary genres:

- (a) non-fictional prose, e.g. **Thomas More’s** (1477-1535) *Utopia* - a description of the ideal Commonwealth written in Latin; **Francis Bacon’s** (1561-1626) *Novum Organum*, in Latin, which announced the new inductive method in philosophy;
- (b) poetry, e.g. the poems of Thomas Wyatt, Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare and others;
- (c) Elizabethan drama, e.g. the plays of Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and others.

6.2.1 The Elizabethan Age

The Elizabethan Age lasted some forty years from the second half of the 16th century until the early 17th century. It coincides with the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and is regarded by many as the most fruitful age in the history of English literature, during which such writers as Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare flourished. In the Elizabethan Age drama became the chief medium of literary expression.

Poetry

The major poets apart from Shakespeare included Thomas Wyatt, Philip Sidney, Henry Howard, Edmund Spenser. During this time, lyric poetry and drama were the major forms of literature. Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey introduced the sonnet to English poetry.

The poet and courtier **Sir Thomas Wyatt** (1503-1542) wrote thirty-one sonnets composed in the Italian form as used by the Italian poet Petrarch. **Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey** (1517-1547) is remembered for his elegant sonnets written both in the English and the Italian fashion. However, his most noteworthy production was the translation of Books 2 and 4 of Virgil’s *Aeneid* in which he used blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) for the first time in English.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) had a reputation as the Renaissance ideal of a complete man; he studied at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, but he did not

receive a degree. He travelled widely in the Continent where he learnt several foreign languages and met a few outstanding scholars of his time. In 1591, he wrote a sequence of 108 sonnets and several songs entitled *Astrophil and Stella* ("Starlover and Star") which imitated the Petrarchan convention. It should be noted that Sydney was a candidate for the elective Polish throne.

Sidney's sonnets inspired many later Elizabethan poets who developed the tradition of the sonnet in English poetry (Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, William Shakespeare). In his *Defense of Poesie* (1595) Sidney affirmed the universality of poetry. It was the first major work of literary criticism in England. Under the influence of Spanish and French romances, Sidney also wrote the prose romance *Arcadia* (1581, 1583-1584; pub. 1590). Strongly influenced by 16th-century Spanish and Italian romances, *Arcadia* proved that the English vernacular could sustain the heroic and pastoral modes of classical and Italian literature.

Edmund Spenser (c.1552-1599) fascinated poets. He was the most outstanding poet of his age. His first major work was a series of 12 eclogues, *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579). His most famous poem is *The Faerie Queene* (1590-1596), which is composed of 12 books, each book consisting of 12 cantos, each canto of about forty stanzas which Spenser invented (Spenserian stanza). Each stanza consists of eight five-foot iambic lines, followed by an iambic line of six feet, rhyming aba bb cbcc. *The Faerie Queene* is an allegory which tells about the adventures of knights who represent some particular virtue. The fairy queen, who is called Gloriana, is an allegory of Queen Elizabeth I.

Spenser's other poetry includes *Amoretti* (1595) which consists of 85 sonnets celebrating his love for a lady. The Spenserian sonnet had a more meditative tone than those of Wyatt and Surrey. Spenser's sonnets express the triumph of virtuous courtship and ideal love which culminates in betrothal and marriage.

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) translated some of Ovid's works and under his influence wrote the romantic and sensuous poem *Hero and Leander*. He also wrote a beautiful pastoral lyric entitled "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love". The poem is full of strong feelings about idealised love.

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) wrote, apart from dramas, some of the most beautiful poetry in the English language. His 154 sonnets deal with the themes of love, time and death. The first 126 sonnets contain references to a young man of superior beauty and rank. The sonnets numbered from 127 to 152 are dedicated to a mysterious and sensual "Dark Lady", probably the poet's mistress. The two final sonnets are translations or adaptations of earlier poems. The *Sonnets* were published in 1609 under that title by Thomas Thorpe without the author's authorisation. Shakespeare's longer poems are *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. Many of his dramas also include some beautiful lyrics, such as "O mistress mine, where are you roaming?" (from *Twelfth Night*).

The Elizabethan theatre and drama

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I the popularity of dramatic performances increased. There were two types of playhouse in Elizabethan times. One was a large, open amphitheatre and the other an indoor hall. The governors of the City of London were hostile to actors and the London authorities expelled the theatres outside the city walls in 1576. However, this event increased the popularity of theatres. Theatres were built on the north and south banks of the Thames outside the city limits. Both rich and poor could attend performances. The first theatre, oddly enough known as "The Theatre", was built in 1576 by James Burbage. Soon a few other theatres began to operate. 'The Curtain', 'The Globe', 'The Rose', 'The Swan' and 'The Fortune' became very popular. Shakespeare's company used the first type of theatre. 'The Globe' opened in 1599, was built as an open playhouse using materials of the demolished original 'Theatre'. It consisted of an 'arena' or 'yard' surrounded by three ranks of galleries for the audience. There were standing places in the yard around the stage. The Elizabethan Age produced a

number of talented dramatists who developed drama from primitive comedy and tragedy to great masterpieces, such as the tragedies of Shakespeare.

The first phase of Elizabethan drama, which includes the plays of the so-called **University Wits**, Robert Greene, Thomas Kyd, George Peele, Christopher Marlowe, as well as early Shakespeare, was the expression of a strong belief in the possibility of human advancement. The second phase begins a little after the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603. It brings forth the major tragedies of Shakespeare. Early enthusiasm and optimism of the first phase waned and was replaced by somber pessimism, disillusionment and even cynicism.

University Wits

Robert Greene (1560-92) was one of the first professional dramatists. His most successful comedy is *The Honourable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589?). However, Greene is now mostly remembered for his pamphlet "Greenes Groats-Worth of Wit" (printed posthumously in 1592), which contains the earliest known mention of William Shakespeare as a playwright. He ridiculed Shakespeare as an actor: "*an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you . . . in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.*"⁵⁷

Thomas Kyd (1558-94) wrote *The Spanish Tragedy* (published in 1592), a revenge play which imitated the plays of the Roman playwright Seneca.⁵⁸ Kyd is believed to be the author of an earlier version of *Hamlet*, which possibly inspired Shakespeare to write his famous play. **George Peele's** (1556-1596) wrote a successful pastoral **masque**, *The Arraignement of Paris* (1584), which was performed by a troupe of boys before Queen Elizabeth I. His chronicle history, *Edward I* (1593), anticipated the Shakespearean historical plays.

The first great English dramatist is undoubtedly **Christopher Marlowe** (1564-1593). His tragic dramas about man's desire for power place him next to Shakespeare. Marlowe exerted a great influence on Elizabethan drama. His characters resemble the personified abstractions of medieval morality plays. His best plays are *Tamburlaine the Great*, *Edward II*, *The Jew of Malta* and *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*. The play about Dr Faustus, written in blank verse, is the first dramatisation of the medieval legend of a man who sold his soul to the Devil. Dr Faustus, tired of science, turns to magic and calls Mephistopheles, with whom he makes an agreement to surrender his soul to the Devil in return for 24 years of life during which Mephistopheles will obey all his orders. Although Marlowe was not the first to use English blank verse, he succeeded in showing that it could be the vehicle of great poetry. Shakespeare developed the dramatic form initiated by Marlowe.

William Shakespeare

It is believed that **William Shakespeare** is the author of 37 plays. They were first published as *quartos* and *folios*, which refers to the way of folding the printed sheets. Quartos are smaller-size whereas folios are large-size volumes. During Shakespeare's life 18 of his plays were published in quartos. There are 'good' and 'bad' quartos, which means that the text in some quartos differed significantly from the original, due to the fact that they were published without Shakespeare's supervision and they were frequently reconstructed from Shakespeare's final draft or from memory. They contained numerous errors and omissions. Over half of the quartos are 'bad'.

Shakespeare's first folio appeared in 1623. It was prepared by two of Shakespeare's friends, John Heminge and Henry Condell. This publication in one volume contains a poem

⁵⁷ Sandra Clark, *Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007) 187.

⁵⁸ Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, known as 'the Younger' (4 BC?-AD65) was a Roman Stoic philosopher, writer and tutor of Nero. His revenge plays influenced Elizabethan drama.

by Ben Jonson, which includes a passage that Shakespeare 'was not of an age, but for all time' and all of Shakespeare's plays except *Pericles*. The second folio was published in 1632 and it contained "An Epitaph on Shakespeare" by John Milton. Heminge and Condell arranged the 36 plays in the first folio into comedies, histories and tragedies.

Shakespeare's plays are characterised by universality, great dramatic power and lyricism. Shakespeare rejected the classical principle of the dramatic unity of place, time and action as well as the precise separation between tragedy and comedy. His characters are never monolithic. Shakespeare's plays were written to be acted and not to be read. Therefore, they sometimes lack sophistication of construction or originality in the plots. Shakespeare often adapted, altered and expanded plots of existing literary or nonliterary works and built his dramas about the human condition. Shakespeare's earliest plays reveal his interest in English history and tradition. His later plays deal with the universal problems of humanity and his last plays show a reconciliation with life. Shakespeare's literary output is usually divided into four periods.

In the first period (until 1594) he wrote comedies, such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Taming of the Shrew*; early chronicle plays, e.g. *Henry VI*, Parts I-III, *Richard III*, and the early tragedy *Titus Andronicus*. In his early comedies Shakespeare followed the pattern of the classical Roman comedy and the courtly comedy of John Lyly (?1554-1606) and Robert Greene. The comic situations are based mostly on mistaken identity and "contests" between characters. The chronicle plays are more than illustrations of English history. For example, *Richard III* is a remarkable presentation of the rise and fall of a villain who becomes a king.

The second period (1594-1601), which reflects a more sophisticated style and an advance in the treatment of plot and characters, includes chronicle plays: *Richard II*, *King John*, *Henry IV* (Parts I-II), *Henry V*, and tragedies *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*; the "festive" or "golden" comedies - *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, written probably about 1595-1596, is a fantasy consisting of several interwoven plots. The subject of this comedy is comic irresponsibility of young love. The setting of the play – the magical Forest of Arden, is a place of magic, mystery and transformation. Characters assume new identities and explore new ways of living. The play is about love, hate and magic. Hermia loves Lysander, but Egeus, Hermia's father does not want her to marry him. Egeus wants his daughter to marry Demetrius. But Hermia does not love him. Instead, Helena, a friend of Hermia, loves Demetrius, but he does not. They all run away to the Arden forest. The king and the queen of the fairies, Oberon and Titania, have just quarrelled, and in revenge Oberon plays a cruel hoax on Titania; she will fall in love with the first creature she sees when she wakes up.

At almost the same time Oberon orders Puck, his fairy servant, to press a love potion on Demetrius' eyes so that he will fall in love with Helena. However, Puck mistakes Lysander for Demetrius and it is Lysander who unexpectedly turns his affection from Hermia to Helena. Eventually, both Lysander and Demetrius are in love with Helena, who starts to think that they are playing a silly joke on her. Also Titania falls in love with one of the Athenian craftsmen called Bottom, whose head is transformed into that of an ass. In the end, things get back to normal. Lysander loves Hermia and Demetrius loves Helena. The play ends with a triple marriage. The message which Shakespeare wanted to pass on is that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder' and that without love, everything is in disarray.

The third period (1601-1608) includes the so-called 'dark comedies', whose plots and endings do not fit the traditional pattern of comedy: *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure For Measure*; and his late tragedies which are the greatest achievements of Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*. They are written in blank verse and tell about individual downfalls of persons of great proportions or ambitions. All Shakespeare's tragedies seem to illustrate the idea that there is a fate that shapes our ends.

Prince Hamlet is summoned to Elsinore Castle in Denmark from university in Germany to

attend his father's funeral. He is shocked to find that his mother Gertrude has already remarried Hamlet's uncle Claudius, the dead king's brother. Claudius has had himself crowned King despite the fact that Hamlet was his the legal heir to the throne. When Hamlet sees his father's ghost, who complains that he cannot rest in peace because he was poisoned by his brother Claudius while he had an afternoon nap in the garden. He urges Hamlet to avenge his death, but he must spare Gertrude. In order to verify the accusation, Hamlet instructs a troupe of actors to perform a play called *The Murder of Gonzago* to which Hamlet has added scenes that recreate the murder of his father. Hamlet calls the modified play *The Mousetrap*. Claudius' reaction to the staged murder reveals that the King has pangs of conscience. Hamlet is now determined to kill him. In the meantime Hamlet causes involuntarily six deaths at Elsinore Castle. First, Hamlet stabs Polonius through a wall tapestry as he spies on Hamlet and Gertrude in the Queen's private chamber. Claudius decides to send Hamlet to England where he is to be executed. Hamlet discovers the plot and instead of him two servants, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are hanged. Ophelia, Hamlet's abandoned lover, is distraught over her father's death and Hamlet's strange behaviour. She drowns while singing sad love songs bemoaning the fate of a spurned lover. Her brother Laertes, who returned to Denmark from France to avenge his father's death, sees Ophelia's descent into madness. Laertes vows to punish Hamlet for her death and plots with Claudius. In the midst of the sword fight between Hamlet and Laertes, Laertes drops his poisoned sword and Hamlet picks up the sword and injures Laertes. The poison kills Laertes instantly. Before he dies, he tells Hamlet that he will shortly die too because he has been hit by the same sword. The Queen, believing that her son is winning, drinks a toast from the poisoned cup and dies. Dying, Laertes reveals to Hamlet the plot and explains that Claudius is responsible for Gertrude's death. In the end, Hamlet stabs Claudius with the poisoned sword and then pours the last drops of the poisoned wine down the King's throat. Before he dies, Hamlet declares that the throne should now pass to Prince Fortinbras of Norway. With his last breath, he releases himself from the prison of his words: "The rest is silence." In the finale, Prince Fortinbras, now the King of Denmark, orders a funeral with full honours for Prince Hamlet.

King Lear shows how folly, hatred, cruelty, lust and horror may affect human lives. The primary plot concerns the story of Lear, King of Britain, who intends to divide his kingdom among his three daughters, Goneril, Regan and Cordelia according to their affection for him. He asks them to say which one loves him most. When Cordelia is unable to speak publicly of her love for him, (she only says that she loves her father according to her duty, not more, not less). Lear disinherits her and divides his kingdom between Regan and Goneril, but retains the title of king and makes the condition that he will be maintained with 100 knights by either daughter in turn. Cordelia is then married to the king of France and leaves Britain. The old King soon becomes the victim of his egoism and lack of insight into his evil daughters' hearts. Goneril and Regan are the most evil characters in the play. They take full advantage of the King's mistaken decision and divide the kingdom between themselves. Cordelia, the third daughter, personifies human goodness and charm. She is contrasted with her two sisters. She truly loves the King but is unable to flatter him. King Lear dies of a broken heart after he hears that Cordelia is dead. Goneril poisons Regan and stabs herself.

The secondary plot shows how Gloucester's illegitimate son Edmund attempts to take his father's title and his brother's inheritance. Edmund tricks Gloucester into thinking that Edgar is planning to betray him. Then Edmund gives the Duke of Cornwall a letter Gloucester received from Cordelia concerning the French invasion. This letter is a proof of Gloucester's loyalty to Lear and his eyes are gouged out as punishment. Gloucester realises that his bastard son was a traitor. He is taken care by Edgar. In the dénouement, Edgar defeats Edmund in a duel and forces him to admit his crimes. Edmund dies of wounds from the duel.

The fourth period (1608-1612), in which Shakespeare moves away from the dark mood of the previous period into calm and reconciliation with life, includes romantic tragicomedies such as *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Pericles* and possibly *Henry VIII*, which may have been written with John Fletcher. Although his style is weaker, we find some of the most beautiful representations of female characters, e.g. Miranda in *The Tempest*, Perdita, the heroine of *The Winter's Tale* or Imogen from *Cymbeline*.

The Tempest is a tragicomedy about betrayal, magic, romance and reconciliation. King

Alonso of Naples and his companions, brother Sebastian, his son Ferdinand, and Antonio (brother of Prospero, the usurped Duke of Milan) encounter a violent storm (tempest) when they sail home for Italy after attending the king's daughter's wedding in Tunis. Everyone is washed ashore on an enchanted island inhabited by the magician Prospero, who has deliberately summoned the storm. Prospero, the former Duke of Milan, and his 15-year old daughter Miranda live in a cave on the island which is also inhabited by Ariel, an airy spirit at the service of Prospero, and the ugly, half human Caliban. When Miranda sees the survivors, she exclaims:

O wonder!
 How many goodly creatures are there here!
 How beautiful mankind is!
 O brave new world,
 That has such people in't!
 (*The Tempest, Act V, Scene I*)

She instantly falls in love with Ferdinand, the first youth she has seen in her life. Prospero approves of this relationship but he warns Ferdinand not to break Miranda's "virgin-knot" until the wedding. Finally, Prospero forgives his brother Antonio and decides to renounce his magic and return to Italy as the rightful duke, together with the king and his company.

Works of Shakespeare arranged by category

Shakespeare's plays are often arranged in three categories: tragedy, comedy, or history, but it is important to remember that the categories are not Shakespeare's.

Tragedies

Anthony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Timon of Athens, Titus Andronicus;

Comedies: *All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, Love's Labours Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Winter's Tale;*

Histories: *Henry IV, part 1 and 2, Henry V, Henry VI, parts 1,2 and 3, Henry VIII, King John, Richard II, Richard III.*

Elizabethan prose

Prose fiction began to develop during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* is a lengthy **pastoral romance** in prose interspersed with verse **eclogues** which is sometimes considered as an antecedent of the novel.

Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) is a **picaresque romance** set during the reign of Henry VIII of England. The first-person narrator, a rogue-hero, Jack Wilton, describes his adventures as a page during the wars against the French, and his subsequent travels in Italy.

Other Elizabethan prose fictions include **George Gascoigne's** (c. 1525-1677) mock-heroic romance, *The Adventures of Master F.J.* (1573) and **John Lyly's** *Euphues* (1578), famous for its peculiar and sophisticated style, called 'Euphuism', whose principal characteristics are the excessive use of antithesis, alliterations, repetitions, rhetorical questions and others stylistic devices.

Elizabethan prose fiction exerted influence on the development of poetry and drama in the late 17th century, as well as on the novel in the 18th century.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The development of lyric poetry, particularly the sonnet (Wyatt, Sidney, Howard,

- Spenser, Shakespeare).
- 2. The golden age of English drama and theatre (Shakespeare, Marlowe, Kyd, Jonson).
- 3. The influence of European thinkers (Erasmus – liberalism; Luther and Calvin – strict Puritanism).
- 4. The beginning of nonfiction prose (Thomas More’s *Utopia*).

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. Explain the terms: Renaissance, Humanism, Reformation.
2. The introduction of the sonnet to English poetry.
3. Analyse and interpret Spenser’s Sonnet 26 from *Amoretti*. Discuss its rhyme scheme, imagery and theme.
4. Features of the Shakespearean sonnet. In what sense is the Shakespearean sonnet innovative? Discuss Sonnets 18 and 130 to illustrate how Shakespeare both defends and defies the Petrarchan tradition.
5. Name other Elizabethan sonneteers and discuss their themes, rhyme pattern, main poetic devices.
6. Renaissance pastoral poetry: name representatives and titles, and discuss characteristic features.
7. Find epithets and metaphors in Marlowe’s “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”. What is pastoral lyric poetry?
8. Explain how Raleigh shows the transience of worldly pleasures and passions in his poem ‘What Is Our Life’.
9. The Elizabethan theatre.
10. Discuss the themes and motifs of Christopher Marlowe’s dramas, explaining the use of blank verse and prose in Marlowe’s works.
11. Characterisation of William Shakespeare’s dramatic works: themes, types of plays, periods.
12. Shakespeare’s tragic heroes.
13. Shakespeare’s comic characters.
14. Analyse a Shakespeare’s tragedy.
15. Analyse a Shakespeare’s comedy.
16. On the basis of one of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies written between 1599 and 1605 demonstrate how their protagonists bring about their own downfall.
17. On the basis of one of Shakespeare’s early comedies discuss some of the conventions employed by the author (consider their subject matter, plot pattern, characters, themes and language).
18. Choose one of Shakespeare’s later plays, such as *The Winter’s Tale* or *The Tempest*, to discuss its main motifs. How do they differ from those in his early plays? Why are his later plays called romances?
19. Read and discuss one of Shakespeare’s chronicles/histories and decide what the Bard is trying to say about kingship in those plays.
20. The achievement of other Elizabethan playwrights: Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Kyd, Ben Jonson.

6.3. Seventeenth century literature

The seventeenth century, particularly the period of the English Revolution (1640–60), was a time of great agitation in all walks of life – religion, science, politics, domestic relations and culture. It was also reflected in the literature of the era, which focused on an analysis of the self and personal life. The 17th century can be divided into the following sub-periods:

- 1) **The Jacobean Age** (1603-25), which refers to the reign of James I (1603-1625). In 1611, the *King James Bible* was published. King James himself published a few books: on poetry, on demonology, and the famous *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604). Francis Bacon and Robert Burton were the best known prose writers (non fiction).
- 1) **The Caroline Age**, which refers to the reign of Charles I (1625-1649). The writers of this age wrote with refinement and elegance. The Caroline Age produced a number of poets known as the 'Metaphysical School of Poetry' and 'Cavalier Poets'. The dramatists of this age still wrote in the Elizabethan tradition.
- 2) **The Commonwealth Period**, also known as the **Puritan Interregnum** (1649-1660) includes the literature produced before, during and after the time of the Civil War. In September 1642, the Puritans closed theatres on moral and religious grounds. During the Puritan Interregnum a number of important political writings were published, e.g. Thomas Hobbes' political treatise *Leviathan*.
- 3) **The Restoration Period**, which covers a time span from 1660 (the year when Charles II was re-established as King of England) to the end of the 17th century, includes poetry, heroic drama and domestic comedies, travel accounts, journalism, pamphlet literature, dairies, and John Bunyan's great allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*. The most outstanding writers of the period were John Dryden, John Wilmot, the earl of Rochester, and Samuel Butler.

Prose

The outstanding prose works of the 17th century include the great translation of the Bible, known as the King James Bible, or Authorized Version (1611); and some great philosophical and political treatises, such as Francis Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), *Novum Organum* (1620), and *The New Atlantis* (1627) and John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and Thomas Hobbes' *The Leviathan*.

The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come by **John Bunyan** (1628-1688) is a Christian allegory in prose. *The Pilgrim's Progress* holds a unique place in the history of English literature. Bunyan captures the speech of ordinary people as accurately as he depicts their behavior and appearance and as firmly as he realises their inner emotional and spiritual life.

The narrator named Christian, has a dream vision in which he learns that the city in which he and his family live will be burned with fire. In Part One Christian decides to escape from the 'City of Destruction' and the subsequent parts of the book present his journey, amongst others, through the House Beautiful, the Valley of Humiliation, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Vanity Fair, Doubting Castle and finally Celestial City. During his journey Christian meets many allegorical figures, e.g. Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Faithful, Hopeful, Giant Despair, etc. In Part Two Christian's wife, Christiana, accompanied by Great Heart, undertakes the same journey to the Celestial City with her children.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) wrote allegorical political prose entitled *Leviathan* (1651) in which he discussed the notion of the sovereign power. Hobbes believed that man is inherently a selfish and asocial creature who seeks only his own pleasure, satisfaction and self-interest. Therefore, in order to live without conflict and war in a society all men must make a contract which would confer all power to one man or one assembly. It is necessary to establish an external power (state) which would control the conduct of individuals. This external power, the leviathan, is called the Commonwealth by Hobbes.

Leviathan is divided into four books: 'Of Man', 'Of Common-wealth', 'Of a Christian Common-wealth', and 'Of the Kingdome of Darknesse'. Book I contains the philosophical framework for the entire text, while the remaining books simply extend and elaborate the arguments presented in the initial chapters. Hobbes depicts the natural condition of mankind as 'war of every man against every man', in which the life of an individual human being is 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'. Therefore, civilised people naturally seek peace, and the best way to achieve peace is to construct the Leviathan through social contract.

The English public servant **Samuel Pepys** (1633-1703) wrote his *Diary* in a code to ensure privacy. It is a fascinating record of private life in 17th century London, including eyewitness accounts of the Plague and the Great Fire. In his diary, Pepys recorded not only events that had historical significance but also those day to day details of his own life that shed light upon the way that people actually lived and worked in seventeenth century London.

Poetry

In poetry, John Donne was the most talented of a group known as the **Metaphysical Poets**, which includes George Herbert and Henry Vaughan. Metaphysical poets were attracted by the achievements of contemporary science. In their poems they employed complex allusive images and metaphors known as conceits. Their work has had a considerable influence on 20th century poetry. Although their poetry is widely varied, it has some common characteristics. The Metaphysical poem, often engages in a debate or persuasive presentation, contains unexpected and striking analogies from science, astronomy, geography, mechanics and philosophy. The poem, which often describes a dramatic event, a thought or contemplation, is an intellectual exercise of the poet's wit. The verse is occasionally rough, resulting in a dominance of thought over form. Metaphysical poetry is highly intellectual.

John Donne (1572-1631) wrote love poems as well as deeply religious poetry. He believed that "man as microcosm is composed of the same elements as the whole universe and as such recreates the totality of being in himself".⁵⁹ His poems of physical love were enriched by philosophical reflection. After his wife's death, Donne underwent a serious religious conversion and wrote fine religious poetry. It was not until the 20th century that readers began to appreciate his 'metaphysical' style. Donne's early achievement is notable for his erotic poetry, especially his elegies, in which he employed unconventional metaphors. 'The Flea' is a famous erotic poem, in which the author presents the title insect to his lover as a symbol of the potential consummation of their relationship.

'The Flea' poem exhibits Donne's metaphysical wit. This poem uses the image of a flea that has just bitten the speaker and his beloved to sketch an amusing conflict between the two lovers over premarital sex. The speaker points to a flea that has jumped from him to the woman and bites both. When the lady has caught the flea, the speaker tries to save the flea's life, arguing that it stands for 'our marriage bed and marriage temple'. However, the lady disregards his pleas and kills it. The speaker argues that the biting by the flea is just the same as having had sex without even touching her.

In Elegy XIX, 'To His Mistress Going to Bed', the poet poetically undresses his mistress and compares the act of fondling her to the exploration of America.

George Herbert (1593-1633) was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He wrote intimate, religious lyrics. His poetry, characterised by a precision of language and ingenious use of conceits, expressed internal conflicts the poet experienced all his life. It was published in a collection entitled *The Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*

⁵⁹ Krzysztof Mościcki, 'Was John Donne a Mystical Poet?', *Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny*, 2 (1991), 97.

(1633).

In Herbert's poem 'The Collar' the author/persona is not happy with his life as a county pastor; he rebels against the Divine Will, but finally he surrenders to God as a child to his father.

Richard Crashaw (1613-1649) was an ecstatic poet. His major publication was *Steps to the Temple* (1646), a collection of religious poetry. Crashaw combined religious themes with erotic metaphors and ecstatic imagery. **Henry Vaughan** (1621-1695) published *Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, a collection of poems similar to Herbert's *The Temple*.

Cavalier poetry was written by a group of lyric poets who were active particularly during the reign of King Charles I (1625-49): Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, Andrew Marvell, John Suckling (1609-42), Robert Herrick and others. Their poetry is mostly concerned with love.

Thomas Carew (1594?-1640?) was strongly influenced by Donne. He wrote many love lyrics and several longer poems. **Richard Lovelace** (1618-1657/1658) was the youngest of the Cavalier poets. One of his best known lyrics is 'On Going to the Wars'. His lyrics are sincere and fresh but they contain witty conceits. **Andrew Marvell** (1621-1678) was Milton's assistant for some time. After the Restoration he became a respected Member of Parliament. His best known poem is *The Garden*, but during his lifetime, Marvell was virtually unknown as a lyric poet. Today his most popular poem is probably *To His Coy Mistress*. **John Suckling** (1609-1642) wrote short lyric poems sparkling with wit and fancy. His satiric love poem 'Song' is one of the best examples of the Cavalier style. **Robert Herrick** (1591-1674) published some religious verse but his reputation mainly rests on his miniature highly polished secular poems dealing with sex, transience of life and death. One of his most famous *carpe diem* poems is 'To the Virgins, to make much of Time'.

John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647-80) was a Restoration poet, courtier and a notorious rake. His most famous poem is *Satyr Against Mankind* (1675). Although Wilmot's poetry is primarily characterised by libertinism, hedonism, wit and licentiousness, an undercurrent of piety runs through much of his work. In the last years of his life, Rochester underwent a religious conversion.

John Milton

The most outstanding epic poet of the period was **John Milton** (1608-74). Educated at St Paul's School in London and Christ's College, Cambridge, he travelled to Paris, Genoa, Florence, Rome, and Naples, where he met a number of distinguished men of learning, including Galileo. When he heard about the approaching Civil War in England he decided to return. He supported Parliament because he disapproved of the religious policy of King Charles I and Archbishop Laud, which he regarded as Roman Catholic authoritarianism.

The central historical event in the 17th century was the Civil War of 1642-51. The tension between the old order and the new found poetic expression in his *Paradise Lost* (1667), which relates the rebellion of Adam and Eve against God. It is a magnificent epic poem in blank verse about man's destiny. Milton seems to argue in *Paradise Lost* that if it had not been for Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve, mankind would not be able to live outside Paradise.

The loss of Paradise is perceived by Milton as the achievement of the human race. The poem is preceded by Milton's preface in which the poet stresses the importance of blank verse in a heroic poem. Blank verse in such a long poem was a literary novelty. Milton also writes about his links with pagan poets, but his main theme is essentially Christian.

The four central themes of *Paradise Lost* are: universality of divine providence, reality of evil, hope of redemption from evil, unity of human race. The central themes are closely interrelated in the poem. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton makes use of the rich resources of European literary tradition, such as the Bible, ancient mythology, mediaeval legends and

Renaissance humanism.

The poem starts with a debate between Satan and his followers whether or not to wage another war in order to regain Heaven. God watches Satan go into the newly created world and He foretells how Satan will succeed in bringing about the Fall of Man and how God will punish Man for yielding to temptation. Jesus, the Son of God, offers himself as a ransom for Man. Satan arrives on earth and goes to the Garden of Eden where he tempts Eve in her dream. God sends Raphael to Adam to warn him of his enemy and to tell him about the need of his obedience to God. Finally, Satan is defeated and is thrown into Hell again. Meanwhile Satan manages to return to earth disguised as a serpent and he talks to Eve of her beauty. He invites her to eat the forbidden fruit of knowledge. Eve takes more of the fruit and gives it to Adam. Adam understands that she is lost because she has eaten the forbidden fruit decides to eat it too because he wants to share her lot. They will fall together. They are no longer innocent. They discover that they are naked and they are ashamed of it. They cover their bodies. God decides that Adam and Eve must be expelled from Paradise.

The concluding verses of *Paradise Lost* express both the human tragedy of leaving Paradise and also a slight hint of hope that they will overcome the difficulties and find a place for themselves:

The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

Milton wrote a sequel to his great epic, titled *Paradise Regained*, which was published alongside the tragedy *Samson Agonistes* in 1671. In 1673, Milton republished his 1645 *Poems*, which included some of his early fine verse, *L'Allegro*, and *Il Penseroso*. He also wrote the masque *Comus* (1634) and the elegy *Lycidas* (1637).

John Dryden (1613-1700), who was also a dramatist, chiefly wrote satire in rhymed couplets. *Mac Flecknoe* (published in 1682) is a verse mock-heroic satire, full of allusions to literary figures, plays and poems, and a direct attack on Thomas Shadwell, a prominent poet of Dryden's epoch. In his great satire *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) Dryden attacked contemporary politicians under the disguise of the biblical allegory about the rebellion of Absalom against King David.⁶⁰

Jacobean Drama

After the death of Shakespeare there followed a decline in dramatic literature. Jacobean drama is often morally ambiguous. It focused on the presentation of suffering and perversity rather than continuing the Elizabethan tradition. Jacobean drama can be roughly divided into two major kinds: domestic tragedy and city comedy. The most representative playwrights after Shakespeare are Ben Jonson, Thomas Dekker, John Marston, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, John Webster, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, John Ford, Philip Massinger.

The Puritans, who were growing in power, were opposed to playhouses which they regarded as locations of all vices. One of the most notorious acts of the Puritan ascendancy was the closing of the theatres in England in the years 1642 -1660.

Thomas Dekker (1572-1632) wrote light comedies. The most famous was *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1600), a play with three intermingled plots set in contemporary London.

⁶⁰ Absalom was the third son of David, king of Israel, who rebelled against his father and was eventually killed. The Absalom motif reappears in William Faulkner's novel, *Absalom, Absalom*.

Ben Jonson (1573-1637) was the greatest of Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries. He exerted a significant influence on the development of English drama. He wrote comedies, tragedies and satires. His best known plays are *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), *Volpone* (1605), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).

John Marston (1575-1634) was Ben Jonson's greatest opponent in the War of the Theatres⁶¹, but later they became friends. His play entitled *The History of Antonio and Mellida* (1602) is a romantic drama of love and adventure. Its second part, *Antonio's Revenge*, is a tragedy of revenge which is based on the same history of Hamlet which Shakespeare knew. As a revenge play *The Malcontent* (1604) is also indebted to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The main character is the banished Duke of Genoa Altofronto, who as the 'malcontent' watches over, not without sinful satisfaction, the attempt of Mendoza to marry his own wife, Maria, and take over rule of the dukedom. Eventually, the usurper is removed, although he is not killed, and Altofronto regains his dukedom and his virtuous wife.

Thomas Middleton (1580-1627) wrote some thirty of plays in a variety of genres in an urban setting, as well as masques, civic entertainments, pageants, pamphlets and poems. However, he is best remembered for his tragedy *Women Beware Women* (1621) a cynical play about love. Other works by Middleton include a political anti-Catholic allegory, *A Game at Chess* (1624), a melodrama, *The Witch* (1615), and *The Widow* (1616), a tragicomedy. Middleton's major plays brought him a considerable reputation within his lifetime.

Thomas Heywood (1574-1641) was the author or co-author of some 220 plays. His best remembered play is *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603), one of the first middle-class tragedies. The play tells the story of a married couple, Master Frankford and his wife Anne, who is caught in adultery with her lover, Wendoll. Instead of killing the two adulterers on the spot (which would have been approved by the public opinion then), Frankford banishes his wife from the house and their two children. Tortured by guilt and remorse, Anne starves herself to death, but before she dies husband and wife are reconciled.

John Webster (1580-1625?) wrote two famous revenge tragedies: *The White Devil* (1612), the story about a sinister world of intrigue and murderous infidelity, loosely based on a real event that occurred in Italy; and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1623), the story of a young widow who marries against the wishes of her powerful brothers. Webster's plays are full of passion and horror. **Francis Beaumont** (1584-1616) and **John Fletcher** (1579-1625) triumphed in tragicomedy. Together they wrote more than 50 plays. Their most successful play was a comedy *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1609). **John Ford's** 1586?-1639) major plays include *The Lover's Melancholy* (1629), *Love's Sacrifice* (1631), *The Broken Heart* (1633) and his most popular play *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633). *The Broken Heart* is a romantic tragedy. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is probably Ford's most powerful play. It deals with a theme of forbidden love, derived probably from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. However, Ford transforms it into an incestuous love between Giovanni and his sister Annabella. **Philip Massinger's** (1583-1640) *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is a social comedy about the conflict between the aristocracy and the rising middle class.

Restoration drama

The Restoration Period was famous for a splendid Restoration comedy of manners. After the reopening of theatres in 1660, English drama became more literary and less theatrical. The existential themes of the Elizabethan drama were replaced by social problems. The reopening of London theatres by Charles II marks the beginning of Restoration drama which is noted, among others, for the introduction of actresses (in the Elizabethan theatre female roles were played by men). Restoration drama is remembered mainly for its so-called *comedy of wit*. The plays of George Etherege, William Congreve and William Wycherley showed the life of fashionable society. The main subject of Restoration

⁶¹ A conflict involving the Elizabethan playwrights Ben Jonson, John Marston and Thomas Dekker around the year 1600, due to the artistic rivalries of the dramatists.

comedy was sexual intrigue. These comedies reflected an amoral and frivolous society. Restoration tragedy, written by John Dryden and Thomas Otway, shows individual failure, remorse and suicide rather than the effect of fate.

George Etherege (1634-c. 1691) wrote comedies, such as *The Comical Revenge* (1664), *She Wou'd if She Cou'd* (1668). His best play, *The Man of Mode* (1676), is a comedy of characters. **William Wycherley** (1641-1715) is the founder of Restoration comedy and the father of modern English comedy. He wrote comedies of intrigue which depicted human weaknesses. *The Country Wife* (1675) shows a society of rakes, rogues and fools. **William Congreve** (1670-1729) was the greatest master of the Restoration comedy. He wrote comedies which dealt with the amorous adventures of the upper classes. His best plays are *The Old Bachelor* (1693), *Love for Love* (1695) and *The Way of the World* (1700).

John Dryden (1631-1700), an effective satirist and an accomplished lyric poet, was also a successful dramatist and theorist of drama. He wrote essays entitled *Of Dramatick Poesy* (1668) in which he showed his appreciation of Shakespeare's art. His best-known neoclassical tragedy, *All for Love* (1678), is an imitation of Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*.

Thomas Otway (1652-1685), Dryden's rival in dramatic art, was one of the forerunners of sentimental drama. His three great tragedies, *Don Carlos*, *The Orphan* and *Venise Preserved*, are notable for psychological insight and a convincing presentation of human passions.

Characteristic features of the period

1. Reformation affects all aspects of English life including literature.
2. Several translations of the Bible into English, the most important being the *King James* version.
3. The contribution of the Metaphysical Poets.
5. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* as the major Christian epic of all times.

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. Discuss the carnal and spiritual dimensions of love as represented by the Metaphysical poets.
2. How do John Donne's poems reflect the tenets of Metaphysical poetry? Give specific examples from his verse. Demonstrate how Donne breaks the divide between the secular and the religious in his poems, illustrating his use of religious imagery to convey physical/erotic love, and vice versa.
4. Analyse John Donne's poem 'The Flea'.
5. Discuss religious themes and motifs in George Herbert's poetry.
6. Name a few Cavalier poets and discuss the main concerns/motifs of their poetry.
7. Discuss the significance of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. What features of a classical epic poem are used in Milton's great epic? What is its theme? Why cannot Satan be perceived as a true hero of the poem?
8. Discuss features of Restoration drama.

6.4. Eighteenth century literature

The Enlightenment

The **Enlightenment**, also known as the 'Age of Reason', was a great period of the development of rational thinking, science and public education from the late 17th to the late 18th centuries. It is associated in Europe with the work of Immanuel Kant, Isaac Newton, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, Denis Diderot and others. The philosophers of the Enlightenment thought that all Nature's laws and phenomena could be understood and explained by reason. The proponents of the Enlightenment emphasised the ideals of liberty,

justice and equality as the natural rights of man.

The term 'Enlightenment', was rooted in an intellectual scepticism to traditional beliefs and dogmas. It aimed to be an opposition to the supposed dark and superstitious character of the Middle Ages. The Enlightenment emphasised the power and goodness of human rationality. The characteristic doctrines of the Enlightenment include:

1. Reason is the most significant and positive capacity of man.
2. Reason enables one to break free from irrationality and ignorance.
3. Through philosophical and scientific progress, reason can lead humanity as a whole to a state of earthly perfection.
4. Reason makes all humans equal and, therefore, every human being should enjoy equal liberty and treatment before the law.
5. Beliefs of any sort should be accepted only on the basis of reason, and not on traditional or priestly authority.

The Neoclassical period

The literature of the English Enlightenment is often referred to as the Neoclassical Period. The literature of that time is characterised by reason, scepticism, wit and refinement. The Neoclassical Period also marks the first great age of English literary criticism. Neoclassicism emphasised adherence to virtues thought to be characteristic of classical literature, such as simplicity, elegance, order and proportion, and respect for classical writers (especially Roman writers) and 'natural geniuses', such as Homer or Shakespeare. Neoclassic literature was written in England between the last quarter of the 17th century and the end of the 18th century. The Neoclassical Period overlaps three shorter periods: the Restoration, the Augustan Age and the Age of Sensibility.

The Augustan Age

The Augustan Age derives its name from the literary period of Virgil and Ovid under the Roman emperor Augustus (27 BC - AD 14). It is also called the Age of Pope. In English literature this age refers to works written between 1700 and 1745. Literature of that age is characterised by elegance and clarity. The most eminent writers of the Augustan Age include Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith, Jonathan Swift as well as Joseph Addison (1612-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729), who conducted two important early periodicals, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) followed John Dryden in poetry. He wrote both serious and comic epic poetry. In the 18th century epic poetry began to decline and Pope was perhaps one of the last significant authors of epic poetry. He was the most important representative of English neoclassical poetry. Although he was troubled all his life by tuberculosis of the spine and chronic headaches, he had a very creative talent. In his poetry Pope imitated ancient authors but he described the manners of the contemporary upper classes and the urban way of life. He used many sophisticated devices such as parallelism, balance and antithesis. Their purpose was to represent the world as an ordered structure. Pope's most ambitious work is the *Essay on Man* (1732-1734), written in heroic couplet, in which he summarised his opinions on the human condition. His famous motto is 'The proper study of mankind is man'. His earlier work is the *Essay on Criticism* (1711), a didactic poem on the nature of artistic creation and criticism. Pope's best-known mock-heroic poem is "The Rape of the Lock" (1712-14), in which the poet deals with a light subject of stealing some hair from a young lady's head. It is an excellent mock-heroic poem full of witty observations which combines the trivial with the serious; yet it marks the end of the popularity of epic poetry, which was gradually replaced by the novel.

Pope also wrote *The Dunciad* (1728), a satiric epic which criticised social vices, and translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Although Pope was a classicist, his poetry reveals some traces of romantic feeling. After Pope's death epic poetry declined.

The Age of Sensibility emphasised the importance of feelings in human life. Another name for this period is the *Age of Johnson* because one of the most eminent literary figures

of that time was Dr Samuel Johnson. This period also produced some of the early novels, including Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and *Clarissa* (1748), and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749).

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was a poet, essayist, critic, journalist and lexicographer. He is regarded as one of the outstanding figures of the 18th century. Johnson's life and literary reputation were vividly presented by **James Boswell** (1740-1795) in the biography, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). Johnson's major work was *A Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1755, after nine years of hard work. It contained the definitions of over 40,000 words, illustrating them with about 114,000 quotations drawn from every field of learning. In addition to his *Dictionary*, Johnson wrote a didactic romance *Rasselas* (1759). He also published numerous essays, political articles and biographies.

Prose

The 18th century is remembered for the development of a new literary genre, the novel, though its beginnings go back to the 17th century. The pioneers of the novel as a literary genre were Aphra Behn, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne and Tobias Smollett.

Aphra Behn (1640-1689) was one of the first professional female writers. She wrote poetry, dramas and in 1688 she published a short novel *Oroonoko* concerning the love of an enslaved African prince in South America. Behn's other fiction includes an epistolary novel *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684–87) and *The Fair Jilt* (1688).

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) is most famous for *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), a narrative based on the true account of a sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who spent some time on an uninhabited island in the Pacific. *Robinson Crusoe* enjoyed enormous success after its publication. Crusoe's enterprising behaviour was seen as the expression of a belief in middle-class mercantilist mentality. Crusoe symbolised the new man, a proto industrialist, committed to creating his own well-being with his own hands. *Robinson Crusoe* has been regarded by many critics as an archetypal Puritan novel which combined a Puritan faith in Providence with the Protestant work ethic. *Robinson Crusoe* launched the English novel on its realist course. In 2003, the *Guardian* placed *Robinson Crusoe* among 100 greatest novels of all time.⁶²

Robinson Crusoe, the narrator of the story, tells that he was born in 1632 in the city of York, England. His father, a merchant of German descent, whose name "Kreutznaer" was changed to Crusoe due to corruption of language, married an English woman called Robinson. He always wanted to spend his life on the boat discovering new lands, but his father advised him to study law. When Robinson was nineteen, he joined a friend on a ship bound for London, without consulting either his father or mother. When a storm causes the near deaths of Crusoe and his friend, the friend is dissuaded from sea travel, but Robinson still goes on to set himself up as merchant on a ship leaving London. This trip is financially successful, and he plans another, leaving his early profits in the care of a friendly widow. The second voyage is not as fortunate as the previous one: the ship is seized by Moorish pirates, and Crusoe is enslaved to in the North African town of Sallee. While on a fishing expedition, he and a slave boy break free and sail down the African coast. A kindly Portuguese captain picks them up, buys the slave boy from Crusoe, and takes Crusoe to Brazil. In Brazil, Crusoe establishes himself as a tobacco and sugar plantation owner and soon becomes successful. Eager for slave labour and its economic advantages, he embarks on a slave-gathering expedition to West Africa but ends up shipwrecked as the only survivor on a desert island near the coast of Trinidad. He builds three main structures on the island: his initial shelter, his country home on the opposite side of the island, and a fort in the woods. He spends his time planting corn,

⁶² See: www.theguardian.com/books/2003/oct/12/features.fiction (May 2016).

barley and rice. He builds furniture, weaves baskets, and makes pots. Crusoe also raises goats and tends to his little animal family of cats, dogs and a parrot. Most importantly, though, Crusoe becomes stronger in his religious faith, eventually submitting to the authority of God. He devotes himself to much religious reflection and prayer. One day Crusoe sees a footprint on the shore and learns that he's actually not alone on the island. There are also cannibals. Crusoe struggles with the question of whether or not he should take revenge on them. Eventually, he meets with Friday, a native man whom he is able to rescue from the cannibals. Crusoe teaches Friday English and converts him to Christianity. The two become like master and slave. Friday and Crusoe also rescue a Spaniard and Friday's father from a different group of cannibals. Eventually, an English longboat full of sailors lands on the island. Crusoe learns that the men have mutinied against their captain. After Crusoe helps restore order to the ship, the men and captain pledge allegiance to Crusoe and agree to take him home. Crusoe then returns to Europe with Friday, where he comes into a great deal of money from his sugar plantation in Brazil. He gets married and eventually revisits the island in his late years. The novel ends with promise of more adventures for him in the sequel.

Defoe's other major works include *Captain Singleton*, *Roxana*, *Moll Flanders*, *The History of Colonel Jack*, and *The Journal of the Plague Year*.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was one of the greatest English satirists. His fiction deals with human follies and vices. In 1697 he wrote *The Battle of Books*, which was published in 1704 with *A Tale of the Tub*, a violent attack on current religious sects and on learning. In 1713 he began to write his intimate *Journal to Stella* (Esther Johnson), who was the illegitimate daughter of Sir William Temple (Swift's former patron). In 1726, Swift published *Gulliver's Travels*, his best work full of deceptive irony and pessimism. The book was published anonymously as an account of the adventures of Lemuel Gulliver. On one plane the book is a violent attack on the political parties, pointless religious controversies, new scientific institutions, rationalism (the Royal Society); on another plane it is a satire on mankind in general.

The plot of *Gulliver's Travels* concerns an imaginary journey of Lemuel Gulliver who was shipwrecked somewhere in the South Pacific. He is found lying asleep on the shore by Lilliputians who are only six inches tall. After he wakes up he can see that he is a prisoner of the small people. They transport him with great difficulty and care to the capital where he is housed in a deserted temple. Gulliver gradually wins their favours and makes observations of their customs and behaviour which he narrates to the reader. On the level of political satire, Lilliputians represent the Whigs, whom Swift detested. On his second voyage he finds himself in the country of giants (Brobdingnag), twelve times as tall as he is, so now Gulliver - in turn - is a Lilliputian. He can see people from a different perspective. In Book III Gulliver visits Laputa, a flying island, inhabited by musicians, mathematicians and philosophers who have literally their heads in the clouds. Swift ridicules scientific investigation, which he distrusted. Book IV describes Gulliver's last visit, this time to the country of Houyhnhnms, a race of coldly rational horse-like creatures and filthy brutes called the Yahoos, who look like humans. In this part Swift gave an utmost expression to his pessimism about mankind. He also ridiculed the follies of British society and its institutions. The main theme of *Gulliver's Travels* is the question, 'What is it to be human?'

In 1729, Swift wrote anonymously *A Modest Proposal*, a savage political pamphlet in which the author calmly offers a solution to the problem of overpopulation and the growing number of the undernourished in Ireland. He suggests that the poor should fatten their children to feed the rich!

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) is regarded as the originator of the English novel. He exerted an enormous influence on the future development of this genre. He was born in Derbyshire as the son of a joiner. In 1706, he was apprenticed to a printer and in 1721 he established his own printing business. He was employed as an official printer to

the House of Commons. In 1733, Richardson wrote *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum* which offered advice on morals and conduct. After the success of that publication he began to write fiction. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) is a novel in the form of letters written by a virtuous young servant girl, who resists her amorous master until he proposes to marry her. Though very popular with readers, *Pamela* was also the object of ridicule. Henry Fielding wrote a parody of *Pamela* entitled *Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews*.

Richardson's next novel, *Clarissa*, published in eight volumes in 1747-1748, is also written in the form of letters. Clarissa, a young lady is wooed by an unscrupulous man of fashion, Mr Lovelace, who finally elopes with her. She resists his advances but he drugs and rapes her. Eventually, she dies of shock. Richardson's novels deal realistically with the life of the middle-classes and the aristocracy.

Henry Fielding (1707-1754), perhaps more talented and educated than Richardson, contributed significantly to the development of the English novel. His greatest work *Tom Jones* (1749) is a panoramic novel, with interpolated narrative (a story within a story) in which the author presents his ethical and social views in a complex plot. The characters have distinct individual traits.

Mr Allworthy, a rich and benevolent country gentleman, finds a baby in his bed one night. He decides to raise the child together with Blifil, his nephew and heir. The mean-spirited Blifil is contrasted with the good-hearted Tom, who after a number of adventures and misfortunes, is finally recognised as the son of Mr Allworthy's sister Bridget, and as such he is Mr Allworthy's proper heir. Tom Jones is realistically portrayed; he has a noble heart although he is often in circumstances which put doubt to it.

The novel contains many comic situations based on mistaken identity and misunderstandings. The friendly, witty and omniscient narrator calls the novel a 'comic epic in prose'. He compares his narrative to a feast and the opening of chapters of each book to a menu. Fielding compares the narrator to God and the novel to God's world.

Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768) was the third 18th-century English novelist who exerted a great influence on the development of the genre. Born in Ireland and educated at Cambridge, Sterne entered the Anglican church but he was more interested in literature than religion. His best known work published in nine volumes, *Tristram Shandy* (1761-1767), presents a comical conflict between school wisdom and common sense. Tristram's father, Uncle Toby and his servant Corporal Trim are among the most likeable characters in English fiction.

Tristram Shandy is not a regular novel but rather a parody of a novel. The book consists of amusing character sketches, blank pages, dramatic action, unfinished chapters and various digressions. The intrusive first-person narrator (Tristram) constantly provides witty, satiric, sentimental and sometimes obscene comments.

In *Tristram Shandy* Sterne enlarged the scope of the novel from the mere chronological account of external incidents to the depiction of a complex of internal impressions, thoughts, and feelings. *Tristram Shandy* is a remote antecedent of postmodernist fiction.

As a result of his travels to the Continent (1762-1766) Sterne wrote, but left unfinished, *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), which marks the transition from the Age of Reason to the Age of Sensibility. This novel without plot recounts various adventures of the narrator, the amiable Reverend Mr. Yorick, who travels through France and Italy.

Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) was an Anglo-Scottish writer who wrote novels in the picaresque tradition. *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) is an account of British naval life. *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) is a comic representation of 18th century European society. *The Expedition Humphrey Clinker* (1771) is an epistolary novel

about the adventures of a family travelling through Britain. Smollett's novels reflect in a realistic and satirical way aspects of contemporary life.

Oliver Goldsmith (?1730-1774) was a prolific Anglo-Irish writer. *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), a sentimental novel and a pastoral poem "The Deserted Village" (1770) as well as a comedy *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) are his most popular literary achievements.

The Vicar of Wakefield is narrated in the first person by Reverend Charles Primrose, a benevolent Anglican priest, who goes bankrupt, loses his parish house at Wakefield and spends some time in a debtor's prison. The novel gives a portrait of idyllic rural life supplemented by sentimental moralising and melodramatic incidents.

The Gothic novel

In the late 18th century a new type of fiction appeared, known as the Gothic novel. The plot of Gothic novels was based on three main motifs: (1) revenge, (2) the demonic villain and (3) the persecuted virgin. They demonstrate a fascination with the supernatural, the macabre, and the horrific, and were usually set in medieval castles or ruins.

Horace Walpole (1717-1797) wrote a curious Gothic romance, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) which inaugurated this new genre of mystery and horror and was continued in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by **Ann Radcliffe** (1764-1823).

The Mysteries of Udolpho is set in 1584 in southern France and northern Italy. The novel recounts the plight of Emily, a young French orphan girl who is entrapped in the castle Udolpho in Tuscany at the hands of Signor Montoni, an Italian brigand. The novel has a thrilling plot which evokes a thick atmosphere of fear.

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818) wrote one of the most notorious Gothic novels, *The Monk* (1796).

Ambrosio, the superior of the Capuchins of Madrid, has a secret relationship with a beautiful girl, Matilda, who comes into the monastery disguised as a novice. Soon the reader learns that Matilda is a wanton sent by the devil to deprave the monk. Thanks to Matilda's knowledge of black magic, Ambrosio attracts and rapes a young virgin, Antonia. Eventually, he kills her in order to hide his sin. His crime is soon discovered and he is cruelly tried by the Inquisition and sentenced to death. However, he makes a pact with Satan who rescues him from burning at the stake, but eventually Ambrosio's soul goes to hell.

Gothic novels influenced some Romantic poets, Mary Shelley, who wrote a famous horror novel, *Frankenstein*, the Brontë sisters, and Edgar Allan Poe.

Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus (1818) by **Mary Shelley** (1797-1851) reveals a fascination with the ambivalence of human nature. It deals with the favourite Gothic motif of split personality.

Dr Frankenstein, a student of natural philosophy, discovers the secret of giving life to inanimate matter. He creates a humanlike monster endowed with supernatural strength and size and imbues it with life. As the creature rises, Frankenstein sees how monstrous his creation is, and escapes in terror. The monster, rejected by his creator, prepares a terrible vengeance for him. This novel inspired many film versions.

The subtitle of the novel, *The Modern Prometheus*, is symbolic. Mary Shelley associates the modern Prometheus⁶³ with the Industrial Revolution in England and its negative effects on the people of this time.

⁶³ In Greek mythology, Prometheus is a champion of humankind who stole fire from Olympus and gave it to mortals. Zeus then punished him for his crime by chaining him to a rock while a great eagle ate his liver every day only to have it grow back to be eaten again each night.

Drama

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) was the most talented playwright of the late 18th century. He wrote brilliant comedies of manners, such as *The Rivals* (1775) and *The School for Scandal* (1777), which gently criticise the society of his time. For many years Sheridan was the owner of the famous London theatre, Drury Lane. *The School for Scandal* exposes the atmosphere of gossip and slander among aristocratic Londoners of the 1770s. It shows that appearances can be deceiving, and they often mislead people.

Poetry

In the later 18th century the subject matter of poetry underwent a significant change. English Romantic poetry was preceded by the emergence of poets who had a particular interest in nature and past. They showed the joys of simple and rural life. James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1726-30), Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (1742-45), Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1751) James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry (1762) and Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village" (1770), an idyllic pastoral, were the most outstanding examples of poetry. It described, among others, the beauty of woods, fields, birds and the sky.

Thomas Gray (1716-1771) represented the transition from classical to romantic sensibility. His poetry reveals the romantic spirit because he abandoned the strict patterns and conventions of classical poetry in favour of freer verse forms and the consideration of nature and common life. Gray wrote reflective poetry of which "The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" is the most famous. Gray also translated Celtic and Icelandic poetry.

James Macpherson (1736-96) was born in Badenoch, a district of the Highlands in Scotland. As a boy he saw the collapse of the Highland revolt in 1745. He worked as a schoolmaster for some time and then became active in politics. He published *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* (1760), *Fingal* (1762), *Temora* (1763) as the 'Gaelic texts' ascribed to an authentic Irish hero, Oisín. These 'Ossianic' fragments were received with enthusiastic interest although sceptics soon doubted the authenticity of the poems. The poems were not original translations. They were a blend of fragments from old Scottish and Irish poetry, adapted for the tastes of 18th century readers. Macpherson's 'Ossianic poetry' strongly influenced the emergence of Romantic poetry, especially in Germany.

Robert Burns (1759-1796) is regarded as the national poet of Scotland. In his youth his mother taught him old Scottish songs and ballads. In his poetry Burns expressed the warm human emotions of love, friendship, patriotism and individual freedom. In 1786 he published his first volume of verse entitled *Poems: Chiefly in Scottish Dialect* which became an immediate success. Burns toured Scotland and northern England collecting folk ballads and songs.

Characteristic features of the period

1. Growth of secularised views, scepticism, rationalism, deism (a rationalistic natural religion); philosophical and rational spirit free from superstitions; faith in religious tolerance.
2. A decline in the reputation of epic poetry and drama.
3. The growth of journalism (*The Tatler*, *The Spectator*).
4. The rise of the novel as a new literary genre (Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as an archetypal Puritan novel of rising capitalism; Robinson - proto-industrialist; Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* - a satire of human follies and vices; Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*: a panoramic novel with a complex plot, **Bildungsroman** presenting ethical and social views; Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey* anticipated the development of the 20th century experimental novel).
5. Towards the end of the period, the rise of interest in the gothic and sublime.

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. Describe the origins and diversity of the English novel of the 18th century.
2. Discuss Daniel Defoe's contribution to the development of the English novel.
3. Discuss irony and grotesque in *Gulliver's Travels*.
4. Discuss the achievement of Alexander Pope.
5. Characterise the 18th century as the Age of Irony (Pope, Swift, Fielding).
6. Discuss Tom Jones and Pamela as two different approaches to novel writing.
7. Characterise the features of the gothic novel.
8. Discuss Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* as a gothic novel.

6.5. Nineteenth century literature

The history of nineteenth century British literature is usually divided into two periods which are labelled the Romantic Age and the Victorian Age.

6.5.1 The Romantic Age (1798–1832)

The early 19th century was dominated by the upsurge of Romanticism. The Romantic Period began in the late 18th century and lasted until approximately 1830. In general, Romanticism was a reaction against the rational logic of Neoclassicism. It emphasised imagination, emotion, intuition, individualism, revolutionism, spontaneity as well as mystery, return to nature and interest in folk motifs.

The most characteristic features of Romantic sensibility are nostalgia for the idealised past (especially the medieval, the cultivation of religious sentiment free from organised religion, love of nature and admiration of rural and simple life. Romantic poets looked to direct contact with nature for inspiration. They glorified and even made a religion of nature. Romanticism stressed the innate goodness of human beings and the evil of institutions that restrain creativity.

The Romantic breakthrough is best manifested in poetry. English Romanticism is represented by William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (the first generation of poets), and Percy Bysshe Shelley, George Byron and John Keats (the second generation).

In 1798, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published *The Lyrical Ballads*, the most important work in English poetry after Milton, in which they rejected the urban world for simple rural life. The Preface to the second edition (1800) is regarded as the most important manifesto of the English romantic movement. Wordsworth regarded poetry as the 'spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings which takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity'.

William Wordsworth (1771-1855) is one of the most renowned and influential English poets. He was born in 1770, in Cockermouth, Cumbria. He was educated at St John's College, Cambridge University. As a youth he developed a love of nature and became an enthusiast of the ideals of the French Revolution (1789-1799). In 1797 Wordsworth and his sister, Dorothy moved to Alfoxden, Somerset, near Samuel Taylor Coleridge's home in Nether Stowey. Wordsworth idealised humble and rustic life and described the nature of poetic pleasure and the relation of poetry to prose. Wordsworth "brought to English literature a new concept of Nature, initiated an introspective trend in poetry which was to develop on a large scale in the 20th century, changed the views of poetic subjects and poetic diction, creating a new language of poetry out of ordinary

language and showed that every, even most trivial incident can be made poetical".⁶⁴ Wordsworth's poetry is a record of his feelings, a personal search for the moments of insight.

Wordsworth's poetical works were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially by the sights of the Lake Country District, in which he spent most of his mature life. Among his best-known poems are "Lucy" poems ("She dwelt among the untrodden ways"), "The Solitary Reaper", "The Daffodils", "Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections from Early Childhood", "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and others.

In the poem known as "Daffodils", which begins: "I wandered lonely as a cloud", the poet gives an account of a walk in the countryside. He uses simple language in a complex poem, whose theme is the role of man in nature (onlooker) and the loneliness of man, which is eventually shown as pleasurable. Wordsworth employs the technique of the 'inward eye' (imagination) and recollection in tranquillity.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who also studied at Cambridge, and later became a friend of Wordsworth, brought into English poetry a sense of mystery and wonder. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", included in *The Lyrical Ballads*, is an imitation of a medieval ballad, which contains a protest against cruelty to any of God's creatures. The curse is cast upon the Mariner because he shot an albatross that had been the companion of the crew of the unlucky ship. The Mariner is then compelled to suffer an utmost isolation. The poem narrates what happens to one individual who fails to recognise and appreciate the spiritual presence in nature. "The Rime" contains many symbols, e.g. the lack of water symbolises the dryness of spirit; the calm, unmoving ship stands for the aimless soul of a sinful man who awaits eventual redemption.

"Kubla Khan", written around 1797-8, is an example of the 'supernatural' poem. It describes a dream vision which reveals the poet's subconscious, mystical flight of imagination. Coleridge's influence on poetry and literary criticism was undisputed. In 1817, he finished his major prose work, *The Biographia Literaria*, a volume composed of notes and dissertations on various subjects, including literary theory and criticism.

Apart from those poets stood **William Blake** (1757-1827), who was called the 'most spirited of artists'. He was not only a poet but also a master engraver and painter. Blake's sketches and poems reflected his mystical faith and his visions of a heavenly world. He attempted to represent eternity through earthly symbols. Blake challenged the philosophical premises which underlie Western civilisation, particularly materialist attitudes.

Blake's poetry is concerned with spiritual themes. It is predominantly dialogic, i.e. it makes use of several 'voices' in one poem. Therefore, it is not always possible to read a particular poem as an expression of the author's views. The essence of Blake's poetry is expressed in the following lines taken from *Auguries of Innocence*:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

Contrary to rationalists (e.g. Isaac Newton), Blake saw nature as an organic whole. He adopted from Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1722) the idea of 'Divine Humanity', i.e. humanity which is a manifestation of God. Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* contain the most beautiful lyrics in the English language. In them Blake examined two aspects of life; he thought that innocence and experience are both part of God's plan. Blake emphasised the importance of a spiritual world and the presence of the

⁶⁴ Wanda Krajewska, *English Poetry of the Nineteenth Century* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1980) 30.

divine in man.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), together with Byron and Keats, belongs to the second generation of English Romantics. When Shelley was 18, he began his studies at University College, Oxford. There he wrote anonymously a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism* and sent copies of this publication to university professors and bishops. Soon the young atheist was treated as a criminal and expelled after only six months of residence. Shelley brought to English poetry a passion for freedom. His best works include *Queen Mab*, *Prometheus Unbound* (the triumphant vision of a utopian future), and *Epipsychidion* (a hymn to abstract beauty and spiritual love). His shorter poems are “Ozymandias” (a sonnet), “Ode to the West Wind”, “To a Skylark”, and “The Masque of Anarchy”, a poem of poetical protest. Shelley was a rebel and revolutionary. He rebelled against all forms of tyranny (to which he included family, marriage and the Church). He was also a great individualist and idealist. He believed that poets could reform the world. “Poets - wrote Shelley – ‘are unacknowledged legislators of the world’.

George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) was a fascinatingly contradictory poet. His father, the notorious gambler ‘Mad Jack’ Byron, scandalised the public by eloping with the wife of a peer. Their daughter, Augusta, played an ambiguous role in the poet’s adult years. After his father’s death in 1791, mother and son moved to their ancestral home, Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire. Byron attended Harrow and began his literary career as a student at Cambridge, where he won a reputation for debauchery (once he kept a bear in his rooms). In 1807, he published his first collection of poems, *Hours of Idleness* and in the same year became a member of the House of Lords. Byron exerted a great influence on the Romantic movement in many European countries including Poland. The adjective ‘Byronic’ has come to denote poetry which combines extreme romanticism with moodiness and cynicism.

The publication of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* (1812-1818) brought Byron enormous fame. The poem prompted many younger poets to write personal and self-dramatising poetry. The suffering wanderer of Cantos I and II and the exile of Cantos III and IV reflect Byron’s views of himself as a young man. Byron’s other longer works include: *The Corsair*, *Lara*, *Giaour*, *Manfred*, *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.

Don Juan (1819-1824) is an unfinished long comic epic poem written in the form of a picaresque verse tale in ottava rima. Its main character is Don Juan, a legendary figure of Spanish origin whose amorous adventures have been the subject of numerous literary and musical works, e.g. Pierre Corneille, Moliere, and composers such as Christoph Willibald Gluck and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Don Juan’s only occupation was to woo and seduce women. Contrary to Mozart’s opera *Don Giovanni*, Byron’s Don Juan is not an immoral man who ruthlessly captivates the hearts of ladies but he is shown as a young naive and very handsome man who cannot resist advances of women. There are many poet’s digressions in *Don Juan*. They refer to politics, relations between the sexes, friendship, truth and hypocrisy, social follies and other poets (Byron disliked Wordsworth and Coleridge).

Byron’s poetry appealed first of all to women, some of whom pursued him all his short life. “She Walks In Beauty” is one of Byron’s most famous short lyric poems. It was created in one night in June, 1814, shortly after Byron had seen for the first time his cousin Lady Wilmot Horton at a party. The poem is divided into three stanzas of six lines each. Lack of a traditional metre with accented and unaccented syllables reflects Byron’s idea of unrestrained Romantic freedom. The subject matter of the poem is the natural beauty and purity of a young woman. Byron had the reputation of a womaniser and revolutionary. After his death, Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s refused him funeral services because his reputation was so scandalous.

John Keats (1795-1821), born in London, the son of a stable keeper, was apprenticed to a surgeon and became a licensed apothecary in 1816. However, his literary

interests prompted him to write poetry. The main theme of Keats' poetry is the incompatibility between the everyday world and timeless art. The everyday world is cruel and lacks love and joy, whereas art offers everlasting joy and happiness.

Keats was fascinated by the culture of ancient Greece. In his famous 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', which shows the permanence of art, he represents lyrically the painted figures which remain unchanged with human beings who have to die. 'The Ode to a Nightingale' is dedicated to a nightingale's song. A nightingale sings and soothes the listener. Its song is like Lethe, the mythical river of oblivion.

Keats's narrative poems include *Endymion* and *Hyperion*. *Endymion* (1818) is a long poem which resembles in style and structure Greek legends and myths. Its theme is the search for an ideal love and happiness. *Hyperion* (1820) tells of the downfall of the old gods and the rise of the new gods. 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', which is a Romantic ballad, deals with the relationship between emotions and reality, the impermanence of human love and the search for an elusive beauty. Keats died of tuberculosis at the age of 25.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The Romantic upheaval in literature: return to feeling and imagination (the power of poetic imagination); sublimation of instinct; the supernatural and folk tradition; imagination was praised over reason, emotion over logic, intuition over science; dissatisfaction with organised society.
2. Rejection of a regular metre, strict forms and other classical conventions in poetry.
3. The poetry of William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge marks the beginning of the Romantic Period in English literature. *Lyrical Ballads*, as the manifesto of Romanticism, is a strong reaction to the rationalism and neoclassicism of the preceding period. Wordsworth was the poet of Nature, and Coleridge was a poet of the supernatural and an influential critic.
4. Blake's rejection of civilisation and glorification of nature and the child.
5. Shelley as a Romantic rebel and idealist.
6. George Gordon Byron as a lyricist and satirist.
7. Medievalism and Hellenism in the poetry of John Keats.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Discuss the similarities and differences between the first and second generations of the English Romantic poets.
2. Discuss the main themes of William Blake's poems, 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger'.
3. Explain William Wordsworth's poetic credo that poetry is "emotion recollected in tranquillity."
4. Discuss William Wordsworth's poem "Daffodils."
5. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" is written in seven parts. Write a brief plot summary of each part. Discuss the theme and form of the poem and describe the gothic elements in it. The Ancient Mariner's punishment, of course, is not completely over. What penance does he have to pay for the rest of his life?
6. Discuss the power of dream in Coleridge's poem 'Kubla Khan'.
7. Referring to specific examples, explain how Blake's ideas of 'innocence' and 'experience' become reflected in his poetry.
8. Define the 'Byronic hero' and demonstrate his features by referring to a chosen Byron's poem.
9. Discuss the major motifs in Percy Bysshe Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'.
10. Explain the role of nature and art in John Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale' and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn'.

6.5.2. The development of the novel in the early 19th century. The Pre-Victorian Period

Walter Scott (1771-1832), who is both a Scottish and English writer, began as a Romantic poet. He wrote verse romances inspired by Scottish legends. His early poem “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” (1805) made him famous and an important representative of Romanticism. However, Scott soon gave up writing poetry because he understood that he was inferior to the emerging poets from the second generation, especially Byron. Then he decided to write historical romances in prose and he became the first literary giant of the 19th century.

Scott paved the way for the next generation of novelists such as Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope. His fiction is based on historical background but is not realistic. Today Scott’s popularity as a novelist has declined, but such classic historical romances as *Ivanhoe* and *Waverley* are still widely read. Scott’s historical romances evoked the past of the Scottish nation as a source of value and meaning.

The 19th century was marked by an unprecedented development of the novel. The most prominent novelists of that time are Jane Austen, Emily and Charlotte Brontë, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

Jane Austen (1775-1817) lived in a transitional period between the Neoclassical and Romantic era. She was the first important woman novelist in pre-Victorian England. Although her novels were quite popular during her lifetime, she was not generally considered to be a great novelist until the late 19th century. Contemporary critics undermined her literary achievement because her novels lacked simple didacticism and excessive idealisation of characters, which was in vogue then. However, many readers admitted that her novels were ‘true to life’. With Jane Austen, the English novel takes on its modern character. It depicts everyday life situations in a realistic way. Jane Austen created the comedy-of-manners novels which revealed the unremarkable lives of common landed gentry of her time.

The author was born as the second daughter in a family of eight children at the village of Steventon in Hampshire, where her father was Vicar, and led an uneventful and ordinary life in the countryside. Jane Austen’s family circle and the close neighbourhood were a good inspiration for her novels. Jane Austen belonged to the same generation as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Walter Scott, but Romanticism had little impact on her fiction.

Her novels, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1818) and *Persuasion* (1818) show the lives of minor landed gentry. The author never mentions current historic events but in a masterly fashion depicts characters and human situations. She finds inspiration solely in her family life and in the lives of her closest relations. There is little action in her plots but her dialogue is witty and natural. In her novels Austen described everyday life of provincial society. She perceives the world as a play of contradictions, animosities, and petty intrigues. Austen’s ethics is based on the values of good conduct, good manners, and reason. She regards marriage as an important social institution. Her characters, who are average country society people, are shown with both affection and slight ironical humour. Austen is never totally critical of her characters; she only shows some of their drawbacks and weaknesses. She tries to be objective in her assessment. Her heroines undergo serious moral changes.

Sense and Sensibility was the first novel Jane Austen published, although it was not the first novel she wrote. The first draft of *Sense and Sensibility*, entitled *Elinor and Marianne*, was a novel written in the form of letters.

The novel depicts the fates of two impoverished sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, who after the loss of their father, are left in strained circumstances because the estate they lived on passes to their father's stepson, John Dashwood, a selfish individual. The three daughters and mother retire to a cottage in Devonshire. However, prior to their departure to the new home, Elinor and Edward Ferrers, the brother of Mrs John Dashwood, are mutually attracted. The title heroines, Elinor and Marianne represent the two contrasting features of their characters: sense and sensibility, respectively. Marianne is open and enthusiastic to the people she meets. In her new place she falls in love with the attractive John Willoughby, who pretends to be a romantic lover, but in fact he is a fortune hunter. Finally, he deserts her in order to marry a rich heiress. Meanwhile Elinor learns that Edward Ferrers and Lucy Steele, a sly and unromantic young woman, have been secretly engaged. However, Edward's younger brother, Robert, falls in love with Lucy and she decides to marry him because of his wealth. Thanks to it Edward can now propose to Elinor and is accepted. Finally, Marianne accepts the proposal of the unromantic Colonel Brandon, a family friend, who is 20 years older, but he has been truly in love with her for a long time.

Like all of Austen's stories, *Sense and Sensibility* is concerned with young women's search for love in an era of strict codes of etiquette and decorum.

Pride and Prejudice is perhaps Jane Austen's greatest novel, and it became immediately popular after its publication. The plot concerns the fortunes of five Bennet daughters.

At the beginning of the novel Mrs Bennet encourages her daughters to find rich and respectable husbands. In the meantime, a wealthy and handsome man moves close to Netherfield, where the Bennets live. Jane soon falls in love with that man, whose name is Mr Charles Bingley. Mr Bingley has a friend, Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy, who eventually falls in love with Elizabeth, although he finds the family strange. When he proposes to Elizabeth, she turns him down, although she begins to have feelings for him. Lydia, the youngest daughter, elopes with a man named Mr Wickham. While Jane and Bingley are getting acquainted, his younger sister Caroline tries to break them apart. However, her plan fails and they get married.

The title of the novel refers, amongst others, to the ways in which Elizabeth and Darcy, the main characters, initially view each other with prejudice which later is transformed into mutual attraction and love. The highly-spirited Elizabeth was Jane Austen's favourite character. *Pride and Prejudice* as a novel of manners reflects many ways of life of contemporary society. It is also a moving story about the search for happiness.

In Jane Austen's time novels had a low reputation; they were read mostly for entertainment by the reading public, mostly women. Austen's novels differed from the typical literary production of the time – they did not teach a moral.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Read *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility* and discuss its plot, settings, characters and some of the themes. What are the characteristic features of the novel of manners?
2. In *Pride and Prejudice* are two basic themes: pride and prejudice. Who represents pride and who represents prejudice in the novel?
3. Discuss plot, point of view, character, setting, style, and genre in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.
4. Is Jane Austen a Romantic or an Augustan writer? Argue, using specific examples from one of her novels.
5. A young woman's journey to self-discovery in Jane Austen's novels.
6. The literary achievement of Walter Scott.

6.5.3. The Victorian Age

The Victorian Age or 'Victorianism' refers to the time in British history which roughly corresponds to the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), although its beginning is usually marked by 1832, the year of the First Reform Bill. It is characterised by the Industrial Revolution, development of democracy, ferment of social ideas and scientific discoveries (including the impact of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution on philosophy and religion), pressures toward political and social reform, utilitarianism in social thought, optimism and belief in progress. Literature was commonly regarded as a form of entertainment and moral education. The novel was the dominant literary form. It had multiple plots and often episodic structure; the narrator was often omniscient. The Victorian Period is usually subdivided into the High (or Early and Mid Victorian) and Late Victorian Period.

Some of the most recognised authors of the Victorian Period include the poets Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold; and the novelists Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

Prose

The life of **Charles Dickens** (1812-1870) is an exemplification of success based on the Victorian idea of self-reliance. Dickens had a hard childhood because his father, a clerk in the Navy Office, ran into financial difficulties which led to his imprisonment for debt. When Charles was 12, he had to work in a factory. It was an experience which he remembered all his life. Then he became an office boy in a firm of attorneys. He read the works of Smollett, Fielding and Cervantes. In 1833, he became a Parliamentary reporter for the Liberal *Morning Chronicle*. He also wrote sketches of town and country life for a number of journals. Many of them were published in his first book, *Sketches by Boz* (1836-1837). In 1836, he also began to publish in monthly instalments *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*, better known as *The Pickwick Papers*, his greatest achievement, offering a panoramic view of 19th century England.

The loosely constructed novel relates the travels to Ipswich, Rochester, Bath and other places of Mr Pickwick and his three fellow members of the Pickwick Club, Tracy Tupman, Augustus Snodgrass and Nathaniel Winkle. Other characters in the novel include Sam Weller - Mr Pickwick's sharp-witted Cockney servant; Mr Jingle, and Mrs Bardell, who are among the most entertaining and memorable creations in English fiction. Mr Pickwick falls victim to his innocent and trusting nature. He is wrongly imprisoned for debt in the Fleet prison in London and has a number of tragicomic adventures, the longest of them being sued by his landlady, Mrs Bardell, for an alleged breach of a promise to marry her.

In 1837-1838, Dickens published *Oliver Twist*, a critique of the Poor Law, and in 1838-1839 *Nicholas Nickleby*, which revealed the vices of old-fashioned private boarding schools. *Old Curiosity Shop*, published in 1841, is a typical example of Dickens's sentimentality.

Nell Trent, the pathetic protagonist, lives in the gloomy old curiosity shop kept by her insane and gambling-addicted grandfather. Her brother, Fred, has borrowed money from the dwarf, Daniel Quilp, and spends it on gambling. Quilp takes over the grandfather's shop. Grandfather and Nell run away and she dies of exhaustion. Her elderly grandfather refuses to admit that she is dead and he sits every day by her grave waiting for her to come back, until he dies himself grief-stricken.

The prolonged death of Little Nell exerted a tremendous impression on readers in Britain and America. The novel is regarded as the specimen of Dickens's sentimentality.

Barnaby Rudge (1841) is the first of Dickens's two historical novels. It shows the

demoralising effect of capital punishment. *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843) is a study of selfishness and hypocrisy. It describes the fate of a young English immigrant in America. *Dombey & Son* (1847-1848) shows the moral development of Mr Dombey, a rich London merchant, after the loss of his only son. The novel has a compact and dramatic structure.

David Copperfield (1849-1850) is perhaps the most typically 'Victorian' of all Dickens's novels; it is also an autobiographical novel. It reveals the Victorian way to success, showing a positive and optimistic view of the position of an individual human being in modern society. David's childhood and youth resemble that of Dickens. After a brief legal career, he becomes a novelist. *Bleak House* (1852) is a critique of chancery courts and the legal system. It shows the helplessness of the individual overwhelmed by the monstrous inhumanity of officials. In *Hard Times* (1854), Dickens showed the dehumanising aspects of the Industrial Revolution and ridiculed Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of Utilitarianism which claimed that "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong".⁶⁵ The exponent of Utilitarianism in the novel is Thomas Gradgrind, a citizen of the northern industrial city of Coketown, who believes only in facts and statistics, and on these principles he brings up his children, Louisa and Tom.

Great Expectations (1861) is a critique of the Victorian concept of gentleman, but it also examines the nature of man and his position with respect to irrational forces in life. Dickens shows that institutions may threaten the life of individuals and whole society.

The novel is narrated in the first person by Philip (Pip). It begins on the Kentish marshes, where orphaned Pip lives in the house of his harsh sister and her husband, a kindly blacksmith, Joe Gargery. Pip helps a starving convict, Abel Magwitch, who is soon captured and taken back to prison. When Pip receives a generous sum of money for his education, he leaves for London where he hopes to become a gentleman. However, the novel ends in disillusionment.

The main subject of Dickens's novels is Victorian society. He portrays the lower-middle-class as well as the poor and underprivileged. The characters in his novels, though rather two-dimensional, illustrate universal truths about the human race. Dickens's vision of life was rather simple: evil is a result of stupidity and lack of feeling, with intelligence and good-heartedness being the weapon to overcome them. In the 20th century, critics discovered that Dickens's fiction has a much more complicated message. Dickens had a particular concern with criminality and he laid bare the evil forces in human character. He viewed individual human beings as essentially weak and vulnerable, liable to be destroyed by adverse circumstances or their own vicious passions. Dickens stressed the importance of sentiment and affection (compassion) in human relationships. He believed that every man can learn to be happy by controlling his character and destiny.

The first period of Dickens's literary activity, which included *The Pickwick Papers*, is optimistic, i.e. crime is punished. Dickens follows the patterns of the novel of adventure of the 18th century. His characters are always static; they never change, only events and circumstances change. The second period presents the gloomy aspects of Victorian life with a gallery of eccentrics and psychopaths.

Dickens, like Shakespeare, had a unique gift for poetic language, which is manifested in his elaborate and often symbolic or parabolic plots. His prose, although it lacks the line breaks associated with poetry, maintains an extraordinarily poetic quality. The writer employed an astonishing range of poetic devices, such as fragmentation, compression, repetition, rhythm and even disguised blank verse, symbol, metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche. Dickens's power of writing springs not only from the acute social concerns he dealt with, but also from the ingenuity of his verse-like narration which is achieved by rhythm and rhyme cadence.

⁶⁵Quoted after Margaret Drabble and Jenny Stringer (eds.), *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 49.

Another important novelist of the Victorian era was **William Makepeace Thackeray** (1811-1863). Unlike Dickens, Thackeray drew his characters from the upper classes of society. Thackeray presented a social panorama of the English upper-middle class, criticising and satirising their heartlessness and pretentiousness. Vanity, according to Thackeray, is a prime motive of human behaviour. His best novel *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848) is a realistic study of early 19th century society. Sub-titled "A Novel without a Hero", it follows the destinies of two contrasted heroines, Becky Sharp and Amelia Sedley, during the period of Waterloo and later. The title of the novel comes from John Bunyan's allegorical fiction, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678).

Vanity Fair tells the story of two young women, Rebecca (Becky) Sharp, a poor orphan, and her foil Amelia Sedley, who comes from a well-to-do family. They leave Miss Pinkerton's academy to start their adult lives and try to accomplish different aims. Becky is determined to climb the social ladder at all cost. Amelia is the opposite of Becky. She is honest but naïve and shallow. Her blind devotion to the gambler George Osborne is hardly reciprocated. Captain Dobbin, the man who truly loves her, says at the end that he has wasted his life in pursuit of someone who is not worth his devotion.

Thackeray's other novels include: *Pendennis*, *The Newcomes*, and *Henry Esmond*, a historical novel set in the reign of Queen Anne.

The feminine voice in Victorian fiction

Charlotte (1816-1855), **Emily** (1818-1848) and **Anne** (1820-1849) **Brontë** were three sisters who shared a literary talent. They lived in Haworth, Yorkshire, where their father was a clergyman. To amuse themselves the sisters created a fantasy world which they described in their journals. Emily and Charlotte planned to set up a school at Haworth and went to the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels to improve their qualifications, but they never realised their plan. Charlotte's finest novel is *Jane Eyre* (1847), which describes the life of a poor orphan who later becomes a governess and is in secret love with her master, a Byronic character named Mr Rochester. The novel presents a young woman's search for identity and happiness.

Emily was the most talented of the three. *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is one of the greatest of English novels, a story of passionate love set in the Yorkshire moors.

The first narrator is Mr Lockwood, a gentleman visiting the Yorkshire moors. He learns from Mrs Nelly Dean, a servant to the Earnshaw family, about the passionate and tragic love affair between Heathcliff, a foundling raised at Wuthering Heights, and Catherine Earnshaw. The atmosphere of the novel has been compared to that of a Greek tragedy.

The structure of *Wuthering Heights* is built on the fates of the three generations of characters: the older generation (Mr Earnshaw); his children (Catherine and Hindley) and the adopted Gypsy boy (Heathcliff); and the youngest generation (Cathy and Hareton). The narrations of Nelly Dean and Mr Lockwood provide a framework for this structure. Heathcliff, the structurally central character of the novel, is a **Byronic hero**.

Anne, the youngest sister, wrote a semi-autobiographical story, *Agnes Grey* (1847), based on her experiences as a governess.

George Eliot (1819-1880), whose real name was Mary Anne (Marian) Evans, was the pioneer of women's emancipation in literature. She was one of the most influential English novelists of the 19th century. She was born on a farm in the county of Warwickshire and spent her childhood in the countryside. At the age of five, Mary Anne was admitted to a school near Nottingham and immediately she was recognised as an exceptional pupil. She learnt French and German, and she had a profound knowledge of religion and history. After her father's death in 1849 she set off to a trip to the Continent, visiting France and Italy, and then she stayed briefly in Geneva, Switzerland. Then she moved to London, where she met a lot of famous intellectuals, such as the philosopher Herbert Spencer and the writer G(eorge)

H(enry) Lewes. Her interests ranged far beyond literature across many different issues, including class, gender and race relations. She saw England being rapidly transformed from a primarily rural country into an industrial one.

Under the nickname George Eliot, she wrote realistic novels, such as *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Romola*, *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda* and others which gave an analysis of human conduct and its moral consequences.

Adam Bede (1859) is set at the end of the 18th century and it deals with a typical theme of George Eliot – misalliance. The protagonist of the novel, Adam Bede, is an excessively idealistic craftsman.

Mill on the Floss (1860), set in rural England, is a profound analysis of a woman's psychology. The protagonist of the novel, Maggie Tulliver, is one of the most memorable heroines of English literature. The novel, which is mostly concerned with an aspiration of a young, intelligent woman for a fuller life in a male-dominated society, concludes with an act of self-denial, renunciation and self-imposed repression of the protagonist's desires. As Ilona Dobosiewicz has pointed out, Maggie Tulliver:

... experiences a perpetual conflict between desire for self-fulfillment and female social obligations and becomes the most internally divided of George Eliot's heroines, trapped by her own aspiring character and her position as a woman in a society that privileges submission.⁶⁶

The gender conflict in *The Mill on the Floss* is generally caused by Maggie's desire to act autonomously beyond the domestic sphere traditionally reserved for women. Because Maggie was a female, she was denied education equal to that of men.

Felix Holt, The Radical (1866), a novel which deals with the education of the masses, is pervaded by reflection on the social and political history of England at the time of the Reform Bill of 1832.

Middlemarch (1871-1872) is generally regarded as the highest literary achievement of George Eliot and the turning point in the development of the English novel. At first sight it seems that the novel describes minutely the scenes of provincial life in Victorian England shortly before the Reform Bill of 1832, but soon the reader discovers that the novel has a complex structure and a more universal message to tell. The novel's 'deep structure' foreshadows some of the major themes of the 20th century novel: failure, frustration and the quest for fulfilment. *Middlemarch* is a brilliant examination of the moral, social, political, and religious implications of the Victorian period.

In her novels George Eliot gave a realistic representation of human conduct. Her last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876) deals with the social situation of British Jews. George Eliot was one of the first Victorian writers to discover the imminent crisis of conventional marriage. Later this theme was developed by George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

The 'Condition-of-England' novels

The social transformations caused by the Industrial Revolution in England produced a new form of realist fiction which flourished between the 1840s and 1860s. It is often called the 'Condition-of-England novel'. The major authors of these novels were Elizabeth Gaskell, Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley. They drew attention to the social effects of the Industrial Revolution and criticised the emergence of the 'mechanical age'. They contributed to the awakening of social conscience among the reading public and emphasised the social and political importance of literature.

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) was an active humanitarian and the wife of a prominent Unitarian clergyman. Dickens encouraged her to write fiction. Her first novel, *Mary Barton* (1848), is a critique of employer - employee relationships.

⁶⁶ Ilona Dobosiewicz, *Ambivalent Feminism: Marriage and Women's Social Roles in George Eliot's Works* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2003), 101.

Mary Barton. A Tale of Manchester Life deals with the theme of industrial unrest and a divided English society. Gaskell provides first-hand observations of life in Manchester during the Chartist riots. She has a lot of sympathy for the plight of the working-class families. The condition of England debate in *Mary Barton* is concerned principally with the struggle between mill owners and workers in the decade between 1830 and 1840.

Ruth (1853) is a novel about a seduced and abandoned sixteen-year old girl, who desperately tries to redeem her "sin." The novel intensified the public debate about the fallen woman question in mid-Victorian England. Elizabeth Gaskell contested the Victorian myth about female fallenness reflected in the saying: "Once fallen, forever lost." Gaskell does not contradict the "fallen woman" stereotype, but provides evidence that not all 'fallen women' must be condemned and ostracised. A temporary lack of sexual purity should not stigmatise a young female in her further life if she is not responsible for her sin and corruption and proves by her conduct that she tries to fully redeem them. Gaskell shows in *Ruth* that the stereotypical Victorian perception of a woman as either "virtuous" or "fallen" is not just and does much harm, however, she ends the novel with the death of the heroine, which shows that the author failed to find ways how to obliterate the myth of the "fallen woman" in Victorian society.

Cranford (1853) is a subtle description of the English countryside in the 1830s.

North and South (1855) shows the contrast between the two regions of England, the rural South and the industrialised North.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) reflected in his social novels the growing discrepancy between the rich and the poor. In his trilogy, *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred*, he examined the problems of contemporary political, social and religious life and provided his own alternative to the Whig interpretation of history. He developed a radical Tory interpretation of the history of modern Britain. The trilogy provoked widespread discussion.

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) was a Church of England priest, Christian socialist, novelist, poet and amateur naturalist. As a result of his interest in the miserable condition of the working class, he joined the Christian Socialist movement. He published anonymously a journal "Workmen of England". In 1848 he published his first novel *Yeast*, which deals with the plight of the rural labourers. His next novel, *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet* (1850), is a supposed autobiography of a self-educated working-class radical. The novel, written under the influence of the social writings of Thomas Carlyle, is an important social document, giving vivid descriptions of the squalor of contemporary London.

Later Kingsley turned his attention to the lot of poor children in *The Water-Babies* (1863), which deals with the working conditions of chimney sweeps, education, sanitation and public health.

The Water Babies is a fairy tale primarily designed for young readers, but it also reflects Kingsley's favourite theme: the working conditions of the poor. The novel's central character, Tom is employed as a chimney sweep by the brutal Mr Grimes. He is illiterate, ill-treated and lacks in religious or moral education. However, at a certain point the boy undergoes a spiritual regeneration in his contact with nature. After he has fallen from the chimney, Tom finds himself in the presence of a girl called Ellie, and he confronts his own dirty blackened body with her cleanliness and neatness. Chased out of Ellie's house, he falls into the river where he enters a fairy underwater world and eventually becomes a water-baby.

Late Victorian writers

Late Victorian novelists include George Meredith, Lewis Carroll, Samuel Butler, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Gissing and Oscar Wilde. Some of these writers dealt in their novels with the crisis of Victorian values. Lewis Carroll abandoned the traditional Victorian narrative techniques and began experiments

with language and form.

George Meredith (1828-1909) was a novelist and poet. His second volume of poetry, *Modern Love* (1862) gave him a permanent place in the history of English poetry. He wrote a number of novels of which probably *The Egoist* (1879) is the most important. His earlier novels include *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) and *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* (1879), which is a reworking of Dickens's *David Copperfield*. Meredith gave perceptive portraits of women in his novels.

Lewis Carroll, whose real name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-1898) was a don (lecturer) at Christ Church College, Oxford, where he taught mathematics. However, he is best known as the author of two of the most famous children's books in English literature: *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1872). They present a dream world in which Alice meets strange creatures and has many interesting adventures. Carroll's tales about Alice prepared the ground for the greatest achievements of the 20th century experimental novel, e.g. James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* disrupts certain conventional ways of telling fables. The book reveals the elusive relationships between words and meanings. Carroll invents new words and gives new meanings for familiar words.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland recounts the curious dream of a young girl Alice who sits on the riverbank and suddenly she sees a White Rabbit wearing a waistcoat and lamenting that he is late. Being very curious, she follows him and falls down a rabbit hole. She finds herself in a long hallway full of tiny doors, where she notices a bottle labelled "DRINK ME". Next she sees a cake with the words "EAT ME". Alice either grows very tall or becomes very small depending on what she eats and drinks. Suddenly she has to swim through a pool of water. She realises that this little lake is made of tears she cried while she was big. Soon she meets other creatures of the fantasy world: the Dormouse, the hookah-smoking Caterpillar and the Cheshire Cat, who appears and disappears at will. When he vanishes, only his grin remains. Alice takes part in March Hare's mad tea party and finally she reaches the garden where she joins in a very strange game with the Queen and her entourage of playing cards.

Samuel Butler (1835-1902) is the author of *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) which is regarded by some critics as the most significant anti-Victorian novel. Butler criticised the foundations of Victorianism: marriage, family, the Church, and contemporary education. He also wrote a fantasy novel entitled *Erewhon* (1872). set in a utopian country based on a reverse order ("erewhon" is an anagram of "nowhere").

The world represented in the novels of **Thomas Hardy** (1840-1928) is more confusing and complicated. Hardy's pessimism stemmed from his opinion that God and Nature were equally indifferent to the strivings and values of men. Human desires for happiness seemed incompatible with the destructive law of life. Hardy, regarded by some as 'the last of the great Victorians', was a profound critic of contemporary society. Following his intellectual predecessors, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, and George Eliot, Hardy questioned current moral and religious principles. He did not believe in divine providence nor did he trust the laws of society. The setting of his fiction is Wessex, a name he used for the six southwest counties of England, including his native Dorset.

Hardy's major novels include *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), probably his best novel, is the story of a poor young girl seduced by a distant relative. Tess is left alone in a cruel world which refuses to offer her help or pity. Eventually she is condemned by society although the author implies that in

spite of the murder she has committed she remains a pure woman. The novel is a powerful indictment of Victorian double standards. Tess's spontaneous relationship to her world takes a non-Christian form of expression. The moral sin which Tess experienced is a taboo in Victorian society; in the eyes of society she is a fallen woman, but she maintains her dignity, beauty and innocence. The novel reflects the moral and ethical dilemmas of Victorian society and also invites the reader to reflect upon the nature of good and evil.

Hardy's social criticism is much more outspoken in *Jude the Obscure* than in his earlier novels. The main targets of Hardy's attack in the novel are the institution of marriage and the socially unjust Victorian educational system. *Jude the Obscure* has often been interpreted as an indictment of the society that made it impossible for a working man to obtain higher education. Hardy's treatment of sexuality and marriage in *Jude the Obscure* was so unorthodox and controversial that it caused such an outrage among the puritanical Victorian public that he decided to write no more fiction.

It should be remembered that Thomas Hardy is now not only regarded as one of the most important English novelists but is also recognised as a major poet. His first book of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, was published in 1898, when he was 58 years old, having already written fourteen novels and over forty short stories. For the rest of his life, Hardy abandoned fiction and devoted himself entirely to poetry.

Henry James (1843-1916), the precursor of the modern novel, was an American who spent much of his life in Britain and eventually became a British subject. James was fascinated by European culture. His literary output was prodigious: 20 novels, many short stories, including the famous ghost story *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), works of criticism, plays, etc. His novels examine the effect of European culture on the American mind. James's fiction is subtle and complex (read more about James in the next chapter).

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) is known for his detective novel *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* as well as for his best stories for children: *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is an allegorical thriller, a study of the duality of man's nature, which also reflects a post-Darwinian concept of the animality of man.

George Gissing (1857-1903) marks the transition from Victorian melodrama to modern realism. Although Gissing is best remembered for his two novels, *New Grub Street* (1891) and *The Old Women* (1893), he wrote over 20 novels, more than 100 short stories and literary criticism. The subjects of his novels were mostly the poor, earlier described by Dickens, but treated here without Dickens's humour or optimism. His naturalistic and exclusively urban novels, *Workers in the Dawn* (1880), *The Unclassed* (1884) and *The Nether World* (1889) show a similar concern to that in the industrial novels of the 1840-1850s. Gissing's disciple in the 20th century was certainly George Orwell, who is clearly indebted to him.

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), who is remembered as a late Victorian dandy, aesthete, witty conversationalist and homosexual martyr, represents the *fin de siècle* aesthetic movement which advocated art for art's sake. As an aesthete, Wilde stated that art can have no ethical sympathies. He rejected Victorian insistence on moral purpose of art and literature. Wilde wrote short stories (*The Canterville Ghost*, 1887), tales for children (*The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, 1888), society comedies (*A Woman of No Importance*, 1893; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 1895; a tragedy in French (*Salomé*, 1894), and the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Dorian, whose portrait is painted by Basil Hallward, expresses a wish that he might remain young and handsome and that his portrait age instead. His wish is fulfilled. From now on Dorian pursues his life in debauched sensuality. He stays young and

attractive, but his portrait becomes foul. When Basil persuades him to reveal the portrait, Dorian kills him. Finally, Dorian tears the canvas with a dagger and dies. His servants find the portrait as it originally looked and the decaying body of their master lying on the floor. In the Preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde states: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all."

His only significant poem is *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898) against the death penalty. It published after his release from the prison in Reading, Berkshire, in 1897. Wilde was convicted of homosexual offences in 1895 and sentenced to two years of hard labour in prison.

Wilde is also famous for his aphorisms like this: "Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught."

Poetry

In the poetry of the Victorian Era many Romantic forms of expression were continued, but social and existential issues became increasingly important for a number of poets. Poetry assumed a more reflective tone. Metre, diction and the melody of verse received far more attention than in the Romantic Period. The major poets include Alfred Tennyson, Robert Browning and his wife Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, Algernon Swinburne, and Gerard Manley Hopkins at the end of the period.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) was the son of a clergyman. Educated at Cambridge, he became one of the leading poets of his time and in 1850 succeeded William Wordsworth as Poet Laureate. Tennyson wrote lyrics, dramatic monologues, plays, long narrative poems, elegies and allegories. He drew inspiration from classical myths, Arthurian legends, the English Renaissance and his own time. In his poetry Tennyson expressed the feelings of loss, sorrow, nostalgia, spiritual solitude and religious doubt. In 1830 he published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* which reflected the idea that the poet should be a sage and prophet. His *Poems* of 1832 includes some of the most musical verse in the English language, 'The Lady of Shalott'.

'The Lady of Shalott' is the story of a woman who lives with a curse in an island tower on a river that flows to Camelot, the seat of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. She weaves a magic web. She cannot look directly out of the window, so she looks at the outer world through a mirror. One day she sees the handsome Sir Lancelot riding by. She leaves the tower, takes a boat and floats off down to Camelot. The boat floats reaches Camelot, but the Lady of Shalott dies. All the knights make the sign of the cross when they see a corpse go by in the boat, but Lancelot says: 'She has a lovely face; God in his mercy lend her grace, The Lady of Shalott'.

Tennyson revived the Arthurian legend in order to present his views on the conflict between art and life. The Lady of Shalott represents a lonely artist isolated from noisy daily life. A curse befalls her when she decides to abandon her art and seek companionship in the profane world. She meets her death.

"Mariana" (1830) and "Mariana in the South" (1832) are dramatic monologues of abandoned heroines who wait for their lost love to return.

In 1850, Tennyson published his greatest work *In Memoriam*, a long elegy on the death of his friend. The poet's despair is contrasted with the calm of nature; despair with hope, consolation. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1854) describes the suicidal British cavalry attack on Russian forces during the Crimean War.

Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861) was a poet and an early feminist, who constantly searched for poetic identity and female autonomy. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), dedicated to her husband and written in secret before her marriage, describes in a

frank way her love for Robert Browning. Her longest and most ambitious work is *Aurora Leigh* (1857), a novel in blank verse, which is primarily the story of a female poet's artistic development.

Robert Browning (1812-1889), influenced by the poetry of Donne, Shelley, Byron and Keats, is best known for his dramatic monologues, such as 'Porphyria's Lover' (1836) and 'My Last Duchess' (1846), in which the speaker tells a sinister story of love and violence. The themes of Browning's poetry include love, human relations and religion, psychology and exploration of human motives, the nature of truth, the validity of human perception, the role of the reader in poetic expression, and the value of poetry as a reflection of universal concerns.

'The Ring and the Book' (1868-1869) is considered as Browning's finest poetic achievement. This long poem (21,000 lines) in blank verse consists of a series of dramatic monologues which present various perspectives on a murder trial in seventeenth-century Italy. Browning's poem reflects Victorian fascination with crime, but it can be interpreted on multiple levels. It contains many literary allusions, historical references, **self-reflexivity** and **metafictional** tropes, which make Browning a proto-post-modernist.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), the son of an Italian refugee, was both a poet and a successful painter, who founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. "The Blessed Damozel", written when Rossetti was 19, is considered by many to be his best poem. In 1860 he married his model Elizabeth Siddal, to whom he had been engaged for nearly 10 years. When she died in 1862, after taking an overdose of laudanum, Rossetti, in a fit of guilt and grief, buried with her a manuscript containing a number of his poems. Some years later he permitted her body to be exhumed and the poems recovered.

His sister, **Christina Georgina Rossetti** (1830-94) was one of the most important women poets of the Victorian era. She wrote mainly religious poems and children's verse as well as sonnets on unhappy love. Her most famous verse collection is *Goblin Market and Other Poems* (1862) It received widespread critical recognition and after the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1861 Rossetti was hailed as her successor. One of her most famous love poems is 'Remember'.

Matthew Arnold (1822-88) was a classical scholar and poet. His most famous critical work is *Culture and Anarchy* (1869). Arnold believed that poetry is "a criticism of life". His poetry displays an elegiac, disillusioned pessimism over the plight of contemporary man who must redefine his own identity in the turbulent and rapidly changing world under the influence of the Industrial Revolution. One of his most important poems, "Dover Beach" (1867), contains a sad reflection about the world from which faith and love disappear. The poem presents a conflict between faith and science. Arnold observes with sorrow the growing loss of faith in modern industrial society. This loss of faith results in the loss of old values whereas new values are not easily accepted. He proposes that the only value that can withstand the period of moral and religious crisis is personal love relation. Some critics claim that Arnold anticipated T. S. Eliot's pessimistic view of the vacuity of the modern world expressed in *The Waste Land*.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) was influenced by contemporary French poets (Baudelaire and others) His poetry is noted for its vitality and for the music of its language and a mood of escapist aestheticism. In 1866, Swinburne published a collection *Poems and Ballads*, which was attacked by some for their sensuality and anti-Christian sentiments and praised by others for their technical mastery. Swinburne's best lyrics include 'The Garden of Proserpine', 'The Triumph of Time', 'A Forsaken Garden', 'Ave atque vale' (an elegy on Baudelaire) and 'Hertha'.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889) was one of the most original and complex

poets of the late 19th century. He began to write verse as a student at Balliol College, Oxford, where he was converted to Catholicism. He then became a Jesuit and after ordination to the priesthood worked in a number of city parishes before being appointed Professor of Greek at the Catholic University of Dublin. He died in Dublin aged only 45. His poetry, published after his death, combines daring technical innovation with an intense vision and feeling for nature. Some of his best poems include 'Pied Beauty' (1877) and 'God's Grandeur' (1877). 'Pied Beauty' is a hymn of praise to the variety of God's creation, which is described as 'dappled things'. 'God's Grandeur' is written in the form of an Italian sonnet which compares God's presence in the world to an electrical current. Like electric current, God becomes momentarily visible in flashes.

Inspired by Anglo-Saxon and old Welsh poetry, Hopkins developed a metrical system called *sprung rhythm*, in which each foot has one stressed syllable, either standing alone or followed by a varying number of unstressed syllables. Hopkins also developed two concepts: *inscape* and *instress*. Inscaperefers to distinctive characteristics of natural phenomena that differentiate them from other natural phenomena. Instress is the force or energy which creates and sustains inscape together, or it may be the impulse from the inscape which carries it into the mind of the beholder.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The affirmation of values and standards which are referred to as "Victorian values."
2. Double standards between national success and the exploitation of lower-class workers.
3. The novel is the dominant form of fiction in the Victorian Period; its characteristic features being realism, didacticism, omniscient and intrusive narrator, complex multiple linear plots, sentimentality; its themes are the individual in the social world. The novelists rather than poets became the spokesmen of the age.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Describe the basic features of the Victorian novel. Compare two Victorian novels and a diversity of their styles.
2. Demonstrate the features of social satire William Makepeace Thackeray's novel *Vanity Fair*.
3. Are Brontë sisters Romantic or Victorian writers? Discuss the issue by referring to one specific novel in each case.
4. What are the characteristic features of Victorian poetry? Discuss one poem written by a Victorian poet.
5. Discuss features and main themes of Alfred Tennyson's poetry.
6. Analyse Robert Browning's poem 'Porphyria's Lover'.
7. Analyse the form and content of Matthew Arnold's poem 'Dover Beach'.
8. The main theme and poetic diction in a selected poems of Algernon Charles Swinburne.
9. Discuss the themes of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.
10. Themes and stylistic features of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.
11. Discuss the technical innovations and unconventional devices used by G.M. Hopkins in his poems "Pied Beauty" and "God's Grandeur."

Essay questions for Wuthering Heights

1. How does Emily Brontë depict Catherine's attachment to Heathcliff when they were children? What character traits do Catherine and Heathcliff share that might have drawn them to each other?
2. How does Catherine change after her stay with the Lintons at Thrushcross Grange? How do the changes affect her relationship with Heathcliff?

3. What reasons does Catherine give in her conversation with Nelly for deciding to marry Edgar? How does Nelly respond to her reasoning? During this conversation, Nelly is aware that Heathcliff is listening to part of the conversation although Catherine is not. How does Nelly's decision not to tell Catherine affect the events of the novel? Why did Nelly make the decision not to reveal that Heathcliff was there?
4. Catherine is often described as having a dual personality or a split personality. She feels drawn in contradictory directions, torn between Edgar and Heathcliff. In fact, her death is attributed to this duality that she is unable to reconcile. What events bring about the crisis that results in her death?
5. Near the end of the novel, Heathcliff's desire for revenge seems to burn itself out. What causes this change, and what incidents illustrate his decreasing interest in life?
6. How would you compare Cathy and Hareton with Catherine and Heathcliff?
7. How do the settings of the moors and the valley function to reveal character?
8. Compare Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. How do the two estates reflect the characters who live there?

Web quest

Browse The Victorian Web and choose links to topics of your interest in Victorian times, literature and art.

6.6. Twentieth century literature

The last decade of the 19th century until World War I may be called a period of transition. In that period English literature challenged the moral and psychological assumptions on which mainstream Victorian literature had rested. The most pervasive feature of the period of transition is that both many writers and readers lost faith in the traditional ways of seeing the world. Alienation, deracination, quest for selfhood and personal freedom are its recurrent themes.

The twentieth century was a period of great industrial, technological and social changes which are reflected by literature and arts. Most of the century was dominated by the impact of World Wars I and II, as well as by the emergence of new media: cinema and television. The British Empire began to disintegrate after the death of Queen Victoria in 1901.

Early 20th century British literature is very varied and rich. The dominant cultural and literary development was Modernism, but there were a number of writers who continued to write in traditional form. The time between the death of Queen Victoria and World War I is often referred to as the Edwardian Period. The subsequent Georgian Period, named for the reign of King George V (1910-1936), produced a group known as the Georgian poets (including D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare, Robert Graves and W. H. Davies). Georgian poetry, traditional in technique and form, focused on pastoral and escapist themes.

Postwar (1945-1960) and contemporary British literature (from 1960 onwards) has chronicled the austerity of the immediate postwar years, the impact of colonisation, women's liberation, emerging consumerism and mass popular culture as well as globalisation and multiculturalism of the present day.

Since the end of the 20th century the rapid growth of the Internet has facilitated access to literary electronic resources. The World Wide Web, amongst its other uses, has become a gigantic library accessible to almost everybody who simply decides to browse it. The Internet has become a new medium to boost literature.

6.6.1 The Edwardian Period

A distinct subdivision of early twentieth century English literature is the Edwardian Period, named for King Edward VII. The Edwardian period, despite its relatively short duration, is characterised by its own unique literature, arts and even lifestyle. It was

definitely a period of transition. Edwardian literature, which revealed a reaction against the standards of the Victorians, provided a profound analysis of contemporary society and continued the ongoing debate on the condition of England.

Major Edwardian writers, such as Joseph Conrad, Herbert George Wells, Rudyard Kipling, John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, Ford Madox Ford, E(dward) M(organ) Forster and D. H. Lawrence turned fiction into a debate upon the principal concerns of the day: the problem of moral victory and failure, the role of science, the growing gap between commerce and culture, the role of a long-defunct landed aristocracy, the validity of social stratification, the transformation of the traditional concepts of family and marriage, the philistinism of the English middle class and the question of female emancipation.

Joseph Conrad or Józef Teodor Konrad Nałęcz Korzeniowski (1857-1924) is regarded by some as one of the greatest novelists writing in the English language although it was not his native tongue. He questioned traditional moral axioms in his fiction. Born in Poland, the son of a Polish nobleman and patriot, Apollo Korzeniowski, he decided to become a sailor, and when he first arrived in England knew almost no English. When he published his first novel, *Almayer's Folly* in 1895 his mastery of the English language was already complete. Although he wrote mostly about the sea, Conrad was concerned above all with moral problems. One of his favourite themes is the fine line between success and failure. His best works include *Youth*, *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, *The Shadow Line*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim*, *Nostramo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Victory*. In his fiction Conrad explored the obscure recesses of the human heart and showed how man's life could be wrecked or sustained by his dreams or illusions.

In *Lord Jim* (1900), the hero, who is chief mate on the steamship "Patna", makes a voyage towards Mecca with a group of pilgrims. When the ship begins to sink, the crew abandon the ship without giving assistance to the passengers. Jim also jumps into the sea. However, it turns out later that the ship did not sink and that most of the passengers were rescued. Jim is tried at a Court of Inquiry in Aden, is forbidden to work as a seaman, and is reduced to taking different jobs ashore. Again he makes a wrong decision and feels responsible for the death of a young boy. Finally, he allows himself to be killed by an angry and grieving father. In the novel, Conrad reveals Jim's struggle with conscience and analyses the problem of individual responsibility.

Heart of Darkness (1902) is a compelling and controversial novella, which can be interpreted on many levels: as an adventure story, a metaphysical thriller, a modernist parable full of irony and deception, a mythical journey, a psychological study of both human consciousness and unconsciousness, a philosophical meditation, an indictment of colonialism and an exploration of the human condition. It can also be read as an analysis of the deterioration of the white man's morality when it is let loose from European standards. Conrad seems to suggest in *Heart of Darkness* that man's nature is essentially evil and it is hidden under the mask of civilisation.

Heart of Darkness investigates greed and egoism which are hidden behind the idealistic slogans of trading companies in Africa. The story begins when Marlow, the narrator, sits on board of a barge on the Thames River with several other people and tells them about his voyage into the dark continent. The other setting is the Congo, although Conrad does not explicitly state that the novel is set in Africa. At the outset Kurtz embodied the highest aspirations of the 19th century Europeans. He wanted to bring enlightenment to dark Africa. However, soon Marlow's narrative reveals the dissociation between reality and aspirations. Towards the end of his life Kurtz is transformed into a horrifying savage.

Heart of Darkness has a complex retrospective narrative and style. Conrad employs two narrators: the impersonal nameless **frame narrator** and the first-person narrator, Marlow, who tells the story to three people on the barge.

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) gave depth to the literature of the British Empire. Once called the poet of the Empire, he portrayed life in the British colonies. He was born in Bombay and spent his childhood in India but was later sent to school in England. Kipling shared the view that the Anglo-Saxons had a God-given mission to bring law, peace and order to India.

The two *Jungle Books* and *Just So Stories* are popular animal stories which became contemporary children's classics. *Kim* (1901) is his greatest masterpiece, based on his childhood experience. It is a philosophical meditation upon India in which Kipling presented a panoramic view of life on the subcontinent, treating with sympathy the native population. Although Kipling supported the idea of the British Empire, he never identified himself with the colonial rulers. On the contrary, he depicted with irony the shallowness of Anglo-Indian social life. He thought that as India was divided by region, religion and race, it could not be left to rule itself.

Herbert George Wells's (1866-1946) fiction was a major departure from traditional Victorian novels. Wells was a science-fiction writer and social critic, who combined scientific knowledge with fantasy. The plot of *The Time Machine* (1895) is set in the year 80271. In *The Invisible Man* (1897) Wells shows the problem of moral responsibility of a scientist and inventor. *The War of the Worlds* (1898) is an apocalyptic vision of the invasion from Mars and a total war. *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896) shows the inherent evil of human nature. Wells' later novels deal with the shortcomings of English social life.

In *Kipps* (1905) Wells depicted the life of a 'little man' in the modern industrial world. *Ann Veronica* (1909), a pro-suffragist novel, describes women's emancipation. *Tono-Bungay* (1909), which incorporates Wells's views on science and progress, is the most characteristic social novel of the early 20th century. *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) expresses the frustrations of the lower middle-class. Wells sees modern England as a random juxtaposition of obsolescence and profiteering, imaged in the urban architecture of the capital, with an endlessly chaotic juxtaposition of old and new. The novel describes the rise and fall of Edward Ponderoso, who makes a fortune by marketing a patent medicine. Wells developed a new type of the novel classified as parabolic.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) is known mainly for his *Forsyte Saga*, a series of six novels tracing the history of a typically English upper class family from Victorian times to the 1920s. Soames Forsyte, the main hero of the first novel, *The Man of Property*, epitomises the Victorian self-made man. Galsworthy had an ambiguous attitude to his characters, treating them with both irony and sympathy.

Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) described the drab and uneventful life of a working class region in the Midlands - the Potteries. He developed his literary style under the influence of Honoré Balzac, Emile Zola, Ivan Turgenev and de Guy de Maupassant. In 1902, he published *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902), which initiated a series of novels which recreated life in the Potteries, in which he lived in his youth. His best novel is *The Old Wives' Tales* (1908), a long chronicle of the lives of two sisters.

G(ilbert) K(eith) Chesterton (1874-1936) was a prolific writer who wrote 80 books, poems, short stories, essays, and several plays. He depicted the mechanical boredom of a commercialised world of the future in his comical fantasy novel, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), which is set in London in the year 1984. In 1908, Chesterton published *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare*, which is a metaphysical thriller written in the nonsense-fantasy tradition of Lewis Carroll.

The novel describes a secret society of anarchists who want to destroy the civilised world. The seven members of the Central Anarchist Council, who, for reasons of security, call

themselves by the names of the days of the week. However, one of them, Thursday, is not the dedicated young revolutionary but a Scotland Yard detective. He soon discovers that five of the other six members are also undercover detectives who are assigned to disclose the anarchists. The real anarchist is the man called Sunday, who has masterminded the plan.

Chesterton's Father Brown stories are excellent short detective fictions in the tradition of Sherlock Holmes series, which present the amateur detective Father Brown, a short Catholic priest with shapeless clothes and a large umbrella, who successfully investigates complex crimes.

E. M. Forster (1879-1970), who was one of the members of the *Bloomsbury Group*, wrote short stories, novels and critical essays. His most important novels are *A Room With a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924).

A Room With a View, a novel about a young woman in the repressed culture of the Edwardian era, set in Italy and England, is both a romance and a critique of English society and its sexual conventions at the beginning of the 20th century.

Lucy Honeychurch, a young upper middle class woman, visits Italy with her older cousin Miss Charlotte Bartlett as her chaperon. At their pension, or guesthouse, in Florence, they are given rooms that look into the courtyard rather than out over the river Arno. Mr. Emerson, a fellow guest, generously offers them the rooms belonging to himself and his son George. Although Charlotte is offended by Mr. Emerson's lack of tact and propriety, she finally does agree to the switch.

Lucy's visit to Italy is marked by several significant encounters with the Emersons. In Santa Croce church, George complains that his father means well, but always offends everyone. Mr. Emerson tells Lucy that his son needs her in order to overcome his youthful melancholy. Later, Lucy is walking in the Piazza Signoria, feeling dull, when she comes in close contact with two quarreling Italian men. One man stabs the other, and she faints, to be rescued by George. On their return trip home, he kisses her, much to her surprise. She keeps his rash behavior a secret.

On a country outing in the hills, Lucy wanders in search of the parson, Mr. Beebe. However, the Italian cab driver leads her instead to George, who is standing on a terrace covered with blue violets. George sees her and again kisses her, but this time Charlotte sees him and chastises him after they have returned to the pension. She leaves with Lucy for Rome the next day.

The second half of the book centers on Lucy's home in Surrey, where she lives with her mother, Mrs. Honeychurch, and her brother, Freddy. A man she met in Rome, the snobbish Cecil Vyse, proposes marriage to her for the third time, and she accepts him. He disapproves of her family and the country people she knows, finding them coarse and unsophisticated. There is a small, ugly villa available for rent in the town, and as a joke, Cecil offers it to the Emersons, whom he meets by chance in a museum. They take him up on the offer and move in, much to Lucy's initial horror.

George plays tennis with the Honeychurches on a Sunday when Cecil is at his most intolerable. After the game, Cecil reads from a book by Miss Lavish, a woman who also stayed with Lucy and Charlotte at the pension in Florence. The novel records a kiss among violets, and Lucy realizes that Charlotte let the secret out. In a moment alone, George kisses her again. Lucy tells him to leave, but George insists that Cecil is not the right man for her, characterizing Cecil as controlling and appreciative of things rather than people. Lucy sees Cecil in a new light, and breaks off her engagement that night.

However, Lucy will not believe that she loves George; she wants to stay unmarried and travel to Greece with some elderly women she met in Italy, the Miss Alans. She meets old Mr. Emerson by chance, who insists that she loves George and should marry him, because it is what her soul truly wants. Lucy realizes he is right, and though she must fly against convention, she marries George, and the book ends with the happy couple staying together in the Florence pension again, in a room with a view.

(Adapted from *Spark Notes*)

Howards End describes the encounter of three social classes in England in the decade before World War One. A major theme of the novel is the repressive class

structure of English society.

Margaret Schlegel, her sister, Helen and brother Tibby represent the cultured liberal middle class society. They are opposed to Henry Wilcox and his children, Charles, Paul and Evie, who are mostly concerned with industrial economy, and who represent the materialistic upper middle class. Two other characters, Leonard and his wife Jacky Bast, are representatives of the lower middle class. Margaret, who marries Henry Wilcox, tries to bridge the gap between the lower and upper levels of the middle class. Forster's famous epigraph: "only connect" suggests that 'connection' between the classes is possible and desirable for the future of England. However, in spite of such idealistic postulates, the novel ends with Leonard Bast's death. The mixing of classes turns out to be a failure. However, Forster shows that *Howards End* has some regenerative forces. When Helen bore Leonard's child and returned to *Howards End*, the house, which symbolises England, was regenerated.

Forster's humanistic urge toward understanding and sympathy of people of all classes is aptly summed up in the epigraph to the novel: "Only connect ..."

A Passage to India (1924), Forster's most ambitious novel, marks the author's interest in Modernism in its use of symbolism and **polyphonic narrative**. The novel shows the conflict between the culture of the East and the West and the falsity of colonial ideology based on the faith in the white man's mission.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Read *A Room With a View* or *Howards End*. Discuss its plot, settings, characters and some of the themes.
2. Discuss the importance of Italy in *A Room With a View*. What does Italy represent for Lucy? How does it change her? How does life in England compare to life in Italy?
3. Compare and contrast the Schlegel and Wilcox families in E.M. Forster's *Howards End*. What ideals do they each represent?

6.6.2 Modernism

Modernism is a general term which describes an innovative style of 20th century art and literature in its first few decades. In Europe the term refers to various experimental trends, such as symbolism, futurism, expressionism, imagism, dadaism, surrealism, etc. It was a distinctive break with 19th century Victorian sensibility and it was marked by a radical change in cultural values. Modernist literature was profoundly influenced by the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and the psychology of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Both art and literature emphasised the central role of the unconscious mind, the importance of the irrational, the intuitive, the primitive and the use of myth. Modernist literature, which rejected the traditional literary forms and values of 19th century literature, expressed a lack of faith in Western civilisation and traditional culture. Modernist writers emphasised the role of the artist, subjectivity, experimentation in artistic creation. Fragmentation, discontinuity, allusiveness and irony are characteristic of both Modernist poetry and fiction. The fragmented and irregular verses of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound changed the poetic form in the latter half of the 20th century. Modernist writers often replaced the traditional narrative technique with the so-called stream-of-consciousness technique or internal monologue. Internal experience was emphasised over outward 'reality'.

Modernist literature in English reached its peak in the early 1920s, with the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land", Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* as well as the poems of William Butler Yeats. Modernist writing expressed a distaste for the industrial civilisation and its effect on the quality of the individual life and human relationships. Being

markedly non-egalitarian and elitist, Modernist literature was generally inaccessible to the common reader.

Prose

James Joyce (1882-1941), the eldest of ten children of John Joyce, a tax collector and fierce Irish Catholic patriot, was born in Dublin. He had the Catholic upbringing and the family even intended to prepare him for the priesthood. He studied modern languages at University College, Dublin. After graduation he left for Paris to study medicine but soon he had to return home because of his mother's illness. In Dublin he worked as a teacher for some time and published some sketches and poems. After the death of his mother Joyce left Ireland, moving from place to place, and finally he settled in Zurich. In 1904 he met Nora Barnacle, whom he married in 1931.

In 1905, Joyce completed a collection of 15 short stories, *Dubliners*, but the volume was not published until 1914. The stories are realistic depictions of ordinary people living in and around Dublin in the early 20th century. "The Dead" is often described as the greatest short story ever written in the English language.

Joyce's fiction was devoid of authorial commentary and strove to achieve the objectivity of drama. His next work was *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which appeared in serialised form. The novel was noticed by Ezra Pound, who helped to have it published in a book form in New York in 1916 and in London in 1917.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a partly autobiographical novel which evokes the memories of childhood and adolescent dreams and experiences. The action of the novel is set in Ireland at the turn of the 19th century. It describes the development of an artist, Stephen Dedalus, from childhood to maturity. Each chapter of *Portrait* focuses on a distinct aspect of the central character's life: his childhood, the bullying he suffered at school, the growing crisis in his faith, the guilt surrounding his awakening sexuality and his precocious adventures. The novel anticipates some of Joyce's modernist techniques, especially the stream of consciousness, that would be fully used in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.

The stream-of-consciousness narrative (i.e. a record of free unrestrained thoughts) in *Portrait* reflects Stephen Dedalus's experience of the past and present. Memories of the past pervade Stephen's present consciousness. The dominant theme of the later part of the book is the role of the artist and his destiny. The novel deals both with Irish issues and the changes in the Western attitudes in the early 20th century, when the old order began to crumble and new cultural and philosophical concepts began to shape.

Apart from the stream-of-consciousness technique, Joyce experimented in his fiction with the use of **epiphanies**, which he understood as sudden spiritual revelations of the mind or moments of insight and understanding.

The two greatest works of James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) were misunderstood for a long time. Today they are regarded as the most significant examples of twentieth century experimental fiction. In both novels Joyce employed the stream of consciousness technique.

Ulysses is a modern epic and an archetypal journey through a town (Dublin). Unlike its ancient counterpart Joyce's *Ulysses* shows a mini-journey limited in both time and space. Its two protagonists, Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, journey through the streets of Dublin within one day only (16th June, 1904). Underneath the surface of realistic action, the novel shows the mythical quest of Leopold Bloom to look for a son who would replace the child he and his wife lost at an early age. The novel describes commonplace incidents which happen to an ordinary unheroic man, but they carry highly sophisticated symbols and literary allusions. Trivial incidents acquire a mythical function in the novel. *Ulysses* is an example of the great modern novel that moves the reader's attention away from its realistic subject into its language and form.

Finnegans Wake is also a narrative written in the experimental stream-of-

consciousness technique, but it is almost unreadable for unprepared readers.

It describes a stream of unconscious and conscious states in the mind of Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, a Dublin tavern-keeper, during one night. Earwicker, his wife Anna Livia Plurabelle, their sons Shem and Shaun and daughter Isabel, are both realistic and symbolic characters. The main character recalls in his dream both his native Irish tradition and a Western intellectual tradition stretching from Homer to Sigmund Freud. The narrative is an experiment in form; it has no beginning and ending; the last sentence leads back into the first. In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce coined a number of so-called portmanteau words (From French 'to carry' + 'cloak'), i.e. words formed by combining two or more seemingly unrelated words in order, as he wrote, to encompass 'allspace in a notshall'.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), who stands together with James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence as the chief figure of literary modernism in England, was an experimental novelist, short story writer and critic. She was born in London as the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, statesman and man of letters and Julia Duckworth Stephen. She moved with her brother and sister to **Bloomsbury**, where they gathered a group of writers, critics and artists, such as Clive Bell, Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, E. M. Forster, the Sitwells and Leonard Woolf, who married Virginia in 1912.⁶⁷ Virginia Woolf experimented with the 'stream of consciousness' technique. She was primarily concerned with the traumatic experience of a woman in a patriarchal society, which involved unequal status, occupational and wage discrimination. Her most important novel is *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925).

Mrs. Dalloway illustrates masterly the stream-of-consciousness technique in the plot which occupies the space of a single day in June 1923. The novel begins with a famous sentence: "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself." Clarissa Dalloway, the middle-aged wife of a conservative politician, prepares for the party she is giving in the evening. Meanwhile the old suitor Peter Walsh, who arrives unexpectedly from India, evokes Clarissa's memories of a distant past. At the same time elsewhere in London, a veteran of the great War, Septimus Warren Smith, who suffers from a shell-shock, commits a suicide. Although the novel contains three interweaving disconnected stories, it has little action; it consists mainly of impressionistic memories. Much of the stream of consciousness narrative, told from the point of view of a third-person omniscient and invisible narrator, is focused on Clarissa recollecting her youth and reasons why she chose a dull but comfortable life.

Mrs. Dalloway reveals the vacuity of Clarissa's life as a society hostess. Clarissa embodies both sexual and economic repression of upper-class women. In fact, Clarissa, like most women of her class, does not have many choices; she can be only a wife, mother and society hostess.

Virginia Woolf's other novels are *A Voyage Out* (1915), a satire on Edwardian life; *Night and Day* (1919), the story of love, marriage, female suffrage and class division in Edwardian England; *Jacob's Room* (1922), about Jacob Flanders, a young man who cannot adjust to the chaotic reality of post-World War I society; *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), a **roman à clef**: in the tradition of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, about the life of the androgynous character who decides not to grow old; *The Waves* (1931), consisting of a series of confessional monologues on such issues as individuality, self and society; *The Years* (1937), about the fates of the two generations of the Pargiter family from 1880 until the mid thirties; *Between the Acts* (1941), a novel full of historical reminiscences set in a single day in the summer of 1939 in a country house in a remote village, where residents prepare an annual pageant.

Woolf also wrote nonfiction. *A Room of Her Own* (1929) is one of the first major works in feminist criticism.

⁶⁷ Read: Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf* (1999).

D(avid) H(erbert) Lawrence (1885-1930) revived in the English fiction of the 20th century the awareness of the natural. He searched for new sources of vitality in the conditions of depersonified urban life and he discovered it in the human psyche. In his fiction Lawrence preached the salvation of the modern world through a return to authentic (primitive) feelings and beliefs.

D. H. Lawrence was born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, on 11 September 1885, as the son of a coal miner. His mother had been a schoolteacher. He graduated from the University College, Nottingham in 1908 and worked as a schoolteacher until 1912. In 1911 Lawrence published his first novel, *The White Peacock*, which reflected his own boyhood and adolescence. In the next year Lawrence eloped to the Continent with Frieda Weekley, his former professor's wife (who was sister of the German aviator Freiherr Manfred von Richthofen), marrying her two years later, after her divorce. Their intense, stormy life together supplied material for much of his writing.

Sons and Lovers (1913), which is partly autobiographical, showing an excessive influence of mother on son, is regarded by many critics as his finest novel. It exerted a strong influence on the consciousness of the generation after World War I. Later Lawrence wrote many novels which were criticised for their overt sexuality. *The Rainbow* (1915) and *Women in Love* (1921) explore with outspoken candour the sexual and psychological relationships of men and women. In the course of his short life, Lawrence published more than 40 volumes of fiction, poetry and criticism.

From 1926 on Lawrence lived chiefly in Italy, where he wrote and rewrote his most notorious novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), which deals with the sexually fulfilling love affair between a female member of the nobility and her husband's gamekeeper. The book was banned until 1959 in the US and 1960 in England.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) was not a novelist by nature. He was interested in science and philosophy. However, as a writer of fiction he was a pessimist and mystic. His early novels expressed the moods and anxieties of the British intelligentsia in the 1920s. Huxley came from an aristocratic family. He was the grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, professor of Natural History, son of Leonard Huxley, the editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*, and brother of Dr Julian Huxley, a famous biologist and writer.

Huxley received his education at Eton and Cambridge. His literary output can be divided into three periods. The first period includes such novels as *Crome Yellow* (1921), *Antic Hay* (1923), and *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), as well as *Point Counter Point* (1928), which is regarded as his best novel of that period. In the second period Huxley was interested in theory of knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, and psychology. In 1931, he published a collection of essays entitled *Proper Studies* (1929). In the third period he travelled a lot in Europe, India, and America, and his writing became more mystical under the influence of the great mystics of the East. The best novels of that period include *Brave New World* (1932), *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), and *After Many a Summer* (1939).

Brave New World, Huxley's most popular novel, is a satire which shows the horrors of the Wellsian utopian society which has been dominated by technology and has lost interest in art. In consequence, life has become sterile and spiritually empty. The novel points to the hazardous consequences of the progress of science and attacks the tenets of industrial civilisation. The domination of technology over spiritual life may cause the loss of the fundamental human values, such as freedom of choice and making conscious decisions. *Brave New World* paved the way for other dystopian novels, e.g. George Orwell's *Ninety-Eighty Four*.

Brave New World is set in London in the year of our Ford 632 (2540). The story begins with the visit of a group of boys to the Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre, where test-tube babies are produced on a mass scale. The newborns are next classified into five social castes named for the first five letters of the Greek alphabet: Alphas, Betas, Gammas, Deltas and Epsilons. Alphas are absolute masterminds and rulers, whereas Epsilons perform only simple menial work. There are no wars, poverty or crime in this genetically-controlled

society. All individuals are satisfied with their care-free life because they take regularly a legal drug called 'soma' which pacifies them through a false sense of happiness. Many characters in the novel are named after influential people of the early 20th century, for example, Bernard Marx (an Alpha Plus discontented intellectual, Lenina Crowne (an attractive Beta laboratory worker).

Paradoxically, the novel, which is a critique of the effects of dehumanised technology, anticipated many controversial developments in modern society including automation technology, advanced assisted reproduction, contraception, mechanical music, interactive cinema, and even sleep-learning. Of course, Huxley did not intend to write scientific prophecy. His novel is an excellent satire on a fictitious affluent society which lives a carefree but state-controlled life without regard to traditional culture, religion and morality.

Graham Greene (1904-1991), who combined many different narrative techniques, was much concerned with moral and theological problems. He is recognised as one of the most gifted English story-tellers of his generation. In his early literary output, Greene was mostly concerned with social problems. Later he gradually became increasingly preoccupied with moral problems, especially the problems of good and evil, suffering, betrayal, and the clash between innocence and experience. Greene developed a distinctive fiction through use of the conventions of the modern spy thriller. However, the settings and characters in his fiction convey a sense of evil and guilt. The Christian notion of man as belonging to both the natural and transcendental world is reflected in almost all Greene's fiction.

His first novel, *The Man Within* (1929) introduced the themes of evil and good, guilt, betrayal, personal failure, and isolation that characterise many of his later works. In order to make his novels attractive for a general reader Greene used freely cinematic techniques in his fiction. His best novel is probably *The Power and the Glory* (1940), a study of political and individual degeneration. His other novels include *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), *The End of the Affair* (1951), *The Quiet American* (1955), *Our Man in Havana* (1958), and *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961). Greene also published numerous short stories and wrote several screenplays.

In 1938, Greene published *Brighton Rock* which has features of a parable or allegory. The major theme of this novel is the conflict between the corrupt individual and the grace of God.

The novel presents a grim picture of the English underworld. The main character in the novel, Pinkie, is a 17-year-old criminal who wants to have his own street gang. He is corrupt, cruel, and incorrigible, although he was brought up in Catholic faith. Pinkie hates human warmth and fears damnation. The novel successfully imitates the convention of popular fiction and is patterned on cinematic techniques. It resembles a thriller, but in fact it is a deep study of depravity of a young gangster who is doomed by his environment and his temper.

Brighton Rock contains various motifs and symbols. One of the major symbols is the novel's title; Brighton rock was until recently associated with a hard sticky kind of sweet formed into long bars. Greene chose it for the title of his novel as a simile, used by one of the characters, Ida, to explain the unchanging human nature. The 17-year-old murderer, Pinkie, had the possibility of changing his conduct but he did not do it. Greene presents a pessimistic view of human nature. He seems to believe that people are either good or bad from the start and in their life they can hardly change. Thus, individual damnation or salvation is entirely dependent on God's will.

Although Greene was converted to Catholicism in 1926, the message of this novel bears the influence of the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, which says that God foreknows and foreordains all events and has irrevocably destined some people for salvation and some for damnation.

Poetry

Poets, who emerged in the last decade of the 19th century, i.e. Gerard Manley Hopkins and Thomas Hardy, changed poetic diction. The language of poetry gradually lost its traditional rhythm and rhyme patterns and began to imitate everyday speech. In the first half of the 20th century the English poetic scene was dominated by William Butler Yeats and T.S. Eliot (read about Eliot in the chapter on American literature).

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was the leading figure of symbolism in English poetry and of the Irish literary revival. He wrote poetry based on Irish history and mythology. Yeats also contributed to the development of the Irish National Theatre by writing plays on Irish themes, e.g. *The Countess Kathleen* (1892) and *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902). He published his earliest poetry in 1885 and continued to write until his death in 1939. Yeats' poetry is usually divided into three stages: aesthetic (associated with the Aesthetic Movement of the 1890s), patriotic (committed to Irish nationalism) and symbolic. Between World War I and 1930 Yeats published much of his most significant poetry in such volumes as *Machael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921), *Seven Poems and a Fragment* (1922), *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Star* (1929). Yeats' later poems explore the difference between the physical and spiritual dimension of life. His famous poem, "Sailing to Byzantium" deals with the Keatsian idea of art. Yeats believes that art becomes even more important for the elderly people who gradually lose interest and contact with daily affairs and ought to find a refuge in the contemplation of eternal art. In 1923, Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize.

First World War Poetry

The horrors of World War I were described dramatically by the so-called First World War poets, Siegfried Sassoon, Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Edmund Blunden, Isaac Rosenberg and other poets.

Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), who survived the war, wrote bitter poems about his experiences as a soldier. He also published an autobiographical work *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928) which was the first of a trilogy of novels (1928-1936) reissued together as *The Memoirs of George Sherston* (1937).

Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was interested in the imagism of Ezra Pound and the works of T. S. Eliot. He wrote a series of sonnets *1914 and Other Poems* (1915) which expressed the patriotism and optimism of the British war effort during World War I. He died young of blood poisoning. His poems were highly praised during the war. Later he was accused of sentimentality. Brooke's 'War Sonnets' include 'The Soldier', one of the most patriotic poems.

Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) is perhaps the most admired of the First War poets. Owen was killed in action on November 4, 1918, at 25 years of age. By then he had published only four of his poems. Owen's finest poems include "Dulce et Decorum Est", 'Futility', and 'Anthem for Doomed Youth'. These poems are both elegiac and realistic descriptions of 'those who die as cattle'. Owen's poetry is also remarkable for his innovative use of half rhyme.

Edmund Blunden (1896-1974) was chiefly a poet of nature. He volunteered for military service and fought at Ypres and the Somme and won the Military Cross for bravery. Apart from poetry he wrote about the trench warfare in his autobiographical book, *Undertones of War* (1928).

Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918), the son of impoverished Russian Jewish immigrants, was an accomplished watercolourist and a poet. Rosenberg joined the army in 1915 and was on the Western Front for the next two and half years. While in the trenches he wrote several poems including *Break of Day in the Trenches*, considered as

one of the greatest WW I poems. He was killed on 1st April, 1918.

Assignment for self-study and/or project work

1. Narrative techniques and moral problems in Joseph Conrad's novels. Comment on the role of Marlow as a narrator in J. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or *Lord Jim*.
2. Features of Modernist fiction.
3. Stream of consciousness and internal monologue in the novels of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.
4. Discuss the poetry of William Butler Yeats. Choose one poem for analysis.
5. Name and discuss the recurrent themes of T. S. Eliot's poetry, referring to specific examples.
6. What makes "The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock" an example of literary modernism?
6. The War Poets in England. Analyse one poem.
7. What was the Bloomsbury Group?
8. Discuss the form and content of James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*.
9. Consider feminist issues in a selected novel by Virginia Woolf.
10. Discuss sexual and social ideologies as well as the use of language in a selected D.H. Lawrence novel.

6.7. The Contemporary Period

The Contemporary Period, which started after the end of World War II, embraces many literary movements and trends which would be difficult to list. Its first half is often called the Postwar Period (1945-1960) and the second half (1960-until now) is generally described as Postmodernism.

British postwar literature is especially concerned with themes of social and cultural change. In the postwar years (mid-fifties) we can distinguish a group known as "Angry Young Men" who expressed discontent with contemporary English society. Their works reflect the bitterness and frustration of the lower-class heroes toward the established socio-political system and class barriers. Some writers continued the traditional realist novel. Others experimented with the fictional form; they wrote allegorical, fantasy, dystopian or speculative fiction. A number of younger writers wrote novels about postcolonial issues. Postwar poetry was dominated by two groups: The Movement and the Group.

6.7.1. The Postwar Period, 1945-1960

The postwar British novel rejected the formal experiments of modernist fiction and returned largely to realism. Many postwar British novels explored the changing condition of the working class in the modern urban society.

Reaction against Modernism in the traditional realist novels of the 1950s and 1960s

Apart from working-class themes, many writers who wrote traditional, realist novels, explored other ordinary aspects of life in contemporary Britain, choosing either provincial or urban setting.

Ivy Compton-Burnett (1884-1969) and **Elizabeth Bowen** (1899-1973), who started their literary career before the war, wrote mostly about the upper and well-to-do middle classes. Compton-Burnett's best-known novel is *More Women Than Men* (1949) and Bowen's is *The Heat of the Day* (1949).

William Cooper (real name: Harry Summerfield Hoff, 1910-2002), who was

called the Godfather of the Angry Young Men of the Fifties and early Sixties, wrote a semi-autobiographical trilogy: *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950), *Scenes from Metropolitan Life* (published in 1982), and *Scenes from Married Life* (1961), together with its sequels, *Scenes from Later Life* (1983) and *Scenes from Death and Life* (1999). All these novels describe the lower-middle-class background.

Angus Wilson (1913-1991) was the author of *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* (1956), which satirises middle-class England. His next novel, *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot* (1958) reveals the female mind in a style similar to George Eliot, the Victorian novelist. His other novel, *No Laughing Matter* (1967) is a family saga showing changes in British society over the past 50 years.

Class-conscious fiction

Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, Stan Barstow, John Braine, David Storey and other young writers, mostly of the working-class or lower middle-class background, who emerged in the 1950s under the common label **Angry Young Men**, portrayed people trying to escape their roots. They produced realistic novels which are both autobiographical and near documentary. They minutely recorded the predominant moods of British society in the 1950s. Their novels expressed the condition of post-World War II England: the decline of the class system and the rise of commercial and popular culture. The 'Angry Young Men' term was applied to a group of young writers of the 1950s, whose heroes share critical or rebellious attitudes to the institutions of the Establishment.

Kingsley Amis (1922-1995) was a novelist and poet. He achieved great popularity after the publication of his first novel *Lucky Jim* (1954), whose hero represented a new generation of Angry Young Men, lower-middle class radicals who strongly criticised established social and political institutions. Set in a university college 'somewhere in England', the novel gives a remarkably funny picture of the division of English welfare society. Amis reversed the traditional stereotype of university created by Cardinal Newman in the 19th century. The hero or rather anti-hero of the novel Jim Dixon, comes from the working-class background. He soon discovers that although the university has made concessions to accept people from the working-class background as staff and students, power still remains in the hands of middle-class professors, such as his head of department.

Alan Sillitoe has written more than fifty books, including novels, plays and collections of stories, poems and travel pieces, as well as numerous essays. He is known primarily for novels and short stories set in a working-class background. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) Sillitoe presented a new hedonistic working-class culture.

The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner (1959) is a short story narrated in the first person about a boy who refuses to conform to the world of the corrupt adults. Sillitoe's fiction is in many ways reminiscent of 19th century social problem novels. One of the dominant themes in Sillitoe's early fiction is the question of identity of characters who grow up in British working-class culture.

John Braine (1922-1986) was the son of a foreman with the Bradford sewage department. His mother, who was a library assistant, gave him access to books at an early age. As a young man he followed his mother's occupation and was appointed assistant librarian at the Public Library in Bingley, a small town outside Bradford. At the same time he tried to write fiction. His first novel, *Room at the Top*, was rejected by four publishers before it finally appeared in print (1957) and became a tremendous success.

The central character of the novel set in a grim Yorkshire mill town, Joe Lampton is a working-class opportunist who slowly climbs the social ladder. He wants to transcend his

class limitations and becomes a white-collar worker. The novel includes such themes as cross-class love relationships and upward class mobility.

The heroes or rather anti-heroes of these novels are usually rootless young men from the working class. Realism, regional dialects and a frank presentation of sex are some of the characteristic features of postwar class-conscious fiction.

Allegorical, dystopian and speculative fiction

The realist trend was abandoned by many writers who experimented with other forms of expression. A number of writers wrote allegorical, dystopian and speculative fiction, e.g. J. R. R. Tolkien, George Orwell, William Golding, J. G. Ballard, Anthony Burgess and Angela Carter.

J(ohn) R(onald) Reul) Tolkien (1892-1973), a professor of Anglo-Saxon language and literature at Oxford University, created a series of mythologies of his own: *The Hobbit* (1937), *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-59), *The Silmarillion* (1977). His fiction combines elements of the adventure story with allegory, drawing on Nordic and Arthurian legends. In recent years Tolkien has been rediscovered and now is one of the most popular English writers.

Tolkien was inspired by early Germanic, especially Old English, literature, poetry, and mythology. These sources of inspiration included Old English literature such as 'Beowulf'. Tolkien also acknowledged several non-Germanic influences or sources for some of his stories and ideas. One of Tolkien's purposes when writing his Middle-earth books was to create a 'mythology for England'.

George Orwell (1903-1950) achieved prominence in the late 1940s as the author of two brilliant satires attacking totalitarianism. In 1945 he published *Animal Farm*, a satirical fable about Stalin's Russia. The animals feel that they are exploited on Mr Jones's farm so they expel their drunken master and take over the management. They are determined to introduce democracy but in reality soon become dominated by the pigs, who create a dictatorship much worse than that of Farmer Jones. His next novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) is a grim prophecy about a totalitarian world. Orwell gave a portrait of England as a 'socialist', police state, which was still sharply divided into 'two nations' – the Party members and the Prolets.

Set in London, the main city of "Airstrip One", a remote province of Oceania, one of three intercontinental totalitarian super-states, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* describes life in the totalitarian system. The repressive Party controls the people via the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue), the workplace of the protagonist Winston Smith, who grows gradually disillusioned and attempts a rebellion against the totalitarian system that eventually leads to his arrest and torture.

William Golding (1911-1993) was also preoccupied with the conflict between good and evil. His novels can be characterised as allegory or fantasy fiction. In *Lord of the Flies* (1954) he presented a modern fable of the growth and corruption of political power. The novel is a reconstruction of a boys' adventure story, *Coral Island*, written in the 19th century by R(obert) M(ichael) Ballantyne. In Ballantyne's book, the shipwrecked boys are well organised and act rationally for the common good, whereas in Golding's novel the shipwrecked boys soon become savage and cruel. His rather pessimistic view of the human race is also evident in his subsequent novels such as *Pincher Martin* (1956), *Free Fall* (1959), *The Spire* (1964) and *Rites of Passage* (1980).

Dystopian themes in English fiction were continued by **Anthony Burgess** (1917-1993), who wrote *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), a grim satire about juvenile delinquents rebelling against the established order.

The action is set in a future London. Alex, the main character, a juvenile delinquent, rapes

and kills people. He is captured and brainwashed by authorities to change his murderous aggressions.

Written in a futuristic vocabulary called *nadsat* (a mixture of Russian, English and American slang), invented by Burgess, the novel criticises not only juvenile delinquency but also the modern permissive and immoral society with lax attitudes and laws. The title of the novel may allude either to a clockwork (mechanical) human being or the Cockney phrase: ‘as queer as a clockwork orange’, which describes something internally bizarre but externally natural.

J(ames) G(raham) Ballard (1930-2009) wrote fiction about the adverse effects of modern technology and consumer culture on human psychology. His most popular work is *Crash* (1973), a controversial novel about car-crash sexual fetishism. *Concrete Island* (1974) is a dystopian story of modern Robinson Crusoe (a wealthy young architect Robert Maitland), who finds himself stranded in no man’s land below three converging motorways after his Jaguar crashes through a barrier. Ballard also wrote two semi-autobiographical novels, *Empire of the Sun* (1984) and *The Kindness of Women* (1991).

6.7.2 Postmodern and postcolonial writing

Postmodernism and postcolonialism concerns have become the dominant movements in late twentieth century English literature.

Postmodernism

Characterised, among others, by **intertextuality**, **metafiction**, fragmentation, a blend of high and low culture, British postmodern writing, like that in the United States and elsewhere, seems to be a revolt against Modernism. Sources of postmodernism can be sought in existentialist philosophy. Postmodernism lacks ideological fundamentalism. History is regarded as a labyrinth and literature as a library. **Intertextuality** is a common feature of postmodern fiction and it blends literary genres and styles. Postmodernist literature can be traced to the mid 1950s but the term postmodernism began to be widely used in the late 1960s. As postmodernism evolved from the late 1960s, it has been influenced by various social and cultural movements. It is difficult or rather too early to speak about a distinct group of British postmodern writers. In a way, almost all noted authors who have published their novels since 1960 use certain postmodern narrative techniques.

John Fowles (1926-2005) is sometimes associated with British Postmodernism or so-called **magic realism**. His novels contain many features of postmodern fiction. Fowles’s first novel, *The Collector* (1963), is written in the form of a diary, kept by a beautiful kidnapped girl who struggles to free herself from her mentally deranged captor. *The Magus* (1965) is a moral fantasy about conscience and manipulation of human individuality. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) resembles at first glance a 19th century novel. However, it soon appears to the reader that the novel has a complex structure and is more than just an imitation or parody of the Victorian novel.

The French Lieutenant's Woman, set in 1867, tells the story of Charles Smithson, a gentleman and amateur palaeontologist. Engaged to Ernestina Freeman, the daughter of a wealthy London tradesman, Smithson finds himself drawn to enigmatic Sarah Woodruff, who has a reputation of a “fallen woman”, because she has been jilted by a French lover. The novel offers three different endings: in one, Charles imagines himself living “happily ever after” with Ernestina; in the second, Charles tells Ernestina about an encounter with Sarah, but he never discloses his relationship with her; and in the third, Charles has sex with Sarah in a hotel and breaks his engagement to Ernestina. Sarah, however, disappears from Charles’ life for several years. Finally, Charles finds her living in the house of artists, likely the Rossettis. He sees that he has a child with her.

On the surface, the novel seems to be a pastiche of Victorian fiction. However, the action tends to move back and forth between the Victorian and the modern age, as the narrator makes intrusive comments about the past and the present. The novel raises the question: is Sarah a victim of Victorian double morals or is she a manipulating woman, who exploited Charles' infatuation? Personal freedom is a major theme of this multilayered, postmodern novel, which explores the constraints of Victorian society.

A Maggot (1985) is set in 18th century England, but is told by a 20th century narrator. The title of the novel may refer to the maggot as symbol of corruption, or to the old-fashioned word for an obsession.

All Fowles's novels contain some parodic intertexts, both literary and historical.

Academic or campus novel

A peculiar form of fiction which emerged in the Sixties and the Seventies was the academic or **campus novel** written by the so-called New University Wits, i.e. writers who are university lecturers and literary critics at the same time. The two most famous of these writers are Malcolm Bradbury and David Lodge.

Malcolm Bradbury (1932-2000) was a prolific fiction writer and academic critic. His first novel, *Eating People Is Wrong*, a satire on human relations in new universities, appeared in 1959 and was an instant success. Of all his narratives *The History Man* (1975) is perhaps the most outstanding and influential novel of the 1970s. It charts the successful career of the manipulative and promiscuous radical sociologist Howard Kirk at the fictional University of Watermouth.

David Lodge taught Literature from 1960 until 1987, when he retired to become a full-time writer. Apart from literary criticism, Lodge has written fiction. In an interview he has said that he is fascinated by the power of narrative. Lodge frequently uses comedy to explore serious subjects.

The British Museum is Falling Down (1965), one of his early works, is a comic novel about a poor Catholic graduate working on his thesis in the Reading Room of the British Museum. He is unable to concentrate on his research because his mind is constantly perplexed by the thought that his wife may be pregnant. *Changing Places* (1975), *Small World* (1984), *Nice Work* (1988) and *Deaf Sentence* (2008) are comic campus novels.

Nice Work is a modern, comic version of the 19th century industrial novel, such as Mrs Gaskell's *North and South*. Set in 1986, designated the "Industry Year Shadow Scheme" by Margaret Thatcher government, it attempts to revive the 'two nations' theme. *Nice Work* imitates the structure of the Victorian condition of England novels: a love story between a feminist university teacher, Robyn Penrose, specialising in industrial novels, and an industrial manager, Vic Wilcox. The central characters are representatives of the two opposed aspects of contemporary England.

How Far Can You Go? (1980) and *Paradise News* (1991) are social satires and both deal with some religious and moral issues which trouble members of the Catholic church in England in the postwar period. *Therapy* (1995) recounts the mid-life crisis of a successful sitcom writer, Laurence Passmore. The novel has an interesting narrative structure consisting of a journal, dramatic monologues, memoir and retrospection. *Author, Author* (2004) describes a period of life of the American writer Henry James.

David Lodge has also written several books on literary criticism, such as *The Language of Fiction* (1966), *The Novelist at the Crossroads* (1971), *The Modes of Modern Writing* (1977), *Working with Structuralism* (1981) and *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism* (1990), *Consciousness and the Novel* (2003).

Women writers

In the contemporary period a number of prominent women writers have emerged. They use varying narrative techniques and a wide spectrum of themes in their fictions.

Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) was a dominant figure in the postwar British literary

scene as a philosophical novelist. She published 25 novels and other works, including philosophical essays. Her fiction is sometimes compared to that of Fyodor Dostoevsky and George Eliot. She described the intellectual and artistic circles in England. Murdoch's best novels include *Under the Net* (1954), *The Bell* (1958), *The Unicorn* (1963), *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1965), *The Black Prince* (1973), *The Sea, The Sea* (1978), *The Green Knight* (1993), a story about an emotionally repressed mother of three girls, is a loose travesty of the medieval romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Murdoch's fiction is saturated with existential reflection, mystery, magic, metaphysics and moral dilemmas.

Muriel Spark (1918-2006) was a Scottish-born novelist and poet. Her best known novel is probably *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), which explores a teacher's influence on a group of schoolgirls in Edinburgh in the 1930s. *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1965) is set in Jerusalem in 1961 and tells the story of a pilgrimage to Holy Land made by the half Jewish Catholic convert Barbara Vaughn. *The Driver's Seat* (1970) is a novella in the psychological thriller genre, dealing with themes of alienation, isolation and loss of spiritual values.

The work of the 2007 Nobel Prize winner, **Doris Lessing** (1919-2013), who was born in Persia and grew up in Rhodesia, is characterised by unsparing and often bleak realism. Lessing is interested in such problems as racism, violence, injustice, sexual hypocrisy, alienation and mysticism. *The Golden Notebook* (1962), her most discussed novel, is often regarded as a pioneer work of postwar radical feminism although the author claims that the book deals with many other issues as well.

The Golden Notebook tells the story of a young novelist Anna Wulf, who writes about her experiences in five coloured notebooks. The black notebook records Anna's problems as a writer; the red reflects her political attitudes; the yellow depicts her relationships and emotions; and the blue notebook is a record of everyday events. The fifth, Golden Notebook, integrates all the separate themes of the preceding notebooks. The novel reveals the intellectual and moral climate of London in the 1950s and shows a woman's quest for identity in the postwar world.

Lessing's other novels include *The Grass is Singing* (1950), *Martha's Quest* (1952), *The Summer Before the Dark* (1973), *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974), *The Good Terrorist* (1985), *The Fifth Child* (1988), *Love, Again* (1996), *The Sweetest Dream* (2001), *Alfred and Emily* (2008).

Angela Carter (1940-1992) wrote a kind of postmodern Gothic fiction which mixes the macabre and the erotic. She won literary awards for her novel: *The Magic Toyshop* (1967) and a collection of short stories, *The Bloody Chamber* (1980). *The Infernal Desire Machine of Dr Hoffman* (1972) is a Gothic fantasy describing a city-state which is threatened by the diabolical Doctor Hoffman. Carter's later fiction includes *Nights at the Circus* (1985) and *Wise Children* (1991). She also wrote essays from the feminist standpoint, e.g. *The Sadeian Woman* and *The Ideology of Pornography* (1979).

Anita Brookner (1928-2016), who came from a Polish-Jewish background, wrote, among others, a highly successful novel, *Hotel du Lac* (1984), an introspective account of a few months spent in a Swiss hotel by Edith Hope, an English writer of romantic fiction. Most of Brookner's novels are set in London and explore the alienation of middle-aged female characters, who feel they have been unlucky in love and still yearn for it, but they find it difficult to maintain a lasting relationship. Brookner, whose psychological style is compared to that of Jane Austen and Henry James, is a master of character. Her other works include *Look at Me* (1983), *Latecomers* (1988), *Fraud* (1992), *Undue Influence* (1999) and *The Rules of Engagement* (2003).

Margaret Drabble, who has already published eighteen novels and established herself as one of Britain's major living novelists, has been compared to George Eliot for the skill with which she depicts contemporary English society. She is often associated with the feminist movement and women's issues. Her fiction provides a very sharp view

of the condition of England in the second half of the 20th century, which exposes social injustice and oppression. Drabble presents rebellious female characters in such novels as *A Summer Bird-Cage* (1963), about the female protagonist's conflict between emotional confinement and independence; *The Millstone* (1965), about unmarried motherhood; *The Waterfall* (1969), showing a modern Jane Eyre character; *The Needle's Eyes* (1972), about emotional entanglement. *The Ice Age* (1977) criticises the economic and spiritual condition of England in the 1970s, and *The Middle Ground* (1980) presents an England split between traditional values and contemporary developments. In *The Witch of Exmoor* (1996) Drabble writes about the lonely existence of a renown feminist author and social fragmentation in England, which has recently become a multi-cultural society.

Margaret Drabble's elder sister, **Antonia Byatt** is also regarded as one of the most significant contemporary British writers. She is both a noted literary critic and an outstanding novelist. Her best-known novels, which reflect life in modern Britain include *Possession* (1990), *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978), *Still-Life* (1985), *Babel Tower* (1996) and *A Whistling Woman* (2002). Byatt's erudite writing is often compared to that of George Eliot.

One of the most original and prolific female writers of recent British fiction is **Jeanette Winterson**. Her novels include *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), a **Bildungsroman** about the relationship between a young lesbian and her adoptive mother; *Boating for Beginners* (1985), a postmodern comic re-writing of the Bible; *The Passion* (1987), a postmodern fairy tale set during the Napoleonic Wars.

Winterson's next novels, *Sexing the Cherry* (1989), *Written on the Body* (1992), *Art and Lies* (1994) and *Gut Symmetries* (1997), *The Stone Gods* (2007) deal with dehumanisation of modern society, nature of love and lesbian issues. Jeanette Winterson has also published books for children, e.g. *The King of Capri* (2003), *Lighthousekeeping* (2004) and *Tanglewreck* (2006).

Contemporary prose

Among the writers born after World War II, Ian McEwan, Martin Amis, Julian Barnes and Graham Swift deserve a special mention.

Ian McEwan is one of the foremost novelists, known for his penetrating insights into human psychology. His first two books were short story collections, *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) and *In Between the Sheets* (1978). *The Cement Garden* (1978), his first novel, is about childhood and adolescence. Other McEwan's novels include *The Child in Time* (1987), the story of young parents whose life collapses after their infant daughter is kidnapped; *The Innocent* (1989) reads almost like a spy thriller. It is set in Berlin during the Cold War and describes a personal relationship between a British technician and a German woman; *Black Dogs* (1992) is set in England, Germany, Poland and France, and shows how historical upheavals, including the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s, affect people who once trusted Communism. *Amsterdam* (1998) is a modern morality tale which revolves around the friends and ex lovers of the deceased Molly Lane, who begin to reflect on their own mortality. McEwan was awarded the **Booker Prize** for the novel.

Atonement (2001), regarded as McEwan's best novel, describes the disastrous consequences of a lie told by a 13-year-old girl, Briony Tallis. *Saturday* (2005) is classified as post 9/11 stream-of-consciousness fiction.

McEwan's more recent fiction includes *Sweet Tooth* (2012), *The Children Act* (2014) and *Nutshell* (2016).

Martin Amis writes fiction which has been heavily influenced by the fiction of contemporary American writers, Philip Roth, John Updike, Vladimir Nabokov and Saul Bellow. A central theme in Martin Amis's novels is the "increasingly fluid, unstable nature of selfhood".⁶⁸ His most popular novels include *Money* (1984), *London Fields* (1989) and *Time's Arrow* (1991).

⁶⁸ James Diedrick, *Understanding Amis* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995) 18-19.

Money: A Suicide Note is a satire on capitalist democracies, such as Thatcherite England. The main character and first-person narrator is a self-indulgent buffoon named John Self, a successful director of television commercials, whose personal life is entangled with his new film project. Self disapproves of his life, but as long as he can make money he does not want to change it. Interestingly, Martin Amis himself appears in his own novel as a **foil** that contrasts the protagonist.

London Fields is a grotesque meditation on love, death and the decay of Western civilisation. *Time's Arrow* (1991) recounts the life of a German Holocaust doctor in a reverse chronology. One of Amis's latest books is *House of Meetings* (2006) about two half-brothers who loved the same woman and who were imprisoned together in a Soviet gulag. Amis's 2014 novel, *The Zone of Interest*, concerns the Holocaust, his second work of fiction to tackle the subject after *Time's Arrow*.

Julian Barnes has published ten novels, two books of short stories (*Cross Channel*, 1996 and *The Lemon Table*, 2004), and two collections of essays. His first novel, *Metroland* (1980) is a semi-autobiographical account of the travel of a young man from the London suburbs to Paris. Barnes's highly successful book is *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* (1989), which is a collection of ten loosely connected stories presenting an unusual view of history. *England, England* (1998) is a kind of Swiftian satire on both present-day England and its heritage industry, where history and tradition are held in low esteem. *Love, etc.* (2000) is a continuation of his earlier novel *Talking It Over* (1991), about a love triangle in which each of the three people concerned tells story from their own perspective. *Arthur & George* (2005) recounts the detective adventure of the well-known Arthur Conan Doyle, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories. Barnes' two most recent books are *The Sense of an Ending* (2011), a meditation on ageing, and *The Noise of Time* (2016), about the life of Dmitri Shostakovich, a Soviet composer.

Graham Swift is the author of a number of postmodernist novels and short stories which are narrated either by a single first-person narrator or by several first-person narrators who reflect upon their lives. They try to understand their own past but also the more general historical process. *The Sweet Shop Owner* (1980) is a subtle account of the last day in the life of an ordinary shop-keeper, Willy Chapman. *Shuttlecock* (1981) presents a family drama and generational conflict in the form of psychological thriller. *Learning to Swim and Other Stories* (1982) is a collection of short stories, which explore hidden everyday dramas. *Waterland* (1983) is a complex novel in which Swift blends history with literary fiction.

The narrator of *Waterland* is Tom Crick, a 53-year-old history teacher, who is to lose his job due to cuts in education spending introduced under the Mrs. Thatcher's government. He explores English history in order to look for his own identity. The novel, written in the form of a fictional autobiography, is a postmodern reflection on English history from the industrial revolution until the present time. Swift allegorises the plight of postwar Britain, a nation which has to come to terms with its loss of prominence in the world.

Last Orders (1996) is a **circadian novel**, i.e. a novel that fits all its action into a single day. Swift employs the metaphor of journey of remembrance in the interweaving and interlocking narrative.

The novel gives an account of a journey taken by the friends of Jack Dodds, a butcher, who has made a will that he wants his ashes scattered off the end of Margate pier on the remote southeast coast. Three friends and Jack's adopted son meet in an East London pub to drive down to Margate to carry out Jack's last will. On their way they stop at Canterbury Cathedral, which reminds the reader of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. The title of the novel is a play on the "last orders" taken by a bartender in the pub and the "last orders" given by Jack concerning the disposal of his ashes. *Last Orders* has no omniscient narrator, but in each chapter characters speak from their subjective points of view.

In 2011, Swift published *Wish You Were Here*, a novel about the changing face

of rural England. It is narrated by the last of a long line of West Country farmers who now runs a caravan park on the Isle of Wight with his childhood sweetheart, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer.

Postcolonial and postimperial literature in English

A number of novelists born outside Britain or of foreign origin have contributed significantly to the contemporary British novel. V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro and Hanif Kureishi have received very good reviews and are popular with readers.

V(idiadhar) S(urajprasad) Naipaul (1932-2018), born of Indian parents in Trinidad, is ranked among the most important postcolonial writers. Major themes of Naipaul's fiction include cultural alienation, detachment and anxiety. His early novels, such as *A House for Mr Biswas* (1961) represent West Indian life. The theme of expatriate alienation is presented in *The Mimic Men* (1967) and *In a Free State* (1971). *A Bend in the River* (1979) is a pessimistic description of life in postcolonial Africa. Fact and fiction are often deliberately blurred in Naipaul's novels. Naipaul received the Nobel Prize in 2001.

Salman Rushdie is an Anglo-Indian novelist, who uses various narrative genres and techniques in his fiction: *magic realism*, fantasy and mythology. Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), awarded by the **Booker Prize**, brought him international fame.

This allegorical novel describes the life of the Anglo-Indian narrator Saleem Sinai, the owner of an extraordinary nose. He was born in the year of the Declaration of Independence of India and has telepathic and other supernatural powers together with the 1000 people born on the Indian subcontinent at the same historic moment. The protagonist symbolises India's lack of unity after obtaining political independence.

After publishing *Satanic Verses* (1988) Rushdie was condemned to death by the former Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on February 14, 1989. The novel was banned in India and many Islamic countries. Rushdie's more recent fiction includes *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) and *The Enchantress of Florence* (2008).

Kazuo Ishiguro was born in Nagasaki and came to Britain in 1960. He studied at the University of Kent at Canterbury and the University of East Anglia. All his novels have been acclaimed by critics. In *A Pale View of the Hills* (1982) a widow, Etsuko, recalls her postwar life in Nagasaki, although, characteristically, she never mentions the atomic bomb thrown on the city by the Americans. In *An Artist of the Floating World* (1986) the protagonist, Masuji Ono, also reflects upon his past life. He feels that he wasted his artistic talent serving Japan's military propaganda machine.

The Remains of the Day (1989), the best novel of Ishiguro, derives from several traditions in English fiction: in a way it is a novel of manners in the tradition of Henry James and E.M. Forster, a novel reminiscent of the so-called 'butler literature', reminiscent of the fiction of P(elham) G(renville) Wodehouse, and a symbolic novel.

The Remains of the Day is set in Darlington Hall, a large country house, in the period leading up to, and the period after, World War II. The protagonist and narrator, the butler Stevens, is a representative of certain class attitudes prominent in British society before World War II. He spends all his butler's life in the pursuit of greatness which he understands as 'dignity in keeping with his position'. As the narrator, he is unreliable because the only point of view presented in the novel is his. The style of narration resembles dramatic monologue – the inner journey of Stevens. The symbolic title of the novel refers to evening, which is the time of reflection on a day's work. Stevens looks back and tries to assess his prewar life. The word 'remains' is ambiguous and may suggest that Steven's life was wrecked although he is unable to admit it.

Ishiguro's next novel, *The Unconsoled* (1995) is about a protagonist who cannot

remember. Ryder is a famous pianist who arrives in a central European city to perform a concert. However, he appears to have lost most of his memory and finds his new urban environment mysterious and dreamlike. He struggles to fulfill his commitments before Thursday night's performance. The novel takes place over a period of three days.

In *When We Were Orphans* (2000) the first-person narrator, Christopher Banks cannot escape the memories of his childhood trauma. Ishiguro's latest novel is *Never Let Me Go* (2005), which is set in a dystopian Britain, where human beings are cloned to provide donor organs for transplants.

Ishiguro's novels show a remarkably consistent preoccupation with such themes as memories of the past, guilt, identity, Englishness.

Hanif Kureishi has written novels on the topics of race, nationalism, immigration, and sexuality. His first and most famous novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) deals with the issues of Englishness, national identity and multiculturalism. Kureishi's other novels include *Intimacy* (1998), *Gabriel's Gift* (2003), *The Body* (2003) and *Something to Tell You* (2008).

The postcolonial representation of British-born black and Asian individuals can be found in the fiction of two outstanding female authors Zadie Smith and Monica Ali, who describe immigrants' experience and redefine the concepts of Englishness and Britishness.

Zadie Smith was born in London to a Jamaican mother and an English father. Her first novel, *White Teeth* (2000), is a remarkable portrayal of contemporary English society and an important discourse of Englishness at the turn of the century. Set in a scrubby North London borough, the novel deals with the issues of gender, race, religion, class, history, identity and multiculturalism in contemporary England. Smith's other novels include *The Autograph Man* (2002) and *On Beauty* (2005). A more recent novel by zadie Smith is *Swing Time* (2016), which focuses on two mixed-race girls who dream of a dancing career. It is a story about difficult childhood, music, identity, race and class.

Monica Ali is the author of *Brick Lane* about a Bangladeshi woman, Nazneen, who moves from Bangladesh to London at the age of 18 in order to marry an older man, Chanu Ahmed. Nazneen, who becomes gradually disillusioned with her pompous husband, learns to live in multiethnic and multicultural London.

Poetry

Contemporary poetry has been written predominantly in free verse in a language that resembles everyday speech. Dialect, colloquial and foreign words can often be found in many modern poems. Major poets who were active both before and after World War II include W. H. Auden and Dylan Thomas. Some of the most characteristic poets of the Contemporary Period include Philip Larkin, Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney.

W(ystan) H(ugh) Auden (1907-1973) was associated with the leftist poets, such as Stephen Spender, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice and Chester Kallman. Auden's poetry of the 1920s and 1930s dealt much with the topics of the day: the Depression, unemployment and poverty. During the Spanish Civil War Auden volunteered as an ambulance driver. In 1939 he went to America and became an American citizen but he returned to England and settled down in Oxford in the last period of his life. After the war Auden became interested in Christianity. Auden's poetry is noted for strong didacticism and a tone of moral responsibility.

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) wrote poems which had absorbed the images of his native Wales. In 1934, Thomas published his first volume of poetry, *Eighteen Poems*, which restored a Romantic sensibility to English poetry. In 1936 he published a second volume of poetry, entitled *Twenty-Five Poems*. Thomas also wrote autobiographical short stories entitled *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* (1940). His other most popular works include

the radio play *Under Milk Wood* (posthumously published, 1954) and the sketch “A Child’s Christmas in Wales” (1955).

The Movement and The Group

Two important groups of poets emerged in post-war British poetry: The Movement and the Group. The former included Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, John Wain, Elizabeth Jennings and Thom Gunn. The latter included Philip Hobsbaum and Edward Lucie-Smith.

Philip Larkin (1922-85) wrote both poetry and fiction. His early poems show the influence of Yeats, e.g. *The North Ship* (1945), while his later poems have an affinity with the poetry of Thomas Hardy and W.H. Auden, whom he admired. He wrote about the spiritual vacuity of post-war Britain.

Philip Hobsbaum (1932-2005) was born into a Polish Jewish family. He published four books of poems in the 1960s and 1970s: *The Place's Fault* (1964), *In Retreat* (1966), *Coming Out Fighting* (1969), and *Women and Animals* (1972). Hobsbaum was also a professor of English literature and a literary critic.

A plurality of contemporary poetic voices

Contemporary British poetry can be characterised by a shared interest in narrative and a broad range of poetic styles. The mainstream names include Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, Andrew Motion and Carol Ann Duffy.

The poetry of **Ted Hughes** (1930-98) is indebted to myth and archetype. He also has a fascination with nature and especially animals. Hughes published several collections of poems: *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Crow* (1970), *Cave Birds* (1975), *Season Songs* (1976). He also wrote books for children.

Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) is one of the best known Irish poets. He studied at Queen’s College, Belfast. In 1966 he published his first volume of poetry, *Death of a Naturalist*. His second volume, *Door Into the Dark*, was published in 1969. In the years 1970-1971 he was a guest lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley. He continued to write poems on the Irish past and present, such as *Wintering Out* (1973), *North* (1975), *Field Work* (1979), *Station Island* (1984), *The Hawan Lantern* (1987), *Seeing Things* (1991). Heaney is recognised by many as the ‘most important Irish poet since Yeats’. In his poetry Heaney makes frequent references to the history, language and culture of his native Ireland. He has acknowledged the influence of such poets as Robert Frost and Ted Hughes as well as Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy and even Dante. In 1995, Heaney was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Andrew Motion has been the Poet Laureate for England since 1999. He is also a novelist and the author of several excellent biographies including *Philip Larkin: A Writer’s Life* (1993); *Keats. A Biography* (1997). Motion is a director of Poetry Archive, a web site, which attempts to make poetry accessible to a wider audience, especially younger people.⁶⁹

One of the most popular living poets in Britain is Scottish-born **Carol Ann Duffy**, whose poetry is concerned with gender and social issues. Her poetry collections include *Standing Female Nude* (1985), *The Other Country* (1990) and *Feminine Gospels* (2002). She also writes poems for children (*The Good Child’s Guide to Rock N Roll*, 2003; *The Hat*, 2007).

⁶⁹ If you want to hear poets read their poems, click on www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive.

Drama

Early in the 20th century English drama revived thanks to the plays of George Bernard Shaw. Like Ibsen, Shaw used the drama as a medium for discussing the most controversial issues of his time.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), born in Dublin of Irish parents, was a socialist and founder of the Fabian Society. In the 1880s and 1890s he worked as a journalist and music critic. Disgusted with the poor quality of contemporary plays he began writing dramas himself, influenced by the work of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). Among his numerous plays, the best are *Widower's Houses*, an attack on people who derive their rents from poor tenants living in slums; *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, the social causes of prostitution; *Arms and Men*, deglorification of war; *Candida*; *The Devil's Disciple*, *Caesar and Cleopatra*, *Man and Superman*, *Major Barbara*, and *Pygmalion*, the story of a low-class London flower-seller who is made a lady by a professor of phonetics. Shaw draws on the Greek myth in which the sculptor Pygmalion carved an ivory statue of a maiden and then fell in love with it. In Shaw's play the phonetician Professor Higgins, like Pygmalion, changes the cockney speech of the illiterate flower-girl into upper-class English. *Pygmalion* is a typical Shavian satire. Shaw's plays always deal with important social, political or religious problems. They contain vigorous, witty dialogue and voice their author's opinions on current social evils.

New social drama

After World War II British drama underwent a significant transformation. The most prominent dramatists of the post-war period were the so-called *Angry Young Men*, who included such playwrights as John Osborne, Arnold Wesker and Shelagh Delaney.

John Osborne (1929-1994) wrote *Look Back in Anger* (1957), which was one of the most influential plays of the fifties. It became an enormous success and was later filmed with Richard Burton in the leading role.

The play is set in a one-room attic apartment which is inhabited by Jimmy Porter, his wife Alison, and his friend Cliff Lewis, who has a separate bedroom across the hall. The central character of the play, Jimmy Porter is a young intellectual working-class misfit, who continually criticises his wife and her family because they represent traditional middle-class values. Alison's friend, Helena, calls Alison's father to take her away from the flat. Surprisingly, Helena moves in to live with Jimmy. After some time Alison returns, having miscarried her baby. Helena can no longer stand living with frustrated and irritable Jimmy and leaves. Finally, Alison returns to Jimmy and his angry life.

The impact Osborne had on British theatre was enormous. *Look Back in Anger* revived class issues in the British theatre, which later evolved into so-called kitchen sink drama represented by Arnold Wesker and Shelagh Delaney

Arnold Wesker's (1932-2016) trilogy *Chicken With Barley*, *Roots*, and *I'm Talking About Jerusalem* are important social documents. **Shelagh Delaney** wrote a significant play *A Taste of Honey* (1958) about a young working-class girl who refuses to conform to her dreary surroundings. All these plays dramatised the frustrations of working-class life in 1950s Britain.

The Theatre of the Absurd

Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) was an Irishman who also wrote in French. *Waiting For Godot*, a "tragicomedy in two acts," originally written in French (1952) and then translated into English (1954) by the author, has become one of the most influential plays

of the 20th century.

Waiting for Godot presents two old tramps, Vladimir and Estragon standing on a country road by a leafless tree and waiting for a mysterious Mr Godot. But Godot never comes or he may not exist; the audience does not know. There is very little action in the play; it shows a static situation. "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful." The subject of the play is waiting as part of the human condition. People always wait for something or someone, and nothing ever happens. Change is an illusion. The play emphasises the absurdity of the human condition.

Waiting for Godot and other Beckett's plays are written in the convention of the Theatre of the Absurd. *Endgame*, which depicts an even a more static and hopeless situation, is a modern morality play about alienation and death. In *Krapp's Last Tape* (1959) Beckett depicts a "wearish old man" sitting alone in his room. He has nobody to talk to, so at night he listens to his voice recorded in various periods of his past. *Happy Days* (1960) shows two characters, Winnie buried in the sand mound, and Willie, her mate. Like other Beckett's plays, it is an allegory of the human condition showing alienation, and the lack of communication between people.

Harold Pinter (1930-2008) was one of the leading contemporary playwrights. He was also associated with the Theatre of the Absurd. His best known plays include *The Birthday Party*, *The Dumb Waiter*, *The Caretaker*, *The Homecoming*. They are studies in violence, non-communication and isolation. Pinter's characters seek self-identification and verification of truth but find communication with other people impossible. Instead of genuine communication, there are word games, cliches, long silences, and sinister threats. Pinter's plays have been called "comedies of menace."

In Pinter's first play, *The Birthday Party* (1958), two gangsters interrogate and terrorise a nervous young pianist. *The Caretaker* (1960) shows an old derelict who intrudes on two mysterious brothers and is ultimately thrown out by them. In *The Homecoming* (1965), a married couple visits the lower-class father and brothers of the husband, now a philosophy professor in the United States, and the wife finally remains in England to serve the family as a prostitute.

Pinter's most famous one-act play is perhaps *The Dumb Waiter*. The dramatist has also written screenplays for several memorable films, e.g. *The Servant*, *Accident*, *The Go-Between* and *The French Lieutenant's Women*. Harold Pinter was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2005.

Tom Stoppard is a British playwright of Czech descent. He also wrote *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966), an absurdist, existentialist tragicomedy. The play recreates the exploits of two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Stoppard also co-wrote the screenplay for the film *Shakespeare in Love*.

Sarah Kane (1971-1999) wrote plays (*Blasted*, *Cleansed*, *Crave*, *Psychosis*) which deal with themes of violence, love, sexual desire and death. They are reminiscent of expressionist theatre and Jacobean tragedy.

Farces and comedies: Alan Ayckbourn

Alan Ayckbourn is a popular playwright, whose comedies and farces deal with marital and class conflicts. His most successful comic plays are the trilogy *The Norman Conquests* (1973), *Bedroom Farce* (1975), *Just Between Ourselves* (1976), *A Small Family Business* (1987), and *Private Fears in Public Places* (2004). His plays have been translated into many languages and are performed on stage and television throughout the world.

Further reading

Balutowa, Bronisława. *Powieść angielska XX wieku*. Warszawa: PIW, 1983.

Characteristic features of the period

1. No sharp dividing line between the late 19th and the early 20th century.
2. The British Empire, which had expanded under Queen Victoria throughout most of the 19th century, began to disintegrate in the early 20th century. The aristocracy and the upper classes exerted less influence. Institutions became more democratic.
3. The traditional Victorian novel was finally disrupted by the Irish novelist James Joyce, whose experimental novel *Ulysses* (1922) described the events of a single day and made use of the interior monologue.
4. The main features of Modernism include: an emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity (stream-of-consciousness writing), a departure from the omniscient third-person narrators, fixed authorial points of view and clear-cut moral positions, a blurring distinction between literary genres, an emphasis on discontinuous narratives, fragmentation and randomness, reflexivity and self-consciousness.
5. In 20th century poetry one can notice a movement from traditional poetic diction to new forms of poetic expression. Modern poetry was written predominantly in free verse in a language that was closer to everyday speech. Dialect, colloquial and foreign words could be found in many modern poems.
6. Non-realist and allegorical fiction: George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and *Ninety-Eighty-Four*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, and Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange*.

Assignment for self-study and/or project work

1. Utopian and dystopian themes in British fiction: G.H. Wells, Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Anthony Burgess.
2. Themes and form in post-war English poetry. Discuss the achievement of two British poets.
3. Describe the development of British fiction after World War II. Give examples of authors and their works, and choose two novels to discuss them in more detail. Describe their genre, setting, characters, plot and significance.
4. What makes Graham Greene a Christian existentialist? Illustrate with references to one of his novels.
5. The Angry Young Men and their influence on the literature of the 1950s and 1960.
6. Define the word 'dystopia', explain its origins and discuss its main features on the basis of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.
7. Discuss the basic tenets of postmodernism in literature, using specific examples to illustrate your answers.
8. Explain the major features of a postmodernist novel by the example of referring John Fowles's *French Lieutenant's Woman*.
9. Discuss the phenomenon of postcolonial literature by referring to one chosen contemporary writer writing in English.
10. Present your own interests in particular works of contemporary English literature.

Chapter Seven

Introduction to the history of American literature

The following survey outlines the shaping ideas, forms and periods in American literature from its beginnings in the late 17th century to the early 21st century focusing on major trends, authors and their works. Along the way we will be reflecting on the ways in which literature we are examining engages with ideas and with social conditions and historical moments. We shall consider to what extent the literary texts promote such national myths as the ‘American Dream’ and to what extent they may subvert or argue with them.

Periods of American literature

1607-1776	The Colonial or early American Period
1776-1790	The Revolutionary Period
1790-1820	The Early National Period
1820-1865	The Romantic Period, the American Renaissance or the Age of Transcendentalism
1865-1900	The Realistic Period
1900-1914	The Naturalistic Period
1914-1945	American Modernism, including
1920s-1930s	the “Lost Generation”, “Jazz Age” and Harlem Renaissance
1945-to date	The Contemporary Period, including
1950s	the beat writers,
1970-to date	postmodernism, new realism and ethnic writing

7.1. The Colonial or early American Period (1607-1776)

Colonial American literature begins in the 17th century with an impressive body of travel accounts, diaries, journals, sermons, religious and meditative poems. Most of these writings are of little artistic merit, but they are valuable chiefly as a mirror of early American experience. Although it is difficult to make a clear distinction between ‘colonial’ and ‘Puritan’ American literature, the former term usually refers to accounts written by the English explorers and adventurers who described the American colonies from the English imperial point of view; the latter refers to both non-fictional and fictional writings of Puritan settlers for whom America became their chosen homeland.

For example, **Captain John Smith** (1580-1631) and other English chroniclers of settlement in the 17th century produced literature of the colonial kind. They often described the relationship between the settlers and local nature, and the differences between European and Native American cultures. In turn, Puritan settlers wrote mostly about their spiritual and religious feelings.

The main currents of early American literature are originated in the Puritan offspring of the Reformation. They reflect the Puritan mind: its Calvinistic roots and the morbid consciousness of sin. The American Puritans believed that they were a new Chosen People of God destined to found a new Jerusalem – a New City of God. They were the best-educated of all the English colonists in America. The Puritan tradition had a great influence on the development of American literature and culture.

The most important writers of the early American Period include William

Bradford, John Winthrop, Anne Bradstreet, Michael Wigglesworth, Edward Taylor, Samuel Sewall, Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards.

William Bradford (1590-1657) was one of the leaders of the Mayflower pilgrims and the governor of Plymouth colony. He wrote an account entitled *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the first chronicle written on American soil, and a masterpiece of New England Puritan literature. The chronicle describes the story of the Pilgrims from 1608, when they first settled in the Dutch Republic on the European mainland through the 1620 “Mayflower” voyage to the New World, until the year 1647. The book ends with a list, written in 1651, of “Mayflower” passengers and what happened to them.

John Winthrop (1587/8-1649), the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote a famous sermon ‘City on a Hill’, in which he declared that the Puritan colonists emigrating to the New World were members of a special pact with God to create a holy community. His *Journal* (1630-49) is the major source of knowledge of the colony’s early years.

Anne Bradstreet (c.1612-1672) is regarded as North America’s first published poet. She wrote poetry which reflects both her Puritan moral and religious outlook and her love for nature and the physical world. Although she finds great hope in the promises of religion, she is also fond of describing the present world, especially the realities of her family and home. One of her most popular poems containing elaborate metaphors is ‘To My Dear and Loving Husband’, which reveals her strong feelings of physical and spiritual love for her husband.

Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705) wrote an enormously popular long narrative poem, ‘The Day of Doom’ (1662), which depicts the terrors of the wicked on the Day of Judgment. In another poem titled ‘God’s Controversy with New-England’ (1662), the author suggests that God punished the colonists of New England with the great draught for their insufficient dedication to Him. Wigglesworth’s verse reflects his austere Puritan faith.

Edward Taylor (c. 1642-1729), regarded as the ‘best writer of the Puritan times’, studied at Harvard, where he acquired Latin, Greek and Hebrew. His major poetic achievement is a collection of poems entitled *Preparatory Meditations* which reflect his intense religious devotion. Although Taylor was mainly preoccupied with the Puritan issues of sin and salvation, his verses are more personal, expressing his individual doubts and fears.

Samuel Sewall (1652-1730) was one of the most famous New England’s diarists. His *Diary*, a fascinating piece of Puritan literature, records the transition in social and economic life in Puritan New England in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. He described certain aspects of everyday Puritan life which cannot be found in the diaries of his contemporaries.

Early essayists and orators

Cotton Mather (1663-1728) was the author of some 500 treatises, pamphlets, sermons, dissertations and biographies. His greatest work is the seven-volume *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), a compendium of ecclesiastical history. Mather was one of the chief supporters of Puritan faith which began to lose its fervour at the end of the 17th century. He urged the second and third generations of New England’s colonists to return to the theological roots of Puritanism. Highly influential, Mather also contributed to the shaping of American national consciousness.

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) was a religious leader and theologian in Massachusetts who wrote numerous treatises and sermons, of which 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' (1737) is best remembered. Edwards' sermons contributed to the religious revival in New England called the 'Great Awakening' (the 1730s and 1740s). Like Mather, Edwards called for a return to strict Calvinism but he used arguments based on contemporary ideas derived from the English Enlightenment philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704).

Characteristic features of the period

1. American Puritan literature reflects the Puritan mind: its Calvinistic roots, morbid consciousness of sin, belief in predestination, the absence of free will and the arbitrary division of mankind into the 'elect' and the 'damned'.
2. Typical forms of early American writings were travel accounts, diaries, journals, religious and meditative poems.
3. The Puritan tradition had a great influence on the development of American literature.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. American colonial literature: major genres, themes and representatives of Puritan writings.
2. Define some of the basic concepts of Puritan ideology and illustrate their significance in specific works.
3. The Puritan myths and their significance for American literature.
4. Discuss some of the first Puritan authors of American literature.
5. Discuss how Anne Bradstreet's poetry reflects Puritan thinking.
6. Discuss the idea of the 'Great Awakening' in Jonathan Edwards' writing.
7. Describe Puritan attitudes in William Bradford's journal *Of Plymouth Plantation*.
8. How do such literary genres as chronicles, diaries and sermons reflect the characteristic traits of the American Puritans?

7.2. The Revolutionary Period and the early development of national Period (1776-1820)

The early development of national literature in America coincides with the spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment, which were strongly influential in the Constitution of the United States. The Enlightenment introduced new political theories to the American colonies, such as John Locke's (1632-1704) notions of government with the consent of the governed and the natural rights of man (life, liberty and property). These ideas had an enormous influence on political writings which begin with the first agitations by patriots in the early 1760s, the adoption of the Constitution in 1787 and extend throughout the whole of the Revolutionary Period. The early development of political literature in America can be divided into two stages: the struggle with England for independence and the consolidation of the Union. The most significant writers of the Revolutionary Period include Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Philip Freneau and Washington Irving.

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) made a great contribution to the development of American culture and science. His unfinished *Autobiography* (1771-1788) is an excellent piece of prose. It was originally devised as a book of advice for his son. It reflects some Puritan influence, but generally it is a specimen of Enlightenment literature in which the author's rational, deistic and scientific temperament is reflected. Franklin acknowledges reason as his chief guide in life. He lists thirteen virtues which are necessary for self-improvement. They are: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity and humility. Franklin was one of the

most outstanding representatives of the American Enlightenment.

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was a political philosopher and pamphleteer. Pamphlets were the most popular form of political literature during the 18th century. His *Common Sense* is the most outstanding pamphlet of the American Revolution. Paine wrote that “The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of all mankind”. He called for complete political independence of the American colonies, and he saw the emerging United States as an experiment in democracy.

Common Sense exerted a profound effect on the development of the American Revolution. Published in January 1776 and distributed throughout the colonies in an edition of well over 100,000 copies, *Common Sense* placed blame for the suffering of the colonies directly on the reigning British monarch, George III. The arguments presented in *Common Sense* found reflection in the American Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) wrote a large part of *The Declaration of Independence*, a major political document of the American Revolution. Jefferson had an idea that the United States should be an agricultural nation, which was in opposition to the vision of Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), who saw America as a nation of commerce and industry. In his writings Jefferson promoted the uniqueness and the potential of the United States.

It is interesting to note that Jefferson was influenced by the ideas of Polish brethren or Arians from the 16th century. The Polish brethren advocated, among other things, separation of church from state, equality and brotherhood of all people. After expulsion they emigrated to England and Netherlands, where their works were published and probably influenced political thoughts of the Enlightenment philosophers.

Another writer who contributed significantly to the development of American writing was **John Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur** (1735-1813). He was a Frenchman but he considered himself an American, although he opposed the Revolution. In his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), he gave a detailed description of life in colonial America and during the early years of the United States. He wrote that America is a place where “individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men”. Crèvecoeur was the first European to describe the new American character. His considerations concerning the transformation of European psyche into American contributed to the myth of America as a land of unlimited opportunities and vistas.

Philip Freneau (1752-1832) was the best poet of the Revolutionary Period. His short lyrical poem “The Wild Honeysuckle” has a major place in early American poetry. Freneau’s poetry anticipated American Romanticism in its awareness of nature. Freneau was also a popular political journalist. He was the editor of the *National Gazette*, a newspaper which supported the ideals of Jeffersonian democracy.

Characteristic features of the period

1. Literature in the service of politics: Paine, Franklin, Jefferson, Crèvecoeur as makers of American national myths.
2. The spread of the ideas of the Enlightenment: Franklin.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Features of the American Enlightenment.
2. Benjamin Franklin’s life and achievement. The significance of his *Autobiography*.
3. The elements of the American Dream in Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*.
4. What are the fundamental differences between Puritan thinking and deist thinking?
Analyse the specific literary works that illustrate these differences.
5. The significance of *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine.
6. Crèvecoeur’s idea of America.

7.3. American Romanticism (1820-1865)

The years 1820-1865 in American literature are called the Romantic Period, but they are also referred to as the American Renaissance, New England Renaissance or the Age of Transcendentalism. This period is important for the development of American literature because it sees the establishment of many literary forms, such as the romance, the novel and the short story, as well as the emergence of many enduring themes, e.g. the frontier; nature; individualism. American Romanticism was a significant shift in sensibility which manifested itself by a reaction against the Enlightenment. Nature became the source of spiritual inspiration. The wilderness and Indians were a constant fascination for the Romantic writers in America.

An important theme of American Romanticism was the unity between the self and nature. The idea of “self” was completely redefined. Self was given a positive meaning and it was associated with ‘self-expression’, ‘self-realisation’ and ‘self-reliance’. American Romanticism stressed individualism and the importance of the common person.

The most outstanding writers of the American Romantic Period include Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

Washington Irving (1783-1859), the son of a Presbyterian merchant, was the first American man of letters who became internationally famous for his collections of tales which were modelled on folklore and contained a humorous and typically American (and Romantic) fascination with the exotic, the ancient, and the odd. *The Sketch Book* (1819-1820) contains one of his most famous tales, “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”. Irving is considered to be the first professional writer in America who also won recognition in Europe.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) was the son of a prosperous Quaker landowner, Judge William Cooper, who founded Cooperstown on Lake Otsego in New York state. He studied at Yale but he was expelled because of a prank. In the years 1806-1811 Cooper served in the US Navy. After he married into the distinguished family of the De Lanceys, he lived comfortably as a country gentleman.

Cooper wrote his first novel, *Precautions* (1820) at the age of thirty. It was an imitation of Jane Austen’s novels. His second novel, *The Spy* (1821), about the American War of Independence, was based on Walter Scott’s *Waverley*. It brought him fame and wealth. *The Pioneers* (1823) is the first in his ‘Leatherstocking’ series which also contain *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1841). These novels explore the American wilderness. They tell the story of a frontiersman, Natty Bumppo, also called Leatherstocking, and his Indian companion, Chingachgook. Natty Bumppo embodies the American frontiersman as a natural gentleman. He was the forerunner of the good cowboy of all the American westerns. The “Leatherstocking Tales” depict the early frontier period of American history.

Like Walter Scott in England, Cooper was a Romantic writer who dealt with historical or legendary characters of the recent past. Cooper had the pictorial imagination to describe the beauty of American nature. In the “Leatherstocking Tales” he explored the struggle between wilderness as symbolised by the Indians and civilisation. He suggested that understanding and coexistence between the white colonists and the Indians was possible. Natty Bumppo, who represented unfettered individualism and natural aristocracy, became the friend of the Indian chief Chingachgook. Cooper’s fiction reflects the emergence of Romanticism in America.

Short story

The modern short story is to a great degree an American creation. The pioneer of the genre who gained a worldwide reputation for his own short stories was **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-1849). Poe was born to itinerant actors in Boston. His mother Elizabeth Arnold Poe died when Edgar was two. His father, David Poe disappeared when he was several months old. Edgar was brought up partly in England by his foster parents, Frances Allan and her husband John Allan, a tobacco exporter from Richmond.

Edgar Allan Poe, apart from writing gothic tales and criticism, also wrote some of the best poetry in the English language. His poem "The Raven", which commemorates the death of a girl named Lenore, belongs among the greatest masterpieces of American poetry. Many of his poems deal with the theme of grief after the death of a young woman.

Poe published his first collection of poems when he was eighteen. In Philadelphia, where he later settled, he wrote for literary magazines and published his first short story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" in 1841. Later he moved to New York, where he published short stories and poems, mostly set in an atmosphere of fantasy and terror. Poe followed the European Gothic tradition in his suspense fiction, which together with his poetry, won him fame in America and Europe.

Poe's short stories can be divided into two categories, those of horror, set in a crepuscular world, and those of ratiocination, which set the standard for the modern detective story. The first category includes such stories as: 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'Ligeia', 'Masque of the Red Death', 'The Black Cat' and 'The Cask of Amontillado', while the second group includes 'The Gold Bug' and 'Murders in the Rue Morgue'.

In his essay, *The Philosophy of Composition*, Poe provided a detailed account of the process of designing and writing his famous poem 'The Raven'. He was in favour of strict artistic control instead of spontaneous poetic creation. Poe insisted that the work of art is more important than the personality of the artist and that the composition of a literary work should be like a mathematical problem.

Allegorical and symbolic fiction

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville were the most outstanding imaginative prose writers who represented the symbolic movement in American literature.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), who descended of the Puritan tradition, was concerned chiefly with moral problems. Sin, guilt and the Puritan conscience are the major themes in Hawthorne's fiction. His most famous novel is *The Scarlet Letter*. Others are: *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Marble Faun*, and *The Blithedale Romance*. His novels show deep psychological insight and probe into complex ethical problems.

The Scarlet Letter is a story about sin, morality and the rules which govern the Puritan community. The setting of this romance is Puritan Boston in the 17th century. Hester Prynne, a young bride awaiting her husband, is severely punished for her sin of adultery; she gives birth to a natural child named Pearl. Hester does not want to disclose the identity of Pearl's father and is sentenced to wear the red letter "A" meaning Adultery on her left breast as a symbol of her guilt. Hester's aged husband is thought to have died in Europe, but in fact he is alive and returns to Salem in disguise. Assuming a false name, Roger Chillingworth, he settles in town and soon discovers Hester's former lover, a young and highly revered clergyman, Arthur Dimmesdale, who is tortured by his sin and falls seriously ill. Chillingworth, who claims that he is a physician, visits him very often and eventually he even moves into his house in order to provide him with medical assistance, but actually he deliberately increases Arthur's suffering. Dimmesdale believes that self-inflicted suffering will absolve him from his sin and so later he will be able to go to Heaven. Meanwhile, Dimmesdale denies Hester's love and suffering. When she proposes that they find refuge in Europe, he refuses and warns her that she will go to Hell because she does not regret her misconduct. Hawthorne does not tell the reader whether the act between two lovers was really sinful, although he depicts Hester and her daughter with sympathy. He clearly condemns Chillingworth as a malevolent man.

Another great imaginative writer of the 19th century was **Herman Melville** (1819-1891). After relatively little schooling Melville went to sea. 'A whale ship', as he put it, 'was my Yale College and my Harvard'. His major work *Moby Dick* (1851), an utter failure when published, is now justly considered one of the world's masterpieces. *Moby Dick* mixed a number of literary styles including fictional adventure story, historical detail and even scientific discussion. The story of the voyage of the whaling ship Pequod is partially drawn from Melville's experiences when he was a sailor and a harpooner on whaling ships in the South Seas.

Moby Dick is a richly allegorical work. Within a realistic account of a whaling voyage the author dramatises the conflict between man and his fate.

The main hero of the novel, Captain Ahab, is a monomaniac, whose one purpose is to capture the fierce, cunning, white whale, Moby Dick, which once deprived him of his leg. The characters of the other sailors on the ship are revealed by their reactions. Whales are captured during the pursuit but circumstances seem to conspire against Ahab: storms, lightning, loss of the compass, the drowning of a man and the insanity of Ahab's favourite sailor, Pip. The white whale is finally sighted, and in the first day's chase he smashes a whaleboat. On the second day another boat is swamped, and the captain's ivory leg is snapped off. On the third day the whale is harpooned, but Ahab, fouled in the line, is pinned to Moby Dick, who bears down on the Pequod, Ahab's ship. The ship is sunk. Ishmael, an outcast youth, and the narrator of the story, who had signed up for a voyage on this whaler, is the only survivor.

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) was an abolitionist and writer of more than 10 books, the most famous of which is *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) which describes sentimentally life in slavery. The story was enormously popular. When Abraham Lincoln met Stowe, he joked, 'So you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war'. Critics used the term "Uncle Tom" pejoratively. They accused the author of white paternalism and black characters black of passivity and subservience. However, recently Uncle Tom's passive behaviour was compared to Gandhi's strategy of peaceful resistance.

Transcendentalism

American literature acquired its new identity through the works of such writers as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau, who were known as Transcendentalists. American transcendentalism was a philosophical, religious and a literary movement. Like Romanticism, it was also a reaction against the Enlightenment. Transcendentalism began as a reform movement in the Unitarian church, which denied the Trinity. Transcendental philosophy was based on monism, a belief in the unity of the world and God, i.e. the presence of God in the world.

Transcendentalists believed that the soul of each individual is identical with the soul of the world. Transcendentalists attempted to revive some of the mystical aspects of New England Calvinism and rejected the rationalist idea of God as the "divine watchmaker". Transcendentalists believed that human nature is essentially good, but organised society makes it corrupt. Therefore, they developed the concept of self-reliance which was to protect individuals from the destructive impact of social institutions and materialism. Many transcendentalists propagated a new way of life in utopian communities. They emphasised the importance of personal experience.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was the leading transcendentalist thinker. He described the doctrine of transcendentalism in his essays, especially *Nature* (1836) and *Self-Reliance* (1841). Emerson distinguished two primary categories in the universe: nature and soul. Man's intuition is a direct link with the universal spirit. In 1836 he published his essay *Nature*, in which he claimed that nature is a visible manifestation of an invisible spirit. In *Self-Reliance* he writes that each individual must primarily rely on himself and not on society. Emerson believed in individuality, progress and self-reliance, and was an enlightened anarchist. "The less government we have the better", he declared. His essay,

“The American Scholar” (1837), called America’s literary Declaration of Independence, is an important text that develops the Transcendental theory of art. According to Emerson, the scholar’s education consists of three influences: (1) Nature as the most important influence on the mind; (2) the Past manifested in books; and (3) action and its relation to experience. “The American Scholar” has become a cornerstone of American literature scholarship which has influenced generations of American writers and scholars until today day.

Emerson’s close companion **Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862) opposed institutional restrictions on the individual. He tried to prove that, if necessary, an individual could survive without the help of civilisation. For two years he lived alone in a cabin at Walden Pond which he built for himself. The fruit of his reflections was an extraordinary book entitled *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854) in which he described his experiment in self-sufficient life. It was also an attack on social conformity and a celebration of individualism. In 1848 Thoreau chose to go to prison rather than pay toll tax to the state government. In his famous essay, *On Civil Disobedience* (1849), he explained his reasons for going to prison, that he wanted to protest against government control over individual lives. Thoreau is regarded as the voice of American individualism. He has inspired a number of civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King.

Fireside poets

The Fireside poets comprised William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. They were popular both in the United States and in Europe. They wrote poetry suitable for memorization and recitation, particularly in schools and at home, hence they were also called Schoolroom or Household poets. Their poetry dealt with nature, domestic life, and myths of the American past.

William Cullen Bryant (1794–1878) was one of the earliest American poets who exhibited Romantic imagination in his poetry. One of his best-known poems is “Thanatopsis” (1811), in which he celebrates nature as a source of joy and escape for people.

*Go forth, under the open sky, and list
To Nature’s teachings, while from all around –
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air –
Comes a still voice.*⁷⁰

Bryant’s other poems, such as ‘Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood’ (1817), ‘A Forest Hymn’ (1825), and ‘To the Fringed Gentian’ (1832), brought him recognition both in the United States and abroad.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) was the most popular poet of his time. He became known for his greatest work in verse *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855), a long epic poem dealing with the life of a young Indian warrior. Longfellow employed a poetic metre based on that of the Finnish epic *Kalevala*. In his other poetry Longfellow presented myths of the American past. He also made a translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* (1867). After his death, he was the first American whose bust was placed in the Poet’s Corner in Westminster Abbey.

⁷⁰ William Cullen Bryant, “Thanatopsis“, in David Lehman, ed. *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 24.

Longfellow was a member of the so-called Boston Brahmins, the elite coterie of New Englanders who claimed hereditary or cultural descent from the original Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Besides Longfellow, the group included John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892), Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894), James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) and Margaret Fuller (1810-1850).

John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) was a Quaker poet, who advocated the abolition of slavery in the United States. He is now largely remembered for his patriotic poems and hymns. **James Russell Lowell** (1819-1891) was also an abolitionist like Whittier. He wrote poetry, satires and antislavery essays. **Oliver Wendell Holmes** (1809-1894) was a physician, medical-school professor, and man of letters. Among his best poems are "Old Ironsides" (1830), about an 18th century ship which was saved as a historic monument; and "The Last Leaf" (1830), which Abraham Lincoln memorized.

Poetry

Walt Whitman (1819-1892) was perhaps the most distinctly American poet of the 19th century. Born on Long Island, New York, Whitman was self-taught having left school at the age of 11. His most important book is *Leaves of Grass* (1855), which he rewrote and revised several times. In *Leaves of Grass*, written in unrhymed free verse, Whitman celebrates his native country as a land of great promise and enormous potential. He wrote: 'The United States is essentially the greatest poem'. Whitman is a great prophet of American democracy.

Leaves of Grass contains some of Whitman's most memorable poems, e.g. 'Song of Myself', the most characteristic poem in the book, 'I Hear America Singing', 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry', 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking', 'When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd', 'O Captain, My Captain' (the last two are elegies on Lincoln's death). Most of his poems deal with man and nature.

Whitman was fascinated by the idea of American democracy, individualism and pluralism. He believed that America needed a new form of literature which would boost its hidden potential. *Leaves of Grass* was written under the inspiration of Emerson's essays, especially the one entitled 'The Poet'. Whitman had a great impact on the future development of American poetry.

In 'Song of Myself' Whitman celebrates individualism and his identity as an American. His Romantic self is the main theme of the poem. Whitman's vision of America was idealised by memory of its great past: the individualism of Jefferson, the transcendental humanitarianism of Emerson and the apotheosis of the common man of the Age of Jackson. His poetry was completely different from any other poetry of the day.

Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) is recognised as one of America's finest and most original poets. She wrote over 1,700 little poems which were published after her death. In revealing her inner experience Dickinson anticipated the style of twentieth-century poetry, particularly in her use of ellipsis and ambiguity. At the same time her poetry is astonishingly frank and direct.

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst, a small Calvinist village in Massachusetts. Her father was a successful lawyer. Except for a brief stay in a college and a trip to Washington, DC with her sister, she lived all her life in seclusion in her parents' home. Only seven of Dickinson's poems were published during her lifetime, although none with her consent. Puritanism and Transcendentalism were major influences in Dickinson's life. Her poetry reveals deep inspiration in nature, and an imagistic compressed style (as opposed to Whitman's style).

Characteristic features of the period

1. Washington Irving's preromanticism.
2. Literary domestication of America in "The Leatherstocking Tales."
3. Aspects of American Romanticism: self-examination, celebration of individualism and the integral relations between nature and man.

4. Basic tenets of Transcendentalism and their implications for literature: individualism and self-reliance. Emerson's essays as declarations of America's literary independence. Thoreau's concepts of individualism, nonconformism and civil disobedience.
5. Edgar Allan Poe's explorations of the human psyche in his poems and stories.
6. Hawthorne's and Melville's allegorical and symbolic fiction: meditations on the human condition, obsession with the past, the nature of evil and sin.
7. Walt Whitman's innovative and visionary poetry as an expression of America's democratic spirit.
8. Religious influence of Emily Dickinson's poetry: Puritanism and Transcendentalism.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. The literary achievement of James Fenimore Cooper.
2. Significance of Romanticism for speeding up the birth of national literature.
3. Recurrent motifs and themes of Edgar Allan Poe's tales and poetry. The Gothic elements in Poe's fiction and poetry.
4. Emerson's and Thoreau's transcendental ideas in their selected writing.
5. Allegory and symbols in the fiction of Washington Irving, Hawthorne, Poe and Melville.
6. Main themes and the symbolism of Hawthorne's writings.
7. Various interpretations of *Moby Dick*. The symbolism of *Moby Dick*.
8. The themes, form and diction of Emily Dickinson's poetry.
9. The themes and form of Walt Whitman's poetry.
10. Analyse Walt Whitman's poem 'The Song of Myself'. Discuss the various ways that Whitman conveys meaning through his choice and placement of words as well as his use of literary devices, such as persona, metaphor and symbolism.
11. Walt Whitman's vision of the United States as a great poem.

Assignments for The Scarlet Letter

Read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne and discuss:

1. What were the characteristic features of Puritan culture?
2. What is the significance of the title of the novel?
3. How do we learn about Hester's secret?
4. Describe the characters of Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth and Hester Prynne.
5. Discuss Pearl as a symbol.
6. Discuss the relationships between Hester and Dimmesdale, Hester and Chillingworth, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, Dimmesdale and Pearl.
7. How does Dimmesdale assess his conduct? Does he consider himself to be 'saved' or 'damned'?
8. Discuss the conclusion of the novel.
9. Comment on Hawthorne's method of narration.

7.4. The Realistic Period (1865-1900)

Following the Civil War, The United States experienced a rapid population and economic growth. American literature entered the Realistic Period. Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry James and Edith Wharton contributed significantly to the shift from romance to realism in prose. The Realistic Period was a reaction to Romanticism. It also included the so-called "local colour" writers: Bret Harte and Kate Chopin.

Mark Twain (1835-1910), whose real name was Samuel Langhorne Clemens, is well-known as a splendid comic realist. Twain had unusual inventive powers and a genius for creating character. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) is considered by some

to be the greatest American novel. Ernest Hemingway once said that all of modern American literature comes from this one book. The journey of Huck along the Mississippi River is a voyage into the American past. Together with *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), the two novels provide nostalgic recollections of Twain's youth spent in Hannibal, Missouri.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn may be interpreted in several ways. At first glance it is a picaresque novel in which young Huck Finn relates his adventures as he travels down the Mississippi River on a raft with a runaway slave named Jim. It is also a satire on American society and the constraints of civilisation.

The beginning of the novel is set in the Mississippi River town of St. Petersburg. Huck, the main character and narrator, is an abandoned boy, the son of the town drunkard, who recounts his adventures. At the beginning of the novel Huck introduces himself: he is a boy who had lived wild and free until certain adventures with his friend Tom Sawyer led him to the discovery of a small fortune in gold. He is now living with Widow Douglas and her sister Miss Watson. He dislikes his new way of life and feels sad and lonely. Huck's father has learned of his son's money and has come to take it from him. Soon he finds out that the money is with Judge Thatcher and he cannot have it. He catches Huck and takes him away. For some time Huck likes the return to his old way of life but finally he decides to escape. While he is making preparations his father gets drunk and tries to kill him in drunken madness. Huck fakes his own death by leaving a bloody axe in the house and escapes in a canoe. He finds Jim, the runaway slave and then they continue the journey down the Mississippi River on the raft together. On their way they help two strange tramps who claim that they are to be a king and a duke. They sell Jim into captivity, but in the end of the book Tom reappears in time to help Huck to rescue Jim, although this help turns out to be unnecessary because Jim has been given freedom.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a highly symbolic novel on the nature of 'American experience' and a contribution to the American myth of the frontier. A significant aspect of the novel is Twain's use of local dialect. Twain's style is realistic, humorous and colloquial.

Twain's other books include *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). He also wrote short stories. The most memorable are "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898) and "The Mysterious Stranger" (published posthumously). Twain exerted a significant influence on twentieth-century American literature.

A friend of Twain, **William Dean Howells** (1837-1920) wrote works of realistic fiction which have become classics in American literature. His best novels include *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885). The first deals with the subject of divorce which was not talked about openly at that time. In his next novel Howells attacked popular romantic fiction. As a realist, he described the history of an ordinary, uneducated man who becomes rich and wants to join 'high society' in Boston. Later Howells wrote the "utopian" romance about an ideal society, *A Traveler from Altruria* (1894).

Henry James (1843-1916) contributed to the transition of fiction from 19th century realism to 20th century modernism. He developed a new subgenre – the psychological novel, in which he attempted to present an objective approach to the description of human behaviour and concrete reality (faithful representation of life). James, who travelled frequently to Europe and in 1875 settled permanently in England, became a British citizen in 1915. His fiction is concentrated on the contrast and conflict between a young, uncorrupted and naive America and an old, civilised but corrupt Europe. In James's "European" novels and stories, his American protagonists win a moral victory over the more cultivated, but morally ambiguous Europeans. Europe is often represented as a museum-world.

James's literary output is usually divided into three phases: early realism,

psychological realism and the “major phase” which was characterised by experiments in narrative techniques. James was interested in psychology. In his fiction he described the complex inner lives of his characters. He described the impact of European civilisation on the American mind. James’s American characters are usually victims of their European counterparts. However, they achieve freedom through perception and understanding of their situation.

The theme of the American abroad was explored successfully by James in his novelette, *Daisy Miller* (1879), which is one of the most interesting studies of a female character in American fiction. The tragic fate of the title character, young Daisy, symbolises the clash of American innocence and spontaneity with European propriety and custom.

Daisy, a young, pretty, honest and free-spirited American woman, who travels to Europe with her rather simple mother, dies of malaria in Rome after spending an evening with a man named Giovanelli at the Colosseum. She is innocent and naive although her behaviour is sometimes shocking to Europeans.

James’s best novels include *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Wings of the Dove*, (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). Much of his fiction has to do with the predicament of the expatriate.

The Portrait of a Lady (1881) is perhaps James’s most popular novel. It continues the theme of an American quest in Europe.

Isabel Archer is a pretty, intelligent and attractive young lady who comes to Europe from America. She has had a few suitors. One of them is Caspar Goodwood, the son of a wealthy Boston mill owner. Isabel is drawn to Caspar, but she feels that marrying him would be to sacrifice her own freedom. She also refuses the proposal of marriage made by a typical English aristocrat Lord Warburton, and eventually marries an American expatriate, Gilbert Osmond, a man of no social standing or wealth, who takes her for her money. She remains loyal to him although she soon realises his vicious nature and worthlessness.

James prepared the foundations for a new theory of fiction in his famous essay *The Art of Fiction* (1884). He believed that the novel is the best form of art for expressing the truth of life. He attacked Victorian sentimentality and naive didacticism. His prose is difficult to read as it consists of long and complex sentences. James modified narrative technique; the key elements in his novels are the invisible narrator and different points of view. James’s narrator reveals the characters’ subjective consciousness.

Like Henry James, **Edith Wharton** (1862-1937) contrasted America and Europe and portrayed the changing American society in such novels as *The House of Mirth* (1905), *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and *Ethan Frome* (1911), her most famous novel. In her fiction the natural instincts of the individual tend to be stifled by a hypocritical society.

Local colourists

Local colourists included a group of writers, such as Bret Harte, Kate Chopin and Ellen Glasgow, who dealt in their fiction particularly with one region. They described in detail local speech, customs, and dress.

Bret Harte (1836-1902) wrote a number of adventure stories, of which “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” (1870) is best remembered. They are set in the western mining area. Harte realistically presented such characters as miners, gamblers and prostitutes.

Kate Chopin (1851-1904) was a late 19th-century feminist (she smoked and walked alone in public without a companion). When she married Oscar Chopin, a cotton businessman, she spent 10 years in New Orleans and then returned to St. Louis after the sudden death of her husband. Chopin, who was impressed by Zola and de Maupassant, wrote two novels *At Fault* (1890) and *The Awakening* (1899), and over 150 short stories; many of them in local colour, e.g. “Bayou Folk” (1894). *The Awakening*, a psychological story of a

new woman looking for sexual and artistic fulfilment, was not fully appreciated until the 1960s with the emergence of the feminist movement in America.

Ellen Glasgow (1873-1945) was a local colourist and an early feminist. She wrote 20 novels, mainly about life in her home state Virginia. *The Battle-Ground* (1902) is story of the injustices of the Civil War era. *The Deliverance* (1904) gives a naturalistic depiction of the class conflicts after the Civil War. *Barren Ground* (1925) is an account of the grim life of a rural Virginia woman. Glasgow was an influence on the younger writers from the South, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty and William Faulkner.

Willa Cather (1873-1947) wrote novels about immigrant pioneer life in Nebraska, such as *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of a Lark* (1915) and *My Ántonia* (1918). Her novels are characterized by strong female characters, a deep love of the land and a distaste for the materialism and conformism of modern American life.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The development of realism in American fiction (Mark Twain, Henry James).
2. The beginning of feminist fiction (Kate Chopin).
3. Local colour fiction (Bret Harte, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow, Willa Cather).

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. The development of realism in the American novel (Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, Henry James).
2. Mark Twain's picture of the South in a selected novel or a short story.
3. Mark Twain's and Henry James's contrasting perceptions of Europe and America.
4. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as an American classic and moral commentary on the American experience.
5. The symbolic meaning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.
6. The features of Mark Twain's narrative.
7. The theme of an American in Europe in American fiction.
8. American versus European manner and mentality in a selected Henry James novel.
9. The theme and narrative technique of *Daisy Miller*.

7.5. The Naturalistic Period (1900-1914)

American Naturalism was a literary expression of the philosophical idea of determinism. In literature, naturalism was associated with the French writer, Émile Zola (1840-1902), who emphasised particularly the effect of heredity and environment on human nature and action. American naturalists were influenced by Charles Darwin's biological determinism and Karl Marx's economic determinism. They believed that literary composition should be based on an objective, empirical presentation of human beings. In their fictions they attempted to apply methods of scientific observation to the depiction of pathological human character. They perceived human behaviour in terms of the interplay between instinctual drives and environmental conditions. Human behaviour is controlled by instinct, emotion, or social and economic conditions. Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London and Theodore Dreiser are the most outstanding American Naturalists. Some elements of the naturalist narrative technique can be found in the novels of Sinclair Lewis and Upton Sinclair.

Stephen Crane (1871-1900) wrote a naturalistic novel about the brutality and degradation of the New York slums, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893), and *The Red Badge*

of Courage (1895), which made him famous. The themes of the former novel include the role of the environment in the shaping of individual lives, social determinism and the causes of prostitution. Written in an impressionistic technique, the latter novel shows the atrocity of the Civil War. Crane shows that the world is an incomprehensible chaos and the only consolation is fellowship between men. The story is told from the point of view of a common soldier, Henry Fleming, who perceives war as dreadful and absurd.

Frank Norris (1870-1902) wrote two successful novels in the naturalistic convention, *McTeague* (1899), a story of degeneration and bestiality; and *The Octopus* (1901), about a conflict between California farmers and the railway corporation. The influence of Émile Zola is apparent in all Norris's fiction, which focuses on human greed, depravity and suffering.

Jack London (1876-1916) grew up in poverty and as a youth led an itinerant and adventurous life. He had a passion for the sea and worked for some time as a merchant sailor. A self-educated man, influenced by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, London came to believe in the survival of the fittest, i.e. that only the best-adapted or the "fittest" in Darwin's theory, win in life. His early stories, such as *The Call of the Wild* (1903), *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), and *White Fang* (1906) show that the laws of nature determine not only the life of an animal but also the human fate. London's outlook was a mixture of Darwinian determinism and Marxian socialism. His later writings include a semi-autobiographical novel, *Martin Eden* (1909), which can be read as a metaphor of individual failure and a critique of the American Dream.

The protagonist in *Martin Eden* is a young self-taught sailor and worker who becomes a successful writer. However, he is soon disillusioned by the new world he has entered and drowns himself during a voyage to the South Seas.

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) was called the Zola of American fiction although he was much closer to the English writer Thomas Hardy in his combination of naturalism and tragedy. Dreiser was interested in social problems. His major fiction includes *Sister Carrie* (1900) and *An American Tragedy* (1925).

The heroine of *Sister Carrie* is Carrie Meeber, a poor but pretty country girl who comes to Chicago to look for work. She is seduced first by a commercial traveller and then by a restaurant manager. Carrie moves from one relationship to another, but eventually she achieves success as an actress. The novel shows the destructive impact of a modern city on human personality.

The hero of *An American Tragedy*, Clyde Griffith, is a poor worker who decides to get rid of his fiancée, Roberta, whom he has made pregnant and who stands in his way. She is drowned partly by accident. Clyde is tried and executed for murder. The novel is a study of crime and the dangers of the American Dream, the effects of urbanisation, modernisation and alienation.

Dreiser's style is sometimes clumsy and awkward but his fiction gives a realistic picture of contemporary America.

Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951), born in Sauk Center, Minnesota used this town as the setting for his most famous novel *Main Street* (1920), which he wrote in a style known as photographic realism. The novel presents a satirical portrait of Gopher Prairie, a dull and conservative midwestern small town.

His next novel, *Babbitt* (1922), set in a fictional small town called Zenith and nicknamed Zip City by its residents, is a story about an "average" American. George F. Babbitt, a middle-aged real-estate broker, is a typical conformist whose life is mechanical and repetitive. This novel gave rise to the term 'babbity' which denotes uncritical conformity to prevailing middle-class standards. Lewis was the first American to be awarded the Nobel

Prize for Literature in 1930.

Muckrakers

Some American writers in the early 20th century practised investigative journalism and wrote novels based on real events in order to expose corruption in business and politics. They were called the **muckrakers**. An example of muckraking narrative is Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle* about the scandal in the meat-packing industry in Chicago.

Upton Sinclair (1878-1968) was an outstanding writer and social reformer who denounced iniquities of the capitalist system. In his first successful novel, *The Jungle* (1906), he described immigrant workers in the Chicago stockyards who undergo a series of horrors and tragedies. Sinclair exposed the terrible conditions in Chicago's meat-packing industry which led to the introduction of the Meat Inspection Act by Congress. Sinclair used his fiction as a form of propaganda. His characters are less important than his message of the need for reform.

Characteristic features of the period

1. The influence of Darwinian determinism on American Naturalists; exposure of acute social problems; individuals are viewed as victims of economic, social and natural laws beyond their control; depiction of lower-class life
2. The emergence of socially conscious literature in America between the 1920s and 1950s (muckrakers and others).

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Stephen Crane as an early American naturalist.
2. Stephen Crane's naturalistic mode of writing in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.
3. An analysis of Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*.
4. Theodore Dreiser's vision of man and society.
5. Socially conscious literature in America in the early 20th century.

7.6. American Modernism (1914-1945)

Modernism can be described as an innovative style of 20th-century literature in its first few decades. Modernist writers rejected the traditional literary forms and values of 19th-century literature, and some of them were profoundly influenced by the psychology of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1861). Both art and literature emphasised the central role of the unconscious mind, the importance of the irrational and the use of myth. Modernist writers often replaced the traditional narrative technique with the so-called stream of consciousness technique or internal monologue. Internal experience rather than "outward reality" was emphasised.

As a period in the history of American literature, Modernism refers to the years 1914-1945, although this division is arbitrary. It represented a vigorous attack on literary tradition. The universal, harmonious vision of the Romantic world was replaced by a vision of a pluralistic and chaotic world. Subjectivity, blurring distinction between literary genres, emphasis on discontinuous narratives, fragmentation and randomness, reflexivity and self-consciousness are some of the key features of American Modernist literature. Other features include stylistic innovations, such as disruption of traditional syntax and form. Among American Modernist prose writers the most outstanding are Sherwood Anderson, F(rancis) Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner and John Dos Passos.

The short story revived in America in the period after World War I. It tended to be particularly concerned with the problems of the day. Many short stories of the Twenties and Thirties voiced a distrust of society; and revealed the disillusionment and moral disintegration of post World War I America. The short story was the favourite literary form of such writers as Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway.

The “Lost Generation” and other pre-war writers (1920-1939)

American Modernism can be subdivided into several shorter periods or distinct trends. Thus the period following the end of World War I is often called the decade of the “Lost Generation”. Many talented young American writers and intellectuals lived and wrote books for some time in Europe, particularly in France. In the 1920s and 1930s, Paris was a fascinating place boasting of such notable artists and writers as James Joyce, Jean Cocteau, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and numerous others.

Many of them were in the circle of influence of **Gertrude Stein** (1874-1946), an American avant-garde author. Disillusioned by the War as well as by the social and political situation in the US, they wrote about loneliness, alienation and failure. They felt alienated both from traditional pre-war values and from their own roots in the United States. ‘You are all a lost generation’, Gertrude Stein said to one of those expatriates, Ernest Hemingway, who used this phrase as the epigraph of his novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).

The most significant writers of the ‘Lost Generation’ were Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner. These writers were framed not so much by their American cultural heritage as by World War I and self-imposed exile.

Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) exerted influence on many American writers of the next generation. He won recognition with his collection of excellent short stories, *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), complex psychological studies of lonely and disillusioned individuals in a small town.

F(rancis) Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) is regarded as a prominent representative of the ‘Lost Generation’ and a symbol of the Jazz Age. His novels include *This Side of Paradise* (1920), a semiautobiographical story of the handsome and idealistic Princeton student Amory Blaine; *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922), also a semi-autobiographical satirical story of Anthony Patch, a socialite and presumptive heir to a tycoon’s fortune, and his self-willed wife, Gloria, during the Jazz Age; *The Great Gatsby* (1925), a story of hope and disillusion, which evokes the spirit of the Jazz Age; *Tender Is the Night* (1934), a psychological portrait of Americans living on the French Riviera in the 1930s; and an unfinished study of Hollywood, *The Last Tycoon* (1941). The title of the novel is taken from the poem “Ode to a Nightingale” by John Keats.

The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald’s best novel, evokes the atmosphere of the Twenties with its Prohibition laws, wealth, jazz, extravagance and optimism. Fitzgerald shows the intellectual and moral emptiness of American society. The novel has a circular, not linear, narration structure. Nick Carraway, with a non-omniscient point of view, begins his story after Gatsby has died. The mysterious Jay Gatsby is a self-made man who gets rich by illegal dealings. He tries to belong to “high society” in order to regain his old love, Daisy. She is beautiful and rich but heartless and egoistic. The novel, revealing the influence of Henry James, Joseph Conrad and T. S. Eliot, presents in a symbolic way a critique of the American Dream, i.e. the conflict between materialism and idealism that is at the core of the American character.

Fitzgerald was an outstanding critic of the American Dream, an ideal of equal opportunity and material success. In his fiction he showed tension between the ideal and reality.

Besides novels, Fitzgerald wrote more than 150 short stories; some of them appeared in four books: *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920), *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922) including “The Diamond As Big As the Ritz”. Many of his short stories belong among masterpieces of the genre.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was born and grew up in Oak Park, Illinois. After graduation from high school he began working as a reporter for the *Kansas City Star*. Hemingway was a novelist and short-story writer whose succinct and lucid style exerted a

powerful influence on many American and European writers. *Three Stories and Ten Poems* (1923) followed his World War I experiences in Europe. His first notable success came in 1926 with *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), a fictional reminiscence of 'lost generation' expatriates in Paris in the 1920s.

The main character of the novel is Jake Barnes, a journalist. Although a war wound has made Jake impotent, he and Robert Cohn, another American, are rivals for the attentions of Lady Brett Ashley. The action is set in Paris and in Spain. During the fiesta of San Fermin, a bullfighter named Pedro Romero makes advances to Lady Brett, who rejects her Spanish lover and returns to Jake.

Two short-story collections, *Men Without Women* (1927) and *Winners Take Nothing* (1933) advanced Hemingway's reputation in this genre. His fame as a novelist was consolidated by an excellent novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), based on his Italian experience during World War I. It embodies his hatred of war through the tragic story of a US officer and a British nurse in wartime Italy and neutral Switzerland. *To Have and Have Not* (1937) is a novel about a Caribbean desperado, set against a background of lower-class violence and upper-class decadence in Key West, Florida. Meantime, the Spanish Civil War attracted Hemingway's interest.

For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), his greatest novel, relates an episode of the Spanish Civil War involving a US volunteer who joins a guerrilla band behind the rebel lines in the Guadarrama mountains. The story masterfully embodies Hemingway's sense of the tragic betrayal of the Spanish people and the theme of individual responsibility. The protagonist, an American volunteer named Robert Jordan, who is fatally wounded while blowing up a bridge, says "I have fought for what I believed in for a year. If we win here we will win everywhere..."

His short novel (or novella), *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) is the allegorical heroic story of an aged Cuban fisherman's lone pursuit of a great marlin in the Gulf north of the island. Santiago captured a gigantic marlin but he could not bring it to the shore because it was devoured by sharks. The novel won the Pulitzer prize in fiction for 1953 and helped Hemingway to win the Nobel prize for literature in 1954. Hemingway's death was caused by self-inflicted gunshot wound which took place at his home in Ketchum, Idaho, on July 2, 1961. Whether the shooting was intentional or accidental was not determined.

William Faulkner (1897-1962) is considered by some a representative of the 'Lost Generation', although he lived briefly in Paris in 1925. He mainly wrote 'sagas' (his own word) about the American South. His first important novel, *Sartoris* (1929), set in the fictitious Yoknapatawpha country (Lafayette County) of northern Missouri, belongs to a cycle of narratives which includes: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936), *Go Down Moses and other Stories* (1942), *Sanctuary* (1931), *The Hamlet* (1940), *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), which are studies of old southern families, relating their past, present and future. Dealing with all levels of southern society, Faulkner saw the South as doomed by its sinful exploitation of land and man. American readers, at first found Faulkner's experimental style obscure and his characters excessively brutal, but the nightmare world which these readers came to accept as a set of symbols for personal and social disintegration more readily impressed European readers. Emphasising the presence of the past in people's awareness, the power of fate, and the value of personal endurance, Faulkner transcended his region and his country to speak to a wider circle of readers throughout the world. In 1949 he received the Nobel Prize. The aristocratic Sartoris family, the Snopes and others are some of the most memorable characters in American fiction. Faulkner pushed the American novel to the limits of fictional convention. He successfully utilised the technique of interior monologue.

Another significant writer of the "Lost Generation" was **John Dos Passos** (1896-1970), who appeared on the literary scene in 1921 with the publication of his antiwar novel, *The Three Soldiers*. His subsequent works are focused on the critique of modern American

society and urban alienation. Dos Passos was a writer of great originality. His narratives have a kaleidoscopic structure and the author's method of writing resembled that of a "newsreel" camera. *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) and the panoramic trilogy *U.S.A* (*The 42nd Parallel*, *Nineteen Nineteen*, and *The Big Money*, 1930-1936) portray American society between 1900 and 1930.

Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938), not affected by World War I, is not considered a representative of the "Lost Generation", although he made several trips to Europe, where his self-consciousness as an American was intensified. However, he has some affinity with the "Lost Generation." Wolfe wrote four novels, several plays and a number of short stories. His most important novel is *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929), which describes the adolescence of Eugene Gant. The book is regarded as a chronicle of American sensibility. His other novels are *Of Time and the River* (1935), *The Web and the Rock* (1939) and *You Can't Go Home Again* (1940).

Although Wolfe's novels and short stories do not depart significantly from the mainstream tradition of American realism, their style, particularly the use of interior monologue, resembles that of James Joyce. A predominant theme of Wolfe's fiction is the story of a hyperconscious individual lost in the swarm of modern life.

In the 1930s, when a sweeping depression brought the US to its knees, a number of writers began to write so-called socially committed literature, i.e. novels, short stories, dramas and poems which dealt with the problems of poverty, social injustice and degradation of common people. John Steinbeck and Erskine Caldwell were perhaps the most outstanding social novelists of the Thirties and Forties.

John Steinbeck (1902-1968) enjoyed success after the publication of *Tortilla Flat* (1935). The succeeding works, *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937), and especially *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), placed him among the best American fiction writers. *The Grapes of Wrath* described the fate of an Oklahoma farming family driven by drought and the Depression to abandon their land and move to California as migratory labourers. His later books include *Cannery Row* (1945), *The Wayward Bus* (1947), *East of Eden* (1952), *Travels With Charlie* (1962), and a short story entitled *The Pearl*. In 1962, Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize.

Erskine Caldwell (1903-1987) was one of most widely read, prolific writers, with a literary output of more than sixty titles. He described human degradation and rural poverty in the South with irony and sympathy in such works as *Tobacco Road* (1932), *God's Little Acre* (1933), *Georgia Boy* (1943).

Poetry in transition (1900-1914)

Early in the 20th century American poetry began to change its traditional form and content although some poets followed the Whitman tradition of loose versification and the celebration of America. Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Carl Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay are the most prominent poets of the period of transition between the traditional post-Romantic poetry and Modernism.

Edgar Lee Masters (1868-1950) achieved success with the publication of *Spoon River Anthology* (1915), which is a sequence of some 200 poems written in the form of confessions of men and women buried in the cemetery of a small Midwest town. These unusual epitaphs reveal the secret lives of common people, their joys, sins and griefs. Each poem has a dramatic story to tell.

Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869-1935) is regarded as the most important American poet of the period between the 1890s and 1910s. He wrote in conventional form ironic poetic portraits of American small towns, although he rejected 19th century poetic forms and conventions influenced by Emerson and Whitman. The poems from his earlier

period, especially the Tilbury Town cycle, show men who failed to achieve financial success in life but instead were successful on a moral or spiritual level. The frequent themes of his poetry include: loss of love, suicide, individualism and responsibility.

Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) wrote about industrial America in *Chicago Poems* (1916). Later he travelled about the US and collected folk songs which he published in *The American Songbag* (1927) containing 280 songs and ballads which he collected from convicts, cowboys and farmers.

Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931), was a mystical poet, self-fashioned troubadour and tramp. He walked through America giving recitals and lectures and sold copies of his poems. Lindsay's original recitations were the source of his fame. He shouted and sang his poems.

Modernist poetry (1914-1945)

American Modernist poetry is associated with such leading exponents as Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, who changed the traditional form and content of poetry by technical innovations, such as free verse and the dislocation of the authorial presence. Modernist poetry is anti-Romantic and impersonal, discontinuous and non-discursive. It shows glimpses which the reader must put together. Image is the most important element of a poem.

Imagism was a brief but characteristic movement of early 20th century poets in America and Europe who rebelled against Romantic poetic diction. The Imagists followed three principles in their poetry: a direct treatment of the subject, omission of any word that was not essential to the presentation and maintaining the musicality of phrase rather than strict regularity of poetic rhythm. The most notable American Imagist poets were Hilda Doolittle, Amy Lowell, Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams. The Imagists wrote short concise image-laden poems influenced by Japanese haiku and Greek lyric poetry.

As a young woman, **Hilda Doolittle** (1886-1961) began a lifelong friendship with Ezra Pound, who introduced her to London's literary circles. Her poetry and fiction were published on both sides of the Atlantic. Doolittle's first published poems appeared in the journal *Poetry* in January 1913. They revealed her interest in ancient myths. Her later poems, such as *Tribute to the Angels* (1945), *The Flowering of the Rod* (1946) and *By Avon River* (1949) followed some of the ideas of Imagism.

Amy Lowell (1874-1925) was also attracted by the Imagist movement under the influence of Ezra Pound and soon became one of its leading poets. She experimented with free verse and "polyphonic prose", a freely rhythmical form of poetic prose that employs characteristic devices of verse, such as alliteration, assonance and rhyme.

Marianne Moore (1887-1972) wrote impersonal philosophical poetry influenced by Pound. In 1915, she published some of her imagist poems in *The Egoist*, a London bimonthly edited by Hilda Doolittle.

William Carlos Williams (1883-1963) was a poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright, one of the principal representatives of the Imagist movement. The themes of his poetry include the degeneration and inadequacy of language and the breakdown of interpersonal communication. He concentrated in his verse on concrete, sensory experience and colloquial speech. Williams was also a pediatrician and general practitioner of medicine in a small-town in New Jersey, who delivered more than 3,000 babies. After returning from a night call, he left his wife this note, which is a fine, short Imagist poem.

This Is Just To Say

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold⁷¹

In his poems Williams tried to express the reality of the physical world. He was deeply immersed in the American experience like his great predecessor, Walt Whitman.

Williams remained an influence on many younger American poets, particularly the poets of the Beat Generation, the San Francisco Renaissance, the Black Mountain School and the New York School. His most characteristic poems are “Lighthearted William”, “By the Road to the Contagious Hospital”, “Red Wheelbarrow” and “This Is Just to Say”.

Expatriate poets: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound

A few American poets emigrated to Europe or spent some time there. T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound became leading poets of the century. Eliot spent most of his life in England and Pound lived in London, Paris and various Italian cities. They exerted a great influence on the development of Modernist poetry in Europe and America.

T(homas) S(tearns) Eliot (1888-1965), the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (1948), was born in the USA, but he went to Europe to study and remained in London where he worked as a teacher, banker, and eventually, writer. Eliot was the major innovator in modern English and American poetry. He looked for inspiration in French Symbolist poetry, Dante, Shakespeare and English metaphysical poetry of the 17th century.

Eliot published his first book of poetry *Prufrock and Other Observations* in 1917. He also edited literary magazines *The Egoist* and *The Criterion* and published literary criticism. In his essay, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), Eliot defined poetry as “an escape from emotion and personality”. Eliot’s notion of poetry and his ideas of the **objective correlative** and the **dissociation of sensibility** exerted a great influence on Modernist poetry and literary criticism.

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (1915) reflects a total break with the conventions of Romantic poetry. The poem is written in the form of an interior monologue (the stream of consciousness technique), which is in a way related to Robert Browning’s dramatic monologue. It shows the fragments of thoughts of an average man, Mr Prufrock. The poem is ironic in its message.

In 1922, he published his most famous poem “The Waste Land”, which shows in a series of visions the chaos, impotence and emptiness of the world. The poem reflects Eliot’s belief in the collapse of the values of western civilisation. The basis of the poem is the legend of the Fisher King who ruled over the Waste Land. “The Hollow Men” (1925) shows the futility of man’s endeavours. The poem describes an age without belief, value and meaning. The main themes of his poetry are separateness, isolation and alienation. Eliot’s poetry

⁷¹ Robin Malan, ed. *New Poetry Works: A Workbook Anthology* (Clartemont, South Africa: New Africa Books, 2007) 199.

became a model for the modernist poets. The rhythm of his poetry imitates ordinary speech. It depends considerably on assonance, repetition and internal rhymes.

Later in life, Eliot wrote dramas, such as *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935), *The Family Reunion* (1939) and *The Cocktail Party* (1950).

The second famous expatriate, **Ezra Pound** (1885-1972), was regarded as a poets' poet (a teacher of poets). From 1908 until 1920, he lived in London, where he wrote for the American magazines *Poetry* and *The Little Review*. His literary reputation was established with the publication of a verse collection *Personae* in 1909. In 1920 Pound moved to Paris, where he became a leader of the American expatriate literary circle. Pound translated from Italian, Chinese and Japanese literature. In 1924, he settled in Italy, where he wrote his major work *The Cantos*, which was inspired, among others, by Confucian ethics and Greek mythology.

"In a Station of a Metro," first published in 1913, is a key poem for understanding Imagism. Written in only two lines, the poem imitates the Japanese *haiku* poetry. There is some separation between the Speaker and the crowd in the Paris Metro, who are presented as an apparition. The image of "petals on a wet, black bough" may suggest the totality of human beings (see p. 96).

A number of American poets followed the Modernist revolution in poetry. They were more or less influenced by European Modernism, and particularly, by the poetic and critical works of Pound and Eliot.

Other poets of the first half of the 20th century

A number of American poets followed the Modernist revolution in poetry. They were more or less influenced by European Modernism, and particularly, by the poetic and the critical works of Pound and Eliot.

Robert Frost (1874-1963) is regarded as the most universal of all American poets. His poetry is closely identified with New England. He has been called the most penetrating interpreter of New England landscapes.

Most of Frost's poetry is dedicated to the beauty of nature, described in simple, everyday language. Like Pound and Eliot, Frost went to England before World War I to become acquainted with new developments in poetry. He met the poets Walter de la Mare, W. H. Davies, Rupert Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke and others. When Frost returned to the United States, he was hailed as a leading voice of the 'new poetry', although he did not achieve remarkable success. Prior to the outbreak of World War I Frost published his first two volumes of poetry, a selection of lyrics entitled *A Boy's Will* and a series of dramatic monologues, *North of Boston*.

While living on farms in Vermont and New Hampshire and teaching literature at Amherst College, the University of Michigan, Harvard University and Dartmouth College, Frost continued to write poetry which was mostly devoted to New England's themes. At this time he wrote some of his finest poems, such as 'Birches', 'Out, Out', 'The Hill Wife' and 'An Old Man's Winter Night'. His short lyrics entitled *New Hampshire* (1923) contain such famous poems as 'Fire and Ice', 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening'.

Towards the end of his life Frost was the most highly esteemed American poet of the twentieth century. His poetry is rooted in the life and scenery of rural New England and expresses traditional American individualism with an outlook varying from agnosticism to religious affirmation.

Wallace Stevens (1879-1955) wrote highly intellectual and imaginative poetry which shows some influence of Imagism, but also possesses its own distinctive character. His first volume of poetry *Harmonium* (1923, enlarged edition 1931) explores the relations between reality and imagination. It contains many of his most famous verses, e.g. 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird'.

Hart Crane (1899-1932) lived a life of a self-imposed exiled artist. He tried to combine Pound's and Eliot's conception of poetry with the tradition of Walt Whitman, which finds reflection in the composition of his best-known epic, *The Bridge* (1930). The poem celebrates American life, history, culture and technology, and the vibrant life of New York streets.

Another remarkable poet, who carried out a revolution in literary expression in the twentieth century, was **E. E. Cummings** (1894-1962). Influenced by Amy Lowell's imagistic experiments, Cummings' early poems described the chaotic immediacy of sensuous experience. He played games with language and lyric form to produce innovative verse saturated with original humour and delicate eroticism.

Cummings wrote a variety of free verse poems about city life, drunks, prostitutes, gangsters and bums as well as tender love poems, erotic epigrams, sonnets and harsh satires directed at national leaders.

The poem "may i feel said he", a sensual tribute to love and a humorous salute to the mating rituals between men and women, is one of the poet's most popular works.

may i feel said he

may i feel said he
(i'll squeal said she
just once said he)
it's fun said she

(may i touch said he
how much said she
a lot said he)
why not said she

(let's go said he
not too far said she
what's too far said he
where you are said she)

may i stay said he
which way said she
like this said he
if you kiss said she

may i move said he
is it love said she)
if you're willing said he
(but you're killing said she

but it's life said he
but your wife said she
now said he)
ow said she

(tiptop said he
don't stop said she
oh no said he)
go slow said she

(cccome? said he
ummm said she)
you're divine! said he

(you are Mine said she)⁷²

Robinson Jeffers (1887-1962) wrote prophetic and pantheistic poetry in the tradition of Walt Whitman. He was fascinated by Nature and criticised the destructive power of civilisation, whose harmful technologies defile the Earth and its life.

Harlem Renaissance (1920s-1930s)

An important movement among American Blacks in the 1920s and 1930s was the so-called **Harlem Renaissance** or **Black Renaissance**, which emphasised on the African heritage of American Blacks and the need of new Black identity. Harlem, a Black quarter in New York, became a symbol of Black urbanity and Black militancy.

The most prominent representatives of the movement were the poets: Claude Mc Kay (1889-1948), Countee Cullen (1903-1946), Langston Hughes (1902-1967); and novelists Jessie Redmont Fauset (1884-1961), Nelly Larsen (1893-1964), Zora Neale Hurston (1891?-1960); and the social activist W. E. B. Du Bois (1868-1963). Characteristic themes of Harlem writers were alienation, marginality, the use of folk material, the use of the blues and jazz tradition.

A central figure among Harlem Renaissance was **Langston Hughes** (1902-1967), who wrote poetry, novels, plays and essays about race, African-American identity and social justice. In 1926 he published a volume of jazz poems, *The Weary Blues*, written for performance with music.

Hughes' other collections of poetry include *The Negro Mother and other Dramatic Recitations* (1931) *Shakespeare In Harlem* (1942), *Fields of Wonder* (1947); *One Way Ticket* (1947). He also edited several anthologies in an attempt to popularize black authors and their works.

Characteristic features of the period

1. Anglo-American roots of Modernism; Pound as the teacher of Modernists; chief representatives: Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Thomas Stearns Eliot, Sherwood Anderson F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Dos Passos; cosmopolitan interest and formal experiences; growth of Imagism; Eliot's role in shaping Anglo-American Modernism.
2. Key features of Modernism: a vigorous attack on the literary tradition; stylistic innovations – disruption of traditional syntax and form; artist's self-consciousness (the artist is generally less appreciated but more sensitive, even more heroic, than average person); the artist challenges tradition; international perspective; creation of a literature of the urban experience; the character in modernist literature suffers from a **dissociation of sensibility** (T.S. Eliot); he is alienated.

Assignments for self-study and/or project work

1. Features of American Modernist fiction.
2. What is the name given to the generation of writers who emerged after World War and why?
3. Francis Scott Fitzgerald as the symbol of the Jazz Age.
4. Fitzgerald's portrayal of the 'Roaring Twenties' in America in his selected novel.
5. The major themes of William Faulkner's fiction.
6. The themes of Ernest Hemingway's novels.
7. Southern vices and obsessions in a William Faulkner novel.

⁷² E.E. Cummings, "may i feel said he," in David Lehman, ed. *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 395.

8. Discuss the use of dramatic monologue in 'The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock'.
9. How does Ezra Pound's poem 'In a Station of the Metro' reflect the ideas of imagist poetry?
10. Francis Scott Fitzgerald as the chronicler of the Jazz Age.
11. What was the Harlem Renaissance?

Assignments for *The Great Gatsby* by Francis Scott Fitzgerald

1. The significance of Gatsby's past.
2. Use of imagery and colour.
3. The symbolic meaning of the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg.
4. The view of the upper classes.
5. Discuss the conflict in the novel: an idealistic dream and the realities of the world.

7.7. The Contemporary Period (1945 – until now)

In the post-war period the United States attained an unprecedented level of political, economic, and military power on a global scale. Americans were increasingly committed to creating an affluent consumer society.

The Contemporary Period, which started after World War II, includes numerous writers representing various and often overlapping trends in American literature. Between 1945 and the 1960s, many writers and the reading public still felt that literature represents a "common national essence".

Since the end of World War II, however, a number of new trends and phenomena have occurred in the United States. The most characteristic of them are the proliferation of television, emergence of youth culture and consumer society, development of information technology and blurring of differences between high and popular (low) culture. Since the 1960s, it seems, imaginative literature ceased to be a significant document of culture. The postmodern debate over the condition of the nation could be increasingly heard not in works of literature but in popular magazines, on television and recently on the Internet. Written literature has been replaced successfully by TV dramas or even by rock music.

The Vietnam War and social unrest in America in the 1960s gave rise to committed new journalism practised by Mary McCarthy, Susan Sontag and Frances Fitzgerald. Some of journalistic techniques were used in nonfiction novels, such as Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1965), and Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* (1968) and *The Executioner's Song* (1980).

Postwar poetry

In the decades following World War II, the form and content of American poetry underwent significant changes. The most characteristic feature of postwar American poetry is the departure from the Modernist dogma of "impersonal" poetry in the 1950s, and the emergence of several trends or movements, such as the San Francisco Renaissance poets, beat writers, the confessional school of poetry, Deep Image Poetry, Black Mountain School of Poetry and the New York poets. Other features are the decentralisation of the poetic scene, multiplicity of standards and diverse concepts of poetry.

San Francisco Renaissance

Kenneth Rexroth (1905-1982) was a chief figure in the San Francisco Renaissance, the American poetic *avant-garde* at the end of World War II. He was a second generation modernist poet, translator and literary critic. He explored traditional Japanese poetic forms such as haiku.

Other important representatives of the San Francisco Renaissance include **Madeline Gleason** (1903-1979), **Robert Duncan** (1919-1988) and **Jack Spicer** (1925-1965).

Beat writers

The term **beat writers** or **beatniks** refers to a group of poets, such as Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gregory Corso, Richard Brautigan, and the prose writers William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac, who rebelled against the conservative values of American society in the 1950s and early 1960s.

The most outstanding representative of the “beatnik” poets was **Allen Ginsberg** (1926-1997). Ginsberg’s poem “Howl” (1956) attacked the American establishment. The opening lines of “Howl” are a clear repudiation of Eliot’s idea of “escape from emotion” in poetry:

I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in
the machinery of night.

Ginsberg denounced American materialism and defended sexual freedom and drug-taking. Among his later works “Kaddish” is worth mentioning. It is a long poem on his mother’s illness and death. Ginsberg seems to follow the bardic tradition of Walt Whitman. Beatniks were hostile to traditional culture and values; Jack Kerouac called the beatniks ‘the children of the sad American paradise’.

Lawrence Ferlinghetti, another famous beat poet, is best known for the collection of poems, *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958), some of which were written for live jazz accompaniment. Ferlinghetti condemns the anti-intellectualism of American culture in his poems with a vigorous anti-establishment intensity.

Richard Brautigan (1935-1984) published poems and short fiction. He was regarded as a generational bridge between the two unconformist youth movements in America, the Beat generation and the hippies. His novels and stories embody the spirit of the counterculture of the 1960s. His most popular work is *Trout Fishing in America* (1967), a picaresque novel about the search for pastoral America.

Gregory Corso (1930-2001) was the youngest poet associated with the Beat movement. His first volume of poetry is titled *The Vestal Lady on Brattle* (1952). His later works include collections of poetry, *Gasoline* and *Minefield*.

Confessional poetry

Confessional poetry can be characterised by an autobiographical mode of verse that reveals the poet’s personal problems with unusual frankness. This term refers to a number of diverse American poets including Robert Lowell, Theodore Roethke, Elizabeth Bishop, John Berryman, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton and Adrienne Rich.

Robert Lowell (1917-1977) is considered by many to be the one of the most important American poets of the second half of the 20th century. As a young poet, he was associated with the Fugitives, a group of poets, writers and critics including John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate and Robert Penn Warren. Later Lowell started the so-called “confessional” school of poetry. Lowell’s *Life Studies* (1959) significantly changed the landscape of modern American poetry.

Theodore Roethke (1908-1963) published six volumes of verse, far ranging in both technique and thematic concerns. Generally classed as a lyricist, he expressed in many of his poems childhood memories (‘Open House’, ‘My Papa’s Waltz’) and the beauty of local nature (‘The Pike’).

Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), a friend of Robert Lowell, published only 101 poems in her life, but her verse is considered one of the most interesting examples of

confessional poetry.

John Berryman (1914-1972) is considered one of the founders of the Confessional School of Poetry. He explored a divided self. *The Dream Songs* is a sequence of 385 confessional poems composed over more than a dozen years.

Sylvia Plath's (1932-1963) books of poetry, *The Colossus* (1960), and, posthumously, *Ariel* (1965), *Crossing the Water* (1971), *Winter Trees* (1971) along with the partially autobiographical novel, *The Bell Jar* (1963), reflect the feeling of mental instability. Plath expressed an obsession with death throughout her poetry. "Daddy" is one of her most controversial poems in which the persona addresses a brutal father-figure.

Anne Sexton (1928-1974) also wrote highly emotional and confessional poetry from the feminine point of view. Her poetry is mostly concerned with an individual's response to her own existence.

Adrienne Rich (1929-2012) was a poet, essayist and radical feminist. Her poetry reflects her concept of the American nation, feminist issues and woman's sexuality.

Other movements in American poetry

Interesting developments in contemporary American poetry include the emergence of such movements as Deep Image Poetry, the New York School of Poetry, the Black Mountain School of Poetry.

Deep Image Poetry focused on 'depth' psychology with detailed image and authentic language. Chief representatives of Deep Image Poetry are **Jerome Rothenberg** and **Robert Bly**.

The New York School of Poetry included **John Ashbery**, **Kenneth Koch** (1925-2002), **Frank O'Hara** (1926-1966), **Barbara Guest** (1920-2006), **James Schuyler** (1923-1991) and **Ron Padgett**. Some of their more important poems appeared in *An Anthology of New York Poets* (1970).

The Black Mountain School of Poetry emerged in the Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina. Three of its members, **Charles Olson** (1910-1970), **Robert Creeley** (1926-2005) and **Robert Duncan** (1919-1988), taught there in the early 1950s, and **Ed Dorn** (1929-1999) and **Joel Oppenheimer** (1930-1998) studied there. Others like **Denise Levertov** (1923-1997) published their poems in the college magazine. The Black Mountain poets promoted a non-traditional poetics based on ordinary speech. They continued the tradition of Emerson and Whitman and articulated deep feelings as an opposition to the values favoured by the New Critics.

Contemporary black poetry

American black poetry has a long and distinct tradition which goes back to Africa. Some of the most outstanding contemporary black poets are Gwendolyn Brooks, Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, Bob Kaufman, Harryette Mullen, Sonia Sanchez.

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000) was a poet and novelist. She became the first black poet to win the **Pulitzer Prize**. Some of her best verse is contained in *The Bean Eaters* (1960). **Maya Angelou** is a well-known poet, songwriter autobiographer and social activist. **Amiri Baraka** (formerly known as Everett Leroy Jones, 1934-2014) was an Afro-American poet, playwright and political activist of Muslim tradition. His poetry and plays often deal with racial conflict. **Bob Kaufman** is often identified with the Beat movement. **Harryette Mullen** is a poet and a professor of English at the University of California, Los Angeles, where she teaches creative writing and African-American literature. She explores the interaction between cultural identity and poetic experience. **Sonia Sanchez** is a poet, playwright and African-American activist associated with the Black Arts Movement,

prominent in the 1960s and 1970s. She uses black urban speech in her poetry and plays.

In the last decades of the twentieth century many American poets were influenced by poststructuralism and deconstruction. They adopted techniques from film and video technology to create new forms of poetic expression. Some of the most distinct forms of most recent poetic expression are **performance poetry** and **slam poetry**.

Performance poetry is written specifically for the listening audience. It is sometimes called Spoken Word Poetry or Live Literature because not every piece that a poet performs is necessarily pure poetry. The Polish American poet **Hedwig Gorski** was first to use the term performance poetry to name her style of writing poetry designed primarily for oral presentation instead of for print publication. Performance poetry evolved in the late 1980s and early 1990s together with the emergence of poetry slams, i.e. poetry competitions at which poets read or recite original work.

During the 1990s, slam, a competition at which poets read or recite their original work, revived interest in spoken word poetry. *Slam poetry* is often highly political, drawing upon racial, economic, and gender injustices as well as current events for subject matter. The slam poetry movement was started by the poet Marc Smith in 1986 at a reading series in a Chicago jazz club. The movement quickly spread across the United States, finding home in New York City at the Nuyorican Poets Café.

Post-war prose

After World War II a significant regional literature emerged, such as that from the American South. A number of southern writers came to prominence. They were, among others, Robert Penn Warren, Truman Capote, and William Styron.

Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989) was a poet, novelist and a literary critic, one of the founders of New Criticism. He wrote a successful novel, *All the King's Men* (1946), a study of a corrupt Southern politician.

All the King's Men, a tale of power and corruption, tells the story of the rise and fall of Willie Stark, a cynical populist and demagogue who builds support during the 1930s in the Depression-era South by appealing to the common man and playing dirty politics. Stark becomes a successful governor, which eventually costs him his life. The novel is narrated by Jack Burden, a political reporter who comes to work as Governor Stark's personal aide.

Truman Capote (1924-1984) wrote a semi-autobiographical novel in the **Southern Gothic style**, *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948). The central themes of the novel are a son's search for his father and self-acceptance as part of coming of age.⁷³ In 1958, he published the novella, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. *In Cold Blood* (1966), a non-fiction novel, is a naturalistic study of the brutal murder of a farmer family in Kansas, the trial, and eventual execution of its perpetrators.

Breakfast at Tiffany's, Capote's most successful novella, opens in New York in autumn 1943. An unnamed narrator who moves into a brownstone apartment building in Manhattan's Upper East Side in order to pursue his career as a writer, befriends Holiday Golightly, later called Holly, one of Capote's best-known creations and an American cultural icon, who soon calls him "Fred", after her older brother. Holly is a country girl who after arrival in New York turns a society girl. She lives by socialising with rich men, who take her to clubs and restaurants, and give her money and expensive presents. She hopes to marry one of

⁷³ Coming of age is a young person's transition from childhood to adulthood. In literature, a novel which deals with the psychological and moral growth associated with coming of age is called a **Bildungsroman**.

them. Over time, she reveals herself to the narrator, who finds himself fascinated by her curious lifestyle. In the end, Holly fears that she will never know what is really hers until after she has thrown it away. Their relationship ends in autumn 1944.

Capote's prose style was impeccable and his insight into the psychology of his characters was extraordinary.

William Styron's (1925-2006) novels are reflections on human institutions and human unhappiness. His first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness* (1951) deals with the tragic life and suicide of a young woman whose rich Southern family is unable to provide love and security. *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967) is a "meditation on American history," as the author described it. *Sophie's Choice* (1979) describes the life of a woman who survived Auschwitz. In 1990, Styron published a memoir *Darkness Visible* about his depression and recovery.

Southern Gothic

Southern Gothic is a subgenre of Gothic fiction which is unique to American literature that is set exclusively in the American South. Common themes in Southern Gothic novels and short stories include deeply flawed, disturbing or disadvantaged characters, decayed or derelict settings, grotesque situations, and other sinister events relating to or coming from poverty, alienation, racism, crime, and violence. The Southern Gothic style is one that employs the use of macabre and ironic events to examine the realities of the American South. The most characteristic authors of Southern Gothic fiction are Carson McCullers, Flannery O'Connor, Katherine Anne Porter, Eudora Welty, and Cormac McCarthy.

Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) wrote moral fiction. Her short stories, published in two collections, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories* (1955) and *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965), are referred to as *Southern Gothic* because they combine elements of the macabre with humour in a setting pervaded by fundamentalist religion. They examine such enduring aspects of humanity as greed, selfishness, and hate.

Carson McCullers (1917-1967) wrote highly imaginative fiction. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940) and *The Ballad of the Sad Cafe* (1943) are novels which depict bizarre or irrational behaviour. The central theme of Carson McCullers' novels is the meaning of love. They are generalised parables on the nature of human illusion and love.

Eudora Welty (1909-2001) was often called a regionalist writer because her characters are deeply rooted in the South. She described with ironic or grotesque humour half-witted, elderly, or handicapped people. Her best works include *Delta Wedding* (1946), *The Golden Apples* (1949), *Losing Battles* (1970) and the autobiography *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984).

Cormac McCarthy has written novels, which combine the styles of the Southern Gothic and postapocalyptic genres. *Blood Meridian* (1985) is considered a turning point in his literary career. His other novels include *All the Pretty Horses* (1992), *The Crossing* (1994), *Cities of the Plain* (1998), *No Country for Old Men* (2005), and *The Road* (2006).

Other notable American fiction writers of the post-World War II and pre-postmodern period include: Vladimir Nabokov, Henry Miller, William Burroughs, Kurt Vonnegut, Jack Kerouac, Ken Kesey, J. D. Salinger, John Updike, and William Gaddis.

Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977) was a Russian-born American novelist and literary critic. His first novels were written in Russian. They include *Mashenka* (1926; English translation: *Mary*, 1970). Nabokov's novels written in English include *Lolita* (1955), *Pnin*

(1957), a story of a Russian refugee who came to the United States in 1940 and was an associate professor of Russian at fictional Waindell College, modelled on Wellesley and Cornell, where Nabokov had taught; *Pale Fire* (1962), a comical example of **metafiction** consisting of a foreword, a 999-line poem, a lengthy commentary on it and notes; *Ada, or Ardor: A Family Chronicle* (1969); a witty and mischievous criticism of society, deviant sexual behaviours and a parody of the history of the novel; *Transparent Things* (1972), the story of a misfit, Hugh Person, an American editor, his marriage to a mean-spirited girl whom he accidentally strangles in his sleep, his incarceration, mental therapy and finally death in a hotel fire; a meditation on time enriched with puns and literary allusions; *Look at the Harlequins* (1974), a fictional autobiography.

Lolita, Nabokov's most popular and scandalous novel, is narrated by Humbert Humbert, a middle-aged college professor, who is obsessed with young girls whom he calls "nymphets". When Humbert moves to Ramsdale, a small New England town, he becomes infatuated with Dolores (Lolita), the seductive twelve-year-old daughter of his widowed landlady, Charlotte Haze. *Lolita* combines a number of literary genres and styles; it is a subversive psychoanalytical novel about paedophilia; a **road novel**, showing an unromantic view of the America of the 1950's; and a highly symbolic novel. Some critics have pointed out that Humbert symbolises the formal, educated Old World of Europe, while Lolita is a metaphor of America: young, beautiful, but not very intelligent and a little vulgar.

Nabokov exerted influence on a number of younger writers, including Martin Amis, John Updike and Thomas Pynchon.

Henry Miller (1891-1980) created a new type of novel which combines fiction, autobiography, social criticism, philosophical reflection and mysticism. His most famous novels are *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), *Tropic of Capricorn* (1938), *Rosy Crucifixion*, including *Sexus* (1949), *Plexus* (1953) and *Nexus* (1960). Miller also wrote essays of literary criticism. Miller's novels, which deal explicitly with his sensual and sexual explorations, challenged established cultural values and moral attitudes. His works were a major influence on the Beat generation of American writers, particularly Jack Kerouac.

William S. Burroughs (1914-1997) was an iconic figure in American **counterculture**. He wrote subversive fiction about the life of drug addicts and homosexuals. Burroughs exerted a great influence on the Beat generation writers as well as on some rock and roll musicians. His first published novel was *Junkie* (1953), a first-person realistic narrative about drug addiction. *Queer*, the second of Burroughs' semi-autobiographical novels was written in the 1950s but it was published in 1985.

Burroughs's seminal work, *Naked Lunch* (1959) is, according to many critics, one of the most important novels of the 20th century, although it is now seldom read, even by bibliophiles. It exerted a major influence on the work of such writers as Thomas Pynchon, J. G. Ballard and William Gibson. *Naked Lunch* is an extraordinarily sincere account of a drug addict written in the technique of **disruptive narrative**, with short, shocking, hallucinatory and frequently obscene descriptions that focus on one moment or give an impression about a character, an idea, or a setting. It can be read as a futuristic fable about the control of human beings.

In the 1960s, Burroughs developed a cut-up fold-in technique of writing, in which a text is cut up into smaller pieces, and then rearranged at random to create a new text. *The Soft Machine* (1961) is an example of such experimental writing. It has no coherent storyline. In 1971 Burroughs wrote *The Wild Boys*, a novel that anticipates **cyberpunk** novels of William Gibson and others. Burroughs' theory of the cutup parallels some avant-garde experiments, such as surrealism and dadaism.

Burroughs experimented with the meaninglessness of language and was concerned with an analysis of control over human beings exercised by language, time and space. Like drugs, sex and power control the body, language controls the mind. "Language is a virus from outer space", wrote Burroughs. He meant that conventional language "locks" people into

fixed patterns of communication that determine our interactions with other people.

Jack Kerouac (1922-1969) is one of the best-known authors of the Beat Generation, whose novel *On the Road* (1957) inspired a number of younger writers.

On the Road is a realistic account of restless journeys across the United States made between 1947 and 1950 by Dean Moriarty, a rebellious youth, Sal Paradise, a young writer and a group of friends. Sal explores the limits of the American Dream. Searching for their personal freedom the youths visit sleepy small towns, big cities, deserts and wilderness. They find pleasure in sex, drugs and jazz.

Kurt Vonnegut (1922-2007) was a master of black humour. His first novel, *Player Piano* (1952) is a dystopian vision of the future world of computers and robots in which people have become useless. *The Sirens of Titan* (1959) was written in the convention of science fiction. *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969) is perhaps his best novel. It is based on Vonnegut's experiences as a prisoner of war in Dresden, Germany. The first chapter of the novel reveals the characteristic postmodern approach to literature. The author tells the reader about the process of writing the novel.

Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade, A Duty Dance With Death is an anti-war novel with a science fiction component. It recounts the experiences and journeys of a soldier called Billy Pilgrim, who survives the Allied forces firebombing of Dresden in 1945, and then moves uncontrollably in time to the future as a resident of a zoo on the planet Tralfamadore, where he was taken in a saucer; and in the present as a middle-aged optometrist living in Ilium, N.Y.

Ken Kesey (1935-2001) represents a transition from the bohemian beatnik movement in the 1950s to the counterculture of the Hippies in the 60s. His most acclaimed and important novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) describes a modern psychiatric ward which becomes a metaphor for oppressive American society.

J. D. Salinger's (1919-2010) *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) was recognised as the voice of the young generation of contemporary Americans. Holden Caulfield, the protagonist and narrator of this novel is a sixteen-year old boy of superior sensitivity who finds it hard to live in a world full of "phonies". Holden escapes his elite boarding school to the outside world of adults but soon he is disappointed by its materialism and "phoniness" (hypocrisy). Holden is a modern knight errant who preserves his innocence and sensitivity.

John Updike (1932-2009) wrote contemporary novels of manners set in a suburban setting; *Rabbit, Run* (1960), which is a sexual and political fiction set in postwar America in the 1950s; *Rabbit Redux* (1971), in the counterculture of the 1960s; *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981), in the post-Vietnam era; the series ends with *Rabbit at Rest* (1990, Pulitzer Prize).

The fiction of **William Gaddis** (1922-1998) stands between American high modernism and postmodernism. Gaddis is regarded as one of the most important postwar novelists. His fiction continues the tradition of Hawthorne and Melville. His novels include *The Recognitions* (1955), narrated mainly in dialogue, *Carpenter's Gothic* (1985), *A Frolic of His Own* (1994). Gaddis's novels deal with the erosion of Western culture and society, distorted human creativity and failed personal relationships. William Gaddis exerted influence on a number of American postmodern writers, such as Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, Jonathan Safran Foer.

The war novels

A number of novelists wrote about the experience of the last world war. The significant war novels include **Norman Mailer's** (1923-2007) *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), **James Jones's** (1921-1977) *From Here To Eternity* (1951), **Irvin Shaw's** (1913-1984) *The Young Lions* (1948), **Herman Wouk's** *The Caine Mutiny* (1951), **William Styron's** *Sophie's Choice* (1979), **Joseph Heller's** (1923-1999) *Catch 22* (1961), and **Kurt**

Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969), presented above. The first five novels give a realistic account of the complexities of wartime life, whereas Heller's and Vonnegut's novels are absurdist satires on war.

Black fiction

The tradition of black fiction extends from **Richard Wright's** (1918-1960) *Native Son*, and **Ralph Ellison's** (1914-1994) *Invisible Man* (1952) to the prophetic fiction of **James Baldwin** (1924-1987), who wrote *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (1953), *Another Country* (1962), *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968) and *If Beale Street Could Talk* (1974). Baldwin's fiction deals with the problems of race and sexuality in modern American society.

Alex Haley (1921-1992), who is best known for his novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976). The book was extremely popular among both black and white readers. Under the inspiration of the book many blacks began to trace their roots back to the African tribes which their ancestors were torn from in the days of slavery.

Toni Morrison is one of the most prominent African-American novelists. Her novels portray complex black lives, particularly emphasising black women's experience in an unjust society and the search for cultural identity. Morrison often mixes fantasy with realistic depiction of racial, gender and class conflicts. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is about the trauma of growing black and female in the 1930s and 1940s. The title of the novel refers to the protagonist's desire to be a white girl with blue eyes. *Sula* (1973) traces the lives of two black heroines in the time of racial segregation in the USA. The novel criticises racism, bigotry and suppression of African Americans. *Song of Solomon* (1977) is perhaps her most famous novel. It is a **Bildungsroman** about a poor black family. *Beloved* (1987) narrates the lives of African Americans during and after slavery. *Jazz* (1992) is about the life of a black couple who live in Harlem during the Harlem Renaissance. In 1993, Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. The most recent novel by Toni Morrison is *Home* (2012), which tells the story of Frank Money, a 24-year-old African-American veteran of the Korean War, and his journey home 'a year after being discharged from an integrated Army into a segregated homeland'.

Alice Walker presents black experience in her fiction from the female perspective. Her novels, written in the convention of lyrical realism, show the dreams and failures of common people, their quest for dignity in life. *The Color Purple* (1982), for which she won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. The novel depicts the relationship between two poor black sisters. *The Temple of My Familiar* (1989) develops themes and ideas introduced in Walker's earlier fiction. It is a multi-narrative novel containing the interleaved stories of the dispossessed and displaced people.

John Edgar Wideman is regarded as one of the most interesting contemporary African American writers. Critics compare him to William Faulkner. Wideman is the author of 11 novels, including *Hiding Place* (1981), *Sent For You Yesterday* (1983), *Two Cities* (1998). He has also written four short-story collections and is a widely published essayist and social critic. His fiction focuses on the experiences of black people in contemporary urban America.

Jewish writers

Jewish postwar writers include Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth, E. L. Doctorow, Isaac Bashevis Singer and Jerzy Kosinski.

The 1976 Nobel Prize winner, **Saul Bellow** (1915-2005) wrote existentialist novels such as, *Dangling Man* (1944), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953) and *Henderson the Rain King* (1959) – a millionaire's tragicomic adventures in Africa in a symbolic search for

the meaning of life. His later novels, which include *Seize the Day* (1956) and *Herzog* (1964), deal with the theme of failure and alienation from society.

Bernard Malamud (1914-86) wrote of Jewish experience in America in such novels as *The Assistant* (1957), about an old Jewish grocer, Morris Bober, who has moved with his family to America hoping to start a better life; *The Fixer* (1966); set in tsarist Russia; *The Tenants* (1971) about the conflict between blacks and Jews in Brooklyn; *God's Grace* (1982), a modern-day dystopian fantasy, set in a time after a nuclear war. Malamud also wrote successful short stories, including *Idiots First* (1963). The world in Malamud's fiction is grotesque, cruel and unjust. His characters live ordinary lives but they are weary of life, guilt-ridden and tormented. The settings are very important in Malamud's fiction because they emphasise the characters' worries and distress.

Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991), who was born in Poland, but emigrated to the United States in 1935, wrote fiction in Yiddish which was translated into English. He is best known for his short stories, in collections, which include *Gimpel the Fool* (1957) and *The Death of Methuselah and Other Stories* (1988). His novels include *The Family Moskat* (1950), *The Magician of Lublin* (1960) and *Shosha* (1978). Singer won the 1978 Nobel Prize for literature.

The Polish-born **Jerzy Kosiński** (1933-1991) wrote the controversial novel, *The Painted Bird* (1965) and *Being There* (1971). *The Painted Bird* is about a young homeless Jewish boy who wanders through the villages of eastern Poland during the Nazi occupation. He saves his life by lying about who he really is. *Being There* is a story about a simple gardener who can talk only about his plants. Quite unexpectedly, his talks are interpreted as great metaphors about public life in the United States. The story is reminiscent of the novel by the Polish author, Tadeusz Dołęga-Mostowicz, *Kariera Nikodema Dyzmy*.

Philip Roth (1933-2018) is the author of a book of short stories, *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), and full-length novels concerned mostly with Jewish middle-class life. His first novel, *Letting Go* (1962), which is narrated in part by Gabe Wallach, a wealthy, intelligent, well-intentioned but indecisive college teacher of English, and by a third-person narrator, deals with the themes of Jewish identity, sex, love and marriage, and the desire to find meaning in literature. The novel portrays realistically the America of the 1950s.

The immensely popular, funny, obscene and scandalous *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) shows a character alienated from his Jewish roots. The novel is a long monologue of Alexander Portnoy, who describes his sexual complexes and desires to a psychiatrist. Many of Roth's novels have been described as obscene, vulgar, misogynistic and even anti-Semitic. Nevertheless, his fiction has a compelling narrative voice and Roth is recognised as an effective storyteller who recreates masterly colloquial speech and gives an insight into human nature as well as Jewish-American experience. Other novels by Roth include *The Breast* (1972), *The Professor of Desire* (1977), *The Great American Novel* (1995), *American Pastoral* (1997), *The Dying Animal* (2001), *The Plot Against America* (2004), *Everyman* (2006), *Indignation* (2008).

The novels of **E. L. Doctorow** (1931-2015) are concerned with American social history from the Civil War until the present time. His first Western-like novel, *Welcome to Hard Times* (1960) is about a small settlement in the Dakota Territory called Hard Times, which is terrorised by a drifter. *The Book of Daniel* (1971) tells the fictional story of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in 1953 for allegedly giving nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union. *Ragtime* (1975), set mostly in New York City, gives a view of early 20th century America. The novel describes the interweaving fates of three fictional families (one black, one Jewish and one WASP) with actual personalities (the entrepreneurs J. P. Morgan and Henry Ford; and the anarchist Emma Goldman, among others). In *The March* (2005) Doctorow recreates the history of the Civil War through multiple viewpoints and voices.

Jonathan Safran Foer has gained renown for his two novels *Everything Is Illuminated* (2002) and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), an example of **visual writing**. His most recent novel is *Here I Am* (2016).

Feminism

The rise of feminism in the 1970s gave impetus for a number of women writers to write novels from a woman's perspective. **Erica Jong** is the author of *Fear of Flying* (1974), a novel about female sexuality. **Rita Mae Brown** explored lesbian life in her **Bildungsroman** *Rubyfruit Jungle* (1973). Other significant feminist writers include **Marilyn French**, who presents a harsh vision of the woman condition in America in the 1950s and 1960s in *The Women's Room* (1977); **Marge Piercy**, who has published a dystopian feminist novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976); and **Sue Miller**, who has written a post-feminist novel, *The Good Mother* (1986) about a newly divorced woman with a three-year-old daughter.

7.1. American postmodernism, new realism and ethnic writing (1970-to date)

Changes in American literature, which can be traced back to the 1970s, were caused by a radical shift in aesthetics. As a result plethora of new subgenres of fiction appeared on the literary scene. They included experimental fiction, metafiction, surfiction, cyberfiction, etc. Generally, all these subgenres were referred to as "postmodernism" or "postmodern" literature. However, few terms are so ambiguous as postmodernism. Initially, postmodernism was a movement in architecture that rejected the modernist ideas of avant garde experimentation. In literature, postmodernism refers to non-realistic and non-traditional literature written after the 1960s. American postmodern writing has been strongly influenced by French thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes.

Postmodern fiction

It should be remembered, however, that not all contemporary American literature fits the "postmodern" category. The major American writers identified as postmodern include: John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo and Paul Auster. Typical features of postmodern fiction include ironical use of quotations, textual games, multiple codes and ambiguity. Postmodern writers usually treat literature as merely a combinatorial game. They question the authority which literature enjoyed. Techniques such as self-reflection, plays with language and nonlinear multi-narratives and self-contradicting plots are characteristic conventions of postmodern fiction.

In his famous essay "The Literature of Exhaustion" (1967), **John Barth** wrote that the traditional literary genres had lost much of their significance to the modern reader.

Postmodern fiction often blurs the boundary between fiction and nonfiction or between prose and poetry. It is often fragmented and lacks a traditional ending. Critics have noticed that some postmodern narratives retell or extend earlier works of literature from a different viewpoint. For example, in one of Woody Allen's short stories appears Madame Bovary, a character from the 19th century French novel written by Gustave Flaubert. Another frequently used technique is pastiche, which mixes different genres or contradictory voices within one work.

John Barth's short story "Lost in the Funhouse" is an example of early postmodernist experimentation with form and content. The narrator constantly breaks the illusion of realism in the story by making frequent references to traditional literary techniques or conventions. *The Sot-Weed Factor* (1960) is an example of the literature of exhaustion.

The Sot-Weed Factor (1960) is a postmodernist parody of the historical novel set in the 1680s and 1690s. The protagonist of the novel is Ebenezer Cooke, a poet, dutiful son and virgin, who

travels from England to Maryland to take possession of his father's tobacco plantation. He has many adventures during his journey to Maryland and while in Maryland. The novel takes its title from Cook's poem which was originally intended to praise Maryland, but finally it turns out to be a bitter satire.

Barth's other novels include *The Floating Opera* (1957), *The End of the Road* (1958), *LETTERS* (1979), *Coming Soon!!!: A Narrative* (2001), *The Development* (2008).

Thomas Pynchon's "Entropy" (1960), *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) and *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) also challenge the traditional form and content of fiction. These narratives are deliberately chaotic and complex.

The early classic of postmodern American fiction, *The Crying of Lot 49*, is an unusual detective novel which ends without a solution. The main character of the book travels all over northern California in order to find clues to a mysterious symbol that keeps appearing in place after place. Finally, when she seems to have uncovered the symbol's meaning, the novel ends unexpectedly.

Donald Barthelme (1931-1989) wrote postmodernist "collages" characterised by technical experimentation and melancholic humour. His story collections include *Come Back, Dr. Caligari* (1964), *City Life* (1970), *Unspeaking Practices, Unnatural Acts* (1968), and *Overnight to Many Distant Cities* (1983). His novels include *Snow White* (1967) and *The King* (1990).

Barthelme was regarded as a leading American practitioner of surrealism. His fiction is concerned with the investigations of consciousness and experiments in metafiction.

New realism

Another recent development in contemporary American fiction is called 'new realism', 'supermarket realism' or 'minimalism'. It is represented by such writers as Raymond Carver (1939-1988), Jay McInerney, Tobias Wolff, Ann Beattie, Bobbie Ann Mason, Richard Ford and others, who have returned to real life themes. Their characters are unheroic average people, unemployed or losers. Minimalist fiction, usually narrated in the first person, shows slices of contemporary American life focusing on human failure.

Written in colloquial language and lacking didacticism, minimalism is characterised by spare use of detail, minimal setting, economy of time frame and lean plots. Minimalist writers rarely provide descriptions or excessive psychological introspection.

The most notable works of minimalist fiction include **Carver's** *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981), **McInerney's** *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984), **Wolff's** *The Barracks Thief* (1984), *Distortions* (1976), **Mason's** *Love Life* (1989).

Contemporary fiction

Contemporary American fiction features a wide range of authors – from canonical figures such as Don DeLillo, Paul Auster and Annie Proulx, to increasingly influential writers such as Jeffrey Eugenides, Gish Jen and Richard Powers and George Saunders.

Don DeLillo explores in his fiction such themes as the effect of mass media on society, rampant consumerism, terrorism, disintegration of family. His major novels include *Americana* (1971), *White Noise* (1985), *Libra* (1988), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997), *The Body Artist* (2001), *Cosmopolis* (2003), and *Falling Man* (2007), a picture of America after September 11, 2001.

White Noise is a postmodern satire of mass culture, consumerism and the effects of

modern technology. It describes an academic year in the life of its narrator, Jack Gladney, a college professor in a small American town who teaches Hitler Studies, and his fifth wife Babetter, live in a constant fear of death. The novel has two major plots: the airborne toxic event, and Jack's discovery of his wife's participation in an experimental study of a new (fictional) psychopharmaceutical called Dylar. The first part of *White Noise*, called "Waves and Radiation," recounts ironically contemporary family and academic life. In the second part, "The Airborne Toxic Event," a chemical spill from a rail car releases a noxious cloud over Jack's home region, prompting an evacuation. In part three, "Dylarama," Gladney discovers that Babette has been cheating on him in order to gain access to the drug Dylar.

Leonard Orr characterised DeLillo's fiction as 'apocalyptic lyricism' – ...' on the level of sentences and paragraphs, the phrasing is often exuberant and beautiful filled both with concise and apt imagery, rhythmically charged, tonally accurate, using technical jargon or tabloid clichés as cultural shorthand. On the event level, he is portraying assassination, genocide, toxic waste, ecological disasters, fascism, commodification, and other grave ills'.⁷⁴

Paul Auster has written a series of experimental fictions published collectively as *The New York Trilogy* (1987), which comprise *City of Glass* (1985), *Ghosts* (1986) and *The Locked Room* (1986). Auster's later novels include *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), *Moon Palace* (1989), *The Music of Chance* (1990), *Mr. Vertigo* (1994), *The Brooklyn Follies* (2005), *Sunset Park* (2010).

Auster's postmodern novels deal with such issues as the art of self-invention, the role of chance and coincidence, a sense of imminent disaster, authorial authenticity and accountability, urban dislocation, American everyday life and history.

Annie Proulx is a novelist, short story writer and journalist. She won the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction for her first novel, *Postcards*. Her second novel, *The Shipping News* (1993), won both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction. Her short story "Brokeback Mountain" was adapted as an Academy Award, BAFTA and Golden Globe Award-winning major motion picture released in 2005.

Jeffrey Eugenides is an American writer of Greek descent. He has written three novels: *The Virgin Suicides* (1993), *Middlesex* (2002) and *The Marriage Plot* (2011).

Set in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, *The Virgin Suicides* follows the lives and deaths by suicide of five sisters over the course of an increasingly isolated year, as told from the point of view of the neighborhood boys who obsessively watch them. His second novel, *Middlesex*, is a picaresque Bildungsroman which recounts eight decades of a family's history in the voice of an intersex man named Cal, born Calliope.

Richard Powers has published twelve novels His fiction explores the effects of modern science and technology. His novels include *Prisoner's Dilemma* (1988), *The Gold Bug Variations* (1991), *Operation Wandering Soul* (1993), *Galatea 2.2* (1995), *Orfeo* (2014), and *The Overstory* (2018).

George Saunders writes short stories, essays, novellas, children's books and novels. His novel *Lincoln in the Bardo* won the 2017 Man Booker Prize. The novel takes place during and after the death of Abraham Lincoln's son William "Willie" Wallace Lincoln and deals with the president's grief at his loss. The bulk of the novel, which takes place over the course of a single evening, is set in the bardo – a Tibetan term for the Buddhism transitional or liminal state between life and rebirth. The novel has been

⁷⁴ Leonard Orr, *Don DeLillo's White Noise: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003) 32.

compared with Edgar Lee Masters's poetry collection *Spoon River Anthology* (1915).

7.3. Ethnic writing

The term 'ethnic writing' or 'ethnic literature' usually refers to works by late twentieth-century Native American, Asian American and Latino authors in which a sense of ethnicity is a central element. Literary works classified as ethnic writing may be regarded as windows into and out of respective subcultures.

Native American Renaissance

Native American Renaissance or the American Indian Literary Renaissance is a term frequently used to describe the literature written after the 1960's by Native American writers. The authors, often of mixed-race European-American and Native American descent, included in this literary movement include: Paula Gunn Allen (1939-2008), Louise Erdrich; Joy Harjo, N. Scott Momaday, N. Scott Momaday, N. Scott Momaday (sic!), Simon J. Ortiz; Leslie Marmon Silko; Gerald Vizenor, and James Welch.

Leslie Marmon Silko is one of the key figures in the First Wave of the Native American Renaissance. She is from a mixed heritage, white, Mexican and Native American. In 1977 Silko published a novel *Ceremony*, in which she explores gender roles, traditional Indian stories, and the identity of people of mixed ancestry, half white and half Native American. In *Ceremony*, Silko reveals many paradoxes and stereotypes present in American society today.

Ceremony recounts the fate of Tayo, a half-white and half-Pueblo Indian, as he tries to cope with his World War II traumas. When he returns to his family's home at Laguna Pueblo, he suffers from mental instability and turns to alcoholism to escape his horrific memories of a Japanese prisoner of war. Tayo eventually turns to traditional Pueblo spirituality and ceremony as a source of his recovery.

Chinese American ethnic writing

Maxine Hong Kingston is one of the best-known Chinese American ethnic writers. In her novel semi-autobiographical novel, *The Woman Warrior* (1976), which won the National Book Critics Award, Kingston talks of her growing up as a Chinese American. She describes her family's way of life and recalls her mother's Chinese stories as well as the experiences of Chinese immigrants living in the United States.

Shawn Wong, a Chinese American writer, has written a novel *American Knees* which deals with the dilemmas of his Asian American identity. **Amy Tan** is another American writer of Chinese descent who has achieved a considerable success. Her novel *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) describes the lives of four Chinese American immigrant families who start a club known as "the Joy Luck Club".

Gish Jen is a contemporary American writer of Chinese descent. Her first novel, was *Typical American* (1991). *Mona in the Promised Land* (1996), a sequel to her first novel, features a Chinese-American adolescent who converts to Judaism. *The Love Wife* (2004) portrays an Asian American family with interracial parents and both biological and adopted children. *World and Town* (2010) gives a picture of a fragile America, its small towns challenged by globalisation, development, fundamentalism, and immigration.

Chicano American ethnic writing

The term Chicano is sometimes used to Mexicans who grew up in the United States. Chicano literature is relatively young. It tends to focus on themes of identity, discrimination, culture and history, with a strong emphasis on validating Chicano culture in the United

States. One the best known contemporary Chicano poets is **Gary Soto**. Another notable Chicano author is **Sandra Cisneros**, who writes poetry and short stories. Her first novel *The House on Mango Street* (1984), describes the experience of a girl living in a Latino section of Chicago through a series of scenes about her family, neighbourhood and secret dreams.

At the beginning of the 21st century major American writers continued to reflect the complex patterns of human relationships and sensibility using varied and often mixed genres and referring to a rich American literary tradition.

7.9. American drama

Although the first permanent American play-houses were the Southwark Theatre erected in Philadelphia in 1766 and the John Street Theatre built in New York City in 1767, the American theatre came into prominence only after World War I. This was connected with the Little Theatre movement which inspired small groups of amateurs throughout America to stage new plays. American playwrights turned to Europe for inspiration and ideas. The most unifying element in American drama is the allegorical theme of twentieth-century man journeying through the confusion of the contemporary world.

In 1915, a number of artists and writers established a group called the Provincetown Players (Provincetown, Massachusetts was their seat). One of the leaders of their group was the young **Eugene O'Neill** (1888–1953). He ignored the conventions of the well-made play and changed the character of American drama by introducing the element of the subconscious. By bringing psychological depth, poetic symbolism and expressionistic technique to the American theatre, O'Neill raised its standards. His one-act plays marked the beginning of a new era in the history of American theatre.

In his early plays, such as *Bound East for Cardiff* (1914) and *The Moon of the Caribbees* (1917), O'Neill successfully combined realism with expressionist technique. His early plays are disappointing to read but they were very impressive on the stage. After the production of *Beyond the Horizon* (1920) he became acknowledged as America's leading playwright. This play was written in naturalistic technique; O'Neill's characters speak authentic, everyday language.

O'Neill's dramas showed a remarkable range of experimentation. *Anna Christie* (1922), *Desire Under the Elms* (1924), and *The Iceman Cometh* (1939) were naturalistic. In *Emperor Jones* (1921) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922), the expressionistic technique was used.

One of his best plays, *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1932), is a profound psychological study which re-interpreted Greek tragedy in a New England setting. The play successfully depicts typically American characters: farmers, soldiers, sailors, ordinary men and women.

The **intertext** of *Mourning Becomes Electra* the Greek myth about Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Orestes and Electra.⁷⁵ The play is divided into three parts titled *Homecoming*, *The Hunted*, and *The Haunted*. The setting of the trilogy is the Mannon residence. Ezra Mannon serves as a general in the Union's army during the Civil War. His wife Christine has an affair with a man called Adam Brant. Christine poisons her

⁷⁵Clytemnestra was the wife of king Agamemnon. While Agamemnon was away, Clytemnestra had a lover Aegisthus. After his return home Agamemnon was treacherously killed by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Agamemnon's children, Electra and Orestes decide to avenge their father by killing their mother Clytemnestra and her new husband, Aegisthus. After the murder of his mother, Orestes goes mad after and is pursued by the Erynies, the female deities of vengeance. The myth was the subject of several ancient tragedies: *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus, *Electra* by Sophocles, and *Electra* by Euripides.

husband after his return from the war. The two children, Lavinia and Orin, soon discover the truth about their father's death. In an act of revenge Orin kills Brant and Christine, commits suicide when she learns of her lover's death. Now Orin lives with a growing sense of guilt and finally he shoots himself. Lavinia renounces the proposal of marriage and lives alone in the Mannon house to atone for the sins of her family.

O'Neill was strongly influenced by Strindberg, Ibsen and Gorky. However, his plays are original in their treatment of the human condition. Before O'Neill, most American drama was farce or melodrama. O'Neill treated the theatre as a venue to work out serious social issues and ideas. He transformed the American Theatre into a serious and important cultural institution. His experiments in dramatic technique influenced such dramatists as Thornton Wilder, Elmer Rice, and others.

Thornton Wilder (1897–1975) is another important representative of modern American drama. He achieved popularity as a playwright after the production of *Our Town* (1938): a panorama of small-town life in America. His other plays include *The Long Christmas Dinner* (1931) and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942).

Elmer Rice (1892–1967) wrote an expressionistic play *The Adding Machine* (1923), which satirised man in the machine age. His later plays, *The People* (1933) and *Between Two Worlds* (1934), expressed his radical social and political views.

Clifford Odets (1906–1963) was the leading representative of socially committed theatre in the United States during the 1930s. His play *Waiting for Lefty* (1935), dealing with labour unionism, was a great stage success.

After World War II, America's most widely discussed playwrights were Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller.

Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) presented the dark vision of life in his plays. He became famous after the production of *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), which is a play about frustration and alienation from society.

Tom Wingfield, who is both the narrator and a character in the play, recalls the memory of his mother Amanda Wingfield and sister Laura, a crippled young lady waiting for a suitor. All three characters are lonely individuals living in an unreal world. The play has the static quality of a dream. The central symbol in the play is Laura's collection of small glass animals, which represents her own secluded and fragile world.

Williams's plays shocked American audiences by showing the maladies and obsessions of contemporary society. His characters are all psychologically tortured and sick, trapped in a world that is both indifferent and incomprehensible. No hope can be offered them because they cannot act, but only react.

Williams's other plays, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and *Night of the Iguana* (1962), show familial tensions, sexual inhibition, frustration, neurotic behaviour and the inability to come to terms with everyday life.

Arthur Miller's (1915–2005) best known plays – *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953), and *After the Fall* (1964) – are all deeply rooted in a realistically critical view of American life.

Death of a Salesman, set in New York and Boston, is concerned with the ruthless success ethic of capitalism. The protagonist, Willy Loman, is an elderly travelling salesman. All his professional life he has accepted the false values of American society (the distorted American Dream), and when he becomes older and less efficient, he is unable to overcome the self-delusion in which he has lived. When Willy's grown sons, Happy and Biff, arrive home for a

visit, Willy revives his memories of their childhood. The boys were a source of his pride and joy; he believed that they would make tremendous careers in business, but they did not. Willy, who lost a job himself in the meantime, cannot accept the truth of the failure in his life and commits a suicide.

The play opposes Aristotle's definition of tragedy as the downfall of a great man. Loman is not a great; he is a common American. His downfall is due to his misconception of himself as someone who has done great deeds. *Death of a Salesman* is the postwar critique of the American Dream.

The Crucible is an indirect attack on McCarthyism. Miller uses the witchcraft hysteria in Salem, Massachusetts, in the 1690s as an allegory of the anti-Communist hysteria that broke out in America in the 1950s.

In *After the Fall* the hero of the play, Quentin, a New York Jewish lawyer and intellectual, examines his failed relationships with women and reflects that he does not know how to live in a world from which love, friendship and ideology are absent.

Contemporary American drama has absorbed in some measure the conventions of the **Theatre of the Absurd**, which in turn, may be considered as a precursor of postmodern drama.

Edward Albee (1926-2016) is considered to be the leading representative of the Absurdist movement in America. The notion of the Absurd in his plays springs from a feeling of deep disillusionment, a draining away of the sense of meaning and purpose in life. In the United States disillusionment with the American Dream was particularly strong in the 1960s. The assassinations of President Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, Martin Luther King, the rise in racial tension, and the war in Vietnam destroyed the foundations of the American optimism.

In his plays, *The Zoo Story* (1959), *The American Dream* (1960) and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962), Albee attacked the ideals of progress, optimism and faith in a national mission, and poured scorn on the sentimental ideals of family life, togetherness and physical fitness.

Other important contemporary playwrights include Lorraine Hansberry, Jack Gelber, and Amiri Baraka. Their plays are about the commercialisation and depersonalisation of contemporary American society.

Lorraine Hansberry's (1930-1965) play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) was immensely popular on Broadway. It is an epic story of the Younger family struggling to realize their dream by escaping the ghetto of African-American life during the 1950s.

Jack Gelber's (1932–2003) Off-Broadway award-winning *The Connection* (1959) shows the world of drug addicts.

Amiri Baraka's most significant play is *The Dutchman* (1964), about racial conflict.

Postmodern American drama is characterised by great diversity that undermines the notion of fixed identity and questions the nature of reality. It draws on a variety of dramatic intertexts, both previous modes of theatrical writing and present instances. The Living Theater, founded in New York City in 1947 by led by the actress Judith Malina and painter/poet Julian Beck, shared many features with postmodern drama. Joseph Chaikin's Open Theater contributed significantly to postmodern American drama.

Postmodern American drama deconstructs a number of the core ideas often presented in Modernist productions while highlighting the Postmodern notion of "truth"

as ultimately unverifiable.

Postmodern American drama has its roots in the provocative and elliptical works of Edward Albee, most notably *The Sandbox* (1950), *The Zoo Story* (1958) and *The American Dream* (1960). Albee's more recent *The Goat, Or Who is Sylvia?* (2000) is a blend of the absurd and the postmodern.

Arthur Kopit's postmodern plays focus on the clash of cultures, language and thought, and the defragmentation of life. One of his best known plays is his early farce, *Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Momma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feelin So Sad* (1960), untitled "a pseudoclassical tragicomedy in a bastard French tradition," parodies the Theatre of the Absurd, the Oedipus complex, and the conventions of avant-garde drama. Kopit's other plays include *Wings* (1978), *The End of the World* (1984), *The Road to Nirvana* (1991), a racy satire of Hollywood; and *Because He Can* (2000), originally produced under the title *Y2K*.

Sam Shepard's (1943-2017) postmodern dramas include *The Tooth of Crime* (1972), *Curse of the Starving Class* (1977), *Buried Child* (1978) and *True West* (1980), all dealing with family conflicts. These plays mix realistic and nonrealistic elements, ridicule popular culture. Shepard also scripted postmodern films, such as *Zabriskie Point*, *Paris Texas*, and *Fool for Love*.

David Mamet, who is also an essayist, screenwriter and film director, is regarded as an important postmodern American playwright. He explores in his plays the bleak urban world, the myths of capitalism, and the loss of spiritual confidence in such plays as *American Buffalo* (1975) and *Speed-the-Plow* (1988).

American Buffalo is a two-act play about three petty crooks who are a little out of luck as they plot the theft of a valuable coin collection. The play was hailed as a penetrating look at commerce reduced to its most basic level. The play is set in the backroom of a junk shop owned by Don, who has taken the much younger assistant Bobby and is trying to teach him the art of conducting business. Don has sold a man a coin he suspects was undervalued, and he begins to devise a scheme to steal it back. The third character, Teach convinces Don that they should steal the entire coin collection while arguing that Bobby is too inexperienced to handle it. The play contains subtexts and its absurdist dialogues are often based on **circumlocution**.

7.10. Contemporary poets

Charles Bernstein is a contemporary poet, essayist, editor, and literary scholar. He is one of the most prominent members of the Language poets (or L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets), considered as one of America's most inventive and influential contemporary poets. A volume of Bernstein's selected poetry, *All the Whiskey in Heaven*, was published in 2010. The collection brings together Bernstein's best poems from the past thirty years, which make an astonishing assortment of different types of poems. Yet despite the distinctive differences from poem to poem, Bernstein's characteristic explorations of how language both limits and liberates thought are present throughout.

Not for all the whiskey in heaven
Not for all the flies in Vermont
Not for all the tears in the basement
Not for a million trips to Mars

Not if you paid me in diamonds
Not if you paid me in pearls
Not if you gave me your pinky ring
Not if you gave me your curls

Not for all the fire in hell

Not for all the blue in the sky
Not for an empire of my own
Not even for peace of mind

No, never, I'll never stop loving you
Not till my heart beats its last
And even then in my words and my songs
I will love you all over again

Although Bernstein borrows from many other poets, his poems display imagination and great formal variety. There are mostly free-verse prose poems, long poems, songs, political tirades and even aphorisms.

Further reading

Bercovitch, Sacvan, ed. *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Characteristic features of the period

1. Major figures of the postwar realist novel: Bellow, Mailer, Updike.
2. American myth in Arthur Miller's plays; Tennessee Williams and his studies of violence, alienation, and aberration; Edward Albee and the theatre of the absurd.
3. American poetry after Modernism: departure from the Modernist dogma in the 50s; the Beat Generation, the emergence of the confessional school of poetry; decentralisation of the poetic scene; multiplicity of standards; major poetic figures: Lowell, Plath, Roethke, Ginsberg, Bly.
4. Changes in the American prose after the 1970s: postmodernism, new realism, ethnic writing.
5. American postmodern writers: John Barth, Donald Barthelme, Kurt Vonnegut, Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, Paul Auster,
6. The significant role of women writers in African American literature: Toni Morrison and Alice Walker.
7. American drama questions social and cultural codes by presenting alternatives to cultural and social norms in its dramatic content or structure.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. American drama in the 20th century
2. Describe trends in post-war American poetry.
3. Realism and experimentation in post-war American fiction.
4. The feminine voice in American poetry and prose.
5. The impact of Walt Whitman on 20th century American poetry.
6. The portrayal of Blacks in the works of American Black and non-Black authors.
7. The treatment of gender, or race or class in selected American novels or short stories.
8. A woman in the racist South in a Toni Morrison novel.
9. Describe some representative examples of Jewish-American fiction.
10. Present your own interests in particular works of contemporary American literature.

Chapter Eight

Introduction to other literatures in English

In recent years the scope of literature in English has expanded considerably. The literature in English is diverse and rich. The term 'Other Literatures in English' refers in this chapter not only to literature written in the English language by writers associated with countries which were part of the British Empire, i.e. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, South Africa and other former British colonies, but also to the constituent countries of the United Kingdom, i.e. Wales and Scotland, as well as Ireland.

8.1. Irish literature

The roots of Irish literature have been traced back to the 7th century. Irish literature in vernacular started with descriptions of the brave deeds of mythical gods, kings, saints and popular heroes. Ireland is also home to a number of writers who belong to the history of English literature. Irish authors writing in English include William Congreve, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, George Moore, George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, Elizabeth Bowen, Iris Murdoch and Seamus Heaney. They are discussed in Chapter Six.

This section deals with Irish authors who are either less known internationally or concerned mostly with Irish issues. They include J. M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, Liam O'Flaherty, Kate O'Brien, Brendan Behan, Flann O'Brien, Edna O'Brien and a number of poets, including Louis MacNeice, Patrick Kavanagh, Derek Mahon, Michael Longley and Seamus Deane.

The end of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century are known as the Irish Renaissance, or the Irish Literary Revival, which was a return to Irishness in literature, a return to Irish myths and folklore. The generation of writers who came after the Irish Renaissance was more concerned with social and political issues and descriptions of everyday life.

J. M. Synge (1871-1909) was a poet, dramatist, prose writer and the dominant figure of the Irish Renaissance. The Irish Literary Renaissance, also known as the Celtic Renaissance (late 19th- and early 20th-century) was a literary and cultural movement that aimed at reviving ancient Irish folklore, legends, and traditions. Besides Synge it included such outstanding writers as W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and Sean O'Casey.

Synge was one of the cofounders of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, one of the most impressive achievements of the Irish Literary Renaissance. His best known plays are *Riders to the Sea* (1904) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), which are based on Irish folklore. Synge developed a Hiberno-English dialect, which combines English vocabulary with Irish sentence structure in order to simulate vernacular speech in rural Ireland. **Lady Gregory** (née Isabella Augusta Persse, 1852-1932) was a co-founder of the Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre. She revived many Irish folktales and stories and wrote plays.

Sean O'Casey (1880-1964) wrote realistic tragicomedies of the Dublin slums. His best plays are *Juno and the Paycock* (1924) and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), which focus on the lives of ordinary Irish people during the Irish Civil War period.

Liam O'Flaherty (1896-1984) was a major figure in the Irish Literary Renaissance. He wrote novels and short-stories. His works include *Thy Neighbour's Wife*, *The Black Soul* and *The Informer*, which was made into an award winning film.

Kate O'Brien (1897-1974), born in Limerick, was a novelist and playwright. Her plays include *Distinguished Villa* (1926). She is best known for her controversial

novels dealing with female sexuality, e.g. *The Land of Spices* (1941), the story of a platonic relationship between two women.

Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967) wrote poetry and prose. He is regarded as the most important Irish poet after Yeats. His best known autobiographical novel is *Tarry Flynn* (1948), which gives a detailed account of rural Irish life.

Louis MacNeice (1907-1963) was one of the representatives of the social protest poets of the 1930s along with the English poets W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis. His poetry includes *Autumn Journal* (1939), written between August and December 1938, it is a long poem which combines personal memories of childhood and schooldays, a visit to Spain in 1936, study at Oxford, teaching classics in London, and the political turmoil prior to World War II. His subsequent volumes of poetry include *Poems, 1925-1940* (1940), *Springboard* (1945), *Holes in the Sky* (1948), *Ten Burnt Offerings* (1952), and *Solstices* (1961). MacNeice was an influence on contemporary Irish poets, such as Michael Longley and Paul Muldoon.

Brendan Behan (1923-1964) wrote both in Irish and English. He is the author of the play, *The Quare Fellow* (1954), which deals with the grim realities of prison life.

Brian Friel has written a number of successful plays including *Philadelphia Here I Come!* (1964), *Translations* (1980) and *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990).

Flann O'Brien (pseudonym of Brian O'Nolan, 1911-1966) wrote a comic novel, an early example of metafiction, *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939). The novel's first-person narrator, a student of literature, invents stories within a frame narrative about easy-going and unlikely characters. Flann O'Brien's fiction is often compared to Joyce's works.

Edna O'Brien is a contemporary Irish writer whose novels and short stories deal with Irish manners and mores with special emphasis on the inner feelings of women, and their problems in relating to men and to society as a whole. She achieved a literary recognition with her first three books, *The Country Girls* (1960), *The Lonely Girl* (1962; reprinted as *The Girl with Green Eyes*, 1964), and *Girls in Their Married Bliss* (1964), dealing with young women coming to maturity in a Puritan Ireland. *August Is a Wicked Month* (1965) narrates the life of a woman whose husband and son are killed while she has a holiday affair in France. O'Brien's short story collections include *The Love Object* (1968), *A Scandalous Woman* (1974), and *Lantern Slides* (1988). The semiautobiographical novel, *The Light of Evening* (2006) features the bonds between mother and long-estranged daughter. O'Brien's non-fiction works include *James and Nora*, a study of James Joyce's marriage.

Deirdre Madden is a contemporary Irish author. Her novels include *Hidden Symptoms* (1988), about life in contemporary Belfast; *Authenticity* (2002), a story about art and artists set in contemporary Dublin; and *Molly Fox's Birthday* (2008), a story of a brilliant actress. The main themes of Madden's novels are Irish identity, friendship, religion and the nature of art.

Patrick McCabe writes dark and violent novels set in contemporary, often small-town, Ireland. His novels include *The Butcher Boy* (1992), a story set in a small Irish town in the late 1950s about a socially deprived adolescent whose father is alcoholic and whose mother commits suicide; and *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998), about Patrick "Pussy" Braden, the bastard child of a parish priest, who rebels against the particular mentality of small-town Ireland.

John Banville is the winner of the 2005 **Booker Prize** for *The Sea*, a story narrated in the first person by a self-aware, retired art historian who tries to reconcile himself to the deaths of those whom he used to love. Banville's other novels include *Dr Copernicus* (1976), about the Polish astronomer; *The Book of Evidence* (1989), *Eclipse* (2000); *The Infinities* (2009). Banville has also published popular crime novels under the nickname Benjamin Black. His mainstream fiction is influenced by Romantic, modernist and postmodernist theories of the creative imagination.

Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) was a poet, playwright and translator. He received the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature. His work often deals with Ireland, particularly Northern Ireland, where the poet was born and lived until young adulthood.

His collections include *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), *Door into the Dark* (1969), *North* (1975), *The Haw Lantern* (1987), *The Spirit Level* (1996), *District and Circle* (2006) and *Human Chain* (2010).

Seamus Deane is a poet, critic and novelist. His poetry includes *Gradual Wars* (1972), *Rumours* (1977), *History Lessons* (1983). Another contemporary Ulster poet and novelist is **Ciaran Carson**, who has published nine books of poetry and four prose works. Important women poets include **Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin**, **Eavan Boland** and **Medbh McGuckian**.

8.2. Scottish literature

The great periods in Scottish literature are medieval, the 18th and 19th centuries, the Scottish Renaissance of the 20th century, and the contemporary period.

Some of the most important Scottish poetry was written by a group of poets known as the Scottish Chaucerians. Inspired by Chaucer, Scottish poets wrote poetry often using his seven-line rhyme royal stanza. The most outstanding were Robert Henryson and William Dunbar.

Robert Henryson (fl. 1460-1500) wrote *Testament of Cresseid*, which continues and reinterprets the story of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, and **William Dunbar** (c. 1460-c. 1520) wrote poetry in the tradition of courtly love, allegories and religious meditations.

The most outstanding Scottish writers, who belong to the canon of English literature, and are discussed in Chapter Six, include **James Macpherson**, **Robert Burns** (national poet of Scotland), **Walter Scott** and **Robert Louis Stevenson**.

Mention should also be made of **Henry Mackenzie** (1745-1831), whose *The Man of Feeling* (1771) became the most popular British novel of his time.

The Scottish literary Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s includes such writers as **Edwin Muir** (1887-1959), a poet, translator and literary critic; **Hugh MacDiarmid** (1892-1978), one of the most important Scottish poets of the 20th century, who wrote both in English and in anglicised Scots; and **Neil Miller Gunn** (1891-1973), a prolific novelist, critic and dramatist.

An outstanding Scottish-born novelist was **Muriel Spark** (1918-2006), who lived in Edinburgh, Rhodesia, London, New York, Rome, and spent her last years in Tuscany, Italy.

The Scottish literary revival of the 1980s (a second Scottish Renaissance) finds expression in the fictions of Alasdair Gray, Irvine Welsh, James Kelman, A. L. Kennedy, Alan Warner, and Brian McCabe, who often deal with the traditions of representing Scotland and Scottishness. The most characteristic representative works of contemporary Scottish fiction include **Alasdair Gray's** *Lanark* (1981), which combines realist and dystopian fantasy descriptions of his Glasgow; **Irvine Welsh's** *Trainspotting* (1993), narrated in the first person by young Scottish working-class heroin users who engage in destructive activities; **James Kelman's** *How Late It Was, How Late* (1994), and **A. L. Kennedy's** *So I Am Glad* (1995) and *Original Bliss* (1997), novels which blend realism and fantasy.

Iain Banks is currently one of the most popular Scottish writers. The themes of his novels include the relationship between culture and violence, war and peace, sexual transgression. His first novel, *The Wasp Factory* (1984) is a darkly comic novel chronicling a psycho and his insane exploits. Banks other novels include *Walking on the Glass* (1985), *The Bridge* (1986), *Complicity* (1993), *Transition* (2009).

Mention should also be made of **Alistair MacLean** (1922-1987), who wrote bestselling thrillers and adventure stories, including *The Guns of Navarone* and *Where Eagles Dare*, set during World War II.

Notable contemporary Scottish poets are **Carol Ann Duffy**, **Douglas Dunn** and **Kathleen Jamie**.

8.3. Welsh literature

Welsh literature in English includes works written in the English language by Welsh writers, particularly if they have subject matter relating to Wales or are influenced by Welsh culture. It has been recognised as a distinctive entity only since the 20th century. The need for a separate identity for this kind of writing arose because of the parallel development of modern Welsh literature, i.e. literature in the Welsh language. Many Welsh writers have written in both the English and Welsh languages.

Gwyn Thomas (1913-1981) and **Alexander Cordell** (1914-1997) wrote a series of popular historical novels about Welsh history in the 19th century. The novel *How Green Was My Valley* by **Richard Llewellyn** (1906-83) is set in South Wales in the time of Queen Victoria and tells the story of a poor but respectable mining family. **Emyr Humphreys** is a bilingual Welsh novelist and poet. He has published over twenty novels dealing with the Welsh experience, including *A Toy Epic* (1958) and *Outside the House of Baal* (1965)

The most famous Anglo-Welsh poet is **Dylan Thomas** (1914-1953), whose childhood and youth in Wales had a profound influence upon his writing. His play for radio, *Under Milk Wood*, reveals the dreams and innermost thoughts of the inhabitants of an imaginary small Welsh village, Llareggub (see also p.). **David Jones** (1895-1974) was one of the most important modernist poets. His poetry was inspired by his Welsh heritage and his Catholicism. **Glyn Jones** (1905-1995) was a popular Anglo-Welsh poet and novelist. His novels include *The Valley*, *The City*, *The Village* (1956), *The Learning Lark* (1960) and *The Island of Apples* (1965). In one of his most important works, *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (1968), Jones discusses the period between the wars in Anglo-Welsh literature.

8.4. Canadian literature

Canadian literature includes works written both by English-speaking and French speaking authors. In this section Canadian literature in English is discussed.

The term “Canadian Literature in English” refers to that literary works written in what is now territorially Canada or written by Canadians abroad. Canada has a rich and diverse literary heritage which is gaining widespread interest and recognition.

The beginnings of English-Canadian literature go back to the 19th century. In 1825, **Oliver Goldsmith** (1794-1861) grandnephew of the English writer Oliver Goldsmith, wrote *The Rising Village* (1834), the first book-length poem published in Canada.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton (1796-1865), politician, judge, and author, wrote humorous political essays, pamphlets and anthologies. His most notable work is *The Clockmaker* (1836), a series of moral essays.

Susanna Moodie (1803-1885) was a poet, novelist and essayist. She emigrated from England in 1832 to Upper Canada, where she settled on a farm with her husband. She described the everyday hardships of pioneer life in *Roughing It in the Bush* (1852), the first literary record of life in Upper Canada. The book, structured as a chronological series of sketches, is in part a memoir and in part fiction which accounts her experiences. Moodie also wrote *Life in the Clearings* (1853) and *Flora Lyndsay* (1854), which all form a trilogy devoted to the Canadian immigrant experience.

Archibald Lampman (1861-1899), described as the Canadian Keats, wrote sensitive lyrical poetry, such as *Among the Millet* (1888) and *Lyrics of Earth* (1893).

THREE FLOWER PETALS

When saw I yesterday walking apart
In a leafy place where the cattle wait?
Something to keep for a charm in my heart—
A little sweet girl in a garden gate.
Laughing she lay in the gold sun's might, 5
And held for a target to shelter her,
In her little soft fingers, round and white,
The gold-rimmed face of a sunflower.

Laughing she lay on the stone that stands
For a rough-hewn step in that sunny place, 10
And her yellow hair hung down to her hands,
Shadowing over her dimpled face.
Her eyes like the blue of the sky, made dim
With the might of the sun that looked at her,
Shone laughing over the serried rim, 15
Golden set, of the sunflower.

Laughing, for token she gave to me
Three petals out of the sunflower;—
When the petals are withered and gone, shall be
Three verses of mine for praise of her, 20
That a tender dream of her face may rise
And lighten me yet in another hour,
Of her sunny hair and her beautiful eyes,
Laughing over the golden sunflower.

(Archibald Lampman, *Among the Milletts*. Ottawa: J. Durie and Son, 1888)

Another outstanding poet was **Charles Douglas Roberts** (1860-1943), whose best-known volume of verse is *Songs of the Common Day* (1893). Roberts also wrote stories for children about Canadian wildlife.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the outstanding novel written in Canada which won international popularity was **Lucy Maud Montgomery's** (1874-1942) *Anne of Green Gables* (1918).

Anne, an orphan looking for a family to love and be loved by, is still one of the most popular characters in world literature. This novel has given generations of girls a strong and independent female role model.

Anne Shirley, a skinny, red-haired, freckled orphan, is mistakenly adopted by farmer Matthew Cuthbert and his sister Marilla, who were expecting a boy to help with their farm work. They live together in the fictional town of Avonlea, situated on the picturesque north shore of Canada's Prince Edward Island.

Though Anne lacks social manners, she has a rich and sophisticated imagination and an optimistic and generous spirit. Because she acts according to her instincts and not according to the accepted code of manners, she unintentionally defies expectations of proper ladylike behaviour. She attends church for the first time wearing a wreath of wildflowers, and screams at Mrs. Rachel for making fun of her red hair. Anne tries hard to oblige Marilla and follow her rules of social conduct, but she makes many mistakes: she bakes a cake with liniment instead of vanilla, and lets a mouse drown in the plum-pudding sauce.

At school, Anne quarrels with a handsome, smart boy named Gilbert. When they first meet, Gilbert insults Anne by calling her Carrots and pulling her red braid. Anne is extremely sensitive about her red hair, and Gilbert's teasing infuriates her. Anne declares her eternal antipathy for Gilbert. This incident marks the beginning of a rivalry between Anne and Gilbert, which lasts until the end of the novel.

Anne's untamed imagination, incessant chatter and great temper ensure that she is the centre

of a series of funny adventures. As she grows older, nurtured by the love and discipline of Marilla and Matthew, she develops into an intelligent and independent young woman. Other important characters include her best friend, Diana Barry. Anne is 11 at the novel's beginning and 16 at its end.

Stephen Butler Leacock (1869-1944) is Canada's most celebrated humourist. He wrote books which combined humour with sharp social criticism. His two great masterpieces are *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912) and *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914). In the early part of the 20th century Leacock was regarded as the best-known humorist in the English-speaking world. He also wrote the biography of Mark Twain (1932) and Charles Dickens (1833).

Frederick Philip Grove (1871-1948) wrote about hardships of pioneer life in the hostile wilderness in such novels as *Our Prairie Trails*, *The Turn of the Year* (1923), *A Search for America* (1927), *Fruits of the Earth* (1933), and *In Search of Myself* (1946).

Mazo de la Roche (1885-1961) was a popular romantic novelist best known for her *Jalna* series or *The Whiteoak Chronicles*. She wrote 16 novels in the series which tell the story of one hundred years of the Whiteoak family in Ontario covering from 1854 to 1954.

The English-born novelist **Malcolm Lowry** (1909-57) is sometimes classified as a Canadian author because he lived sporadically in British Columbia. The years he spent in Dollarton (1940-54) were the happiest and most productive years of his chaotic life.⁷⁶ His masterpiece, *Under the Volcano* (1947) is a world classic now.

Under the Volcano, one of the most important books of modern literature, was inspired by his months of alcoholic depression in Mexico (1936-38). The novel recounts the story of Geoffrey Firmin, an alcoholic British consul in the small Mexican town of Quauhnahuac, on the Day of the Dead, November 2, 1938. The novel takes its name from the two volcanoes that overshadow Quauhnahuac. In the character of the consul, a drunken diplomat without official duties, and in the infernal Mexican setting, Lowry found his perfect symbols. *Under the Volcano* is particularly rich in symbolism. It contains numerous references and allusions to other writers and literary works. Particularly, the influence of Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is felt in the novel. There are also references to Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*, William Shakespeare's tragedies, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Perhaps the most distinguished Canadian writer of the 20th century was **Robertson Davies** (1913-1995), novelist, essayist and playwright. *The Deptford Trilogy* (1970-75) is typical of his fiction in its preoccupation with myth, magic and miracles.

Alice Munro (b. 1931), called by Canadians "our Chekhov," is a world famous writer. Her short stories, usually set in her native southwestern Ontario, gained international popularity. Munro's fiction is characterised by rich imagery and narrative style. Her short story collections include *The Progress of Love* (1986), *Friend of My Youth* (1990), *The Love of a Good Woman* (1998), *Runaway* (2004), *The View from Castle Rock* (2006), *Too Much Happiness* (2009), *Dear Life* (2012).

Margaret Atwood is one of the most prominent contemporary Canadian writers. She is also a poet and critic. In 1969, Margaret Atwood published *The Edible Woman*, a novel about women's alienation. Her work entitled *Survival* (1972) is a controversial critique of Canadian literature. In the same year she also published a highly acclaimed novel, *Surfacing*.

Her best poetry includes the cycle of poems, *The Journals of Susanna Moodie* (1970), which is the evocation of the myth of the wilderness, immigrant experience, and the effects of the colonial mentality.

Her next collection of poems, *Power Politics* (1971), is devoted to gender issues. Since its publication it has not only acquired the stature of a classic but, reprinted many times, become the best-known extended work in Canadian poetry. In her novels and poems,

⁷⁶ *The Canadian Encyclopedia* <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com> (Accessed April 2013).

Atwood explores the various concerns of her generation, including the quest for identity, feminism, love, etc.

Michael Ondaatje (b. 1943), although born in Sri Lanka, has lived in Canada since 1962. His novel *The English Patient* (1992) was made into a highly successful film.

The setting of *The English Patient* is an abandoned Italian villa at the end of World War II, which has become a shelter for four protagonists: Hana, a young Canadian nurse who looks after a severely burned patient; Kip, an Indian sapper in the British Army; David Caravaggio, a friend of Hana's father who was a spy during the war and was severely maimed by the Germans. The past and present are intertwined in the novel which explores themes of nationhood, identity, displacement, love, war traumas and human obligations.

Among outstanding contemporary Canadian poets are **Al Purdy** (1918-2000), and **Margaret Avison** (1918-2007), as well as **Leonard Cohen** (b. 1934), who occasionally performs in public. Cohen's songs and poems reflect his quest for a sense of living which he finds in fleeting moments. His constant themes are those of love, faith, and suffering. His poetry collections include *The Spice-Box of Earth* (1961) and *The Energy of Slaves* (1972). In 1966, he published the novel *Beautiful Losers*.

A growing number of writers from various ethnocultural origins are acclaimed in Canada and abroad.

8.5. Australian literature

Australian literature, although written in English, has its own features and themes, but one of the finest novels about Australia, *The Kangaroo*, was written not by an Australian writer but by an Englishman, D. H. Lawrence.

The earliest Australian writing consisted of reminiscences and autobiographies of explorers and convicts. A more distinctly Australian literature started at the end of the last century. **Henry Kendall** (1839-82) is regarded as an early "national bard of Australia". His most famous poetry collections are *Leaves from Australian Forests* (1869) and *Songs from the Mountains* (1880). **Henry Archibald Lawson** (1867-1922) published bush ballads and stories based on his experience of the 'outback' and notable for their style and humour.

Katherine Susannah Prichard (1883-1969) was the first Australian novelist to gain international recognition. She published many novels which drew on her first-hand observation of the lives of cattle ranchers, goldminers, and aborigines. Her family saga, *Coonardoo* (1929) deals with relations between white and aboriginal people on an Australian outback.

Patrick White (1912-1990) was the first Australian writer widely regarded as a major English-language novelist of the 20th century. His novels, such as *The Tree of Man* (1955), *Voss* (1957) and *Riders in the Chariot* (1961) won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. In his fiction White examined the conflict between inner consciousness and social existence as well as a distinct Australian identity.

One of the most prominent present-day writers is **David Malouf**, whose fiction includes *Johnno* (1975), *The Great World* (1990), *Remembering Babylon* (1993) and *The Conversations At Curlow Creek* (1996).

Peter Carey is an Australian novelist and short story writer who lives now in New York. He has published, amongst others, *Illywhacker* (1985), a novel about Australian history told through the memoirs of a 100-year old confidence man or "illywhacker"; and *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), a symbolic novel about Christianity in Australia. His latest novels are *Theft: A Love Story* (2006); and *His Illegal Self* (2008). Carey's fiction has many features of magic realism.

Kenneth Adolf Slessor (1901-1971) was one of Australian poets, who introduced modernist ideas to Australian poetry. Other representatives of 20th century Australian poetry

include **Jack Davis** (1917–2000) and **Dorothy Hewett** (1923-2002).

8.6. New Zealand literature

The first novel written in New Zealand, entitled *Taranaki: A Tale of the War*, was written by **Henry Butler Stoney** in 1861. The novel exploited incidents from the New Zealand wars. The pastoral conditions of life in New Zealand were described by Lady Barker in *Station Life in New Zealand* (1870) and *Station Amusements in New Zealand* (1873). **Samuel Butler** wrote *First Year in Canterbury Settlement* (1863). **Thomas Arnold** (a brother of Matthew Arnold, who had lived in Wellington and Nelson for a few years in the 1840s) wrote *Passages in a Wandering Life* (1900).

In the early 20th century **William Satchell's** novels, *The Land of the Lost* (1902), *The Toll of the Bush* (1905) and *The Elixir of Life* (1907), won critical acclaim. His historical novel *The Greenstone Door* (1914) deals with the events of the Maori Wars.

More original literature has developed since 1945. **Guthrie Wilson's** *Brave Company* (1951) is regarded as the best of the war novels published by New Zealand writers. Guthrie Wilson was a New Zealander who made a reputation overseas after the war.

The country's best known short-story writer is **Katharine Mansfield** (1888-1923), who spent much of her life in London, but whose internationally acclaimed stories evoke her childhood in New Zealand with lyrical subtlety. She lived in Wellington, and went to school in London. A talented cellist, she was not at first attracted to literature, and after finishing her schooling in England, she returned to her New Zealand home in 1906. Weary of the provincial New Zealand lifestyle, she returned to London two years later. Katherine Mansfield is widely considered one of the best short story writers of her period. With the published collection called *The Garden Party* (1921), Katherine Mansfield won the acclaim of many critics of her time, and popular success as well.

Another renowned short story writer was **Frank Sargeson** (1903-1982), whose realistic fiction focused on social criticism. His lower class characters, particularly males, feel discontented and alienated. His most acclaimed story is *That Summer* (1946).

Perhaps the most popular New Zealand novelist is **Dame Ngaio Marsh** (1895-1982), who wrote the first of her many detective stories in 1932. She had a second career as a producer of Shakespearean plays.

Another world-known New Zealand author is **Janet Frame** (1924-2004), who wrote twelve novels, four collections of short stories, a book of poetry and three volumes of autobiography. Her fiction concerns the themes of alienation and isolation. It is based on her traumatic experiences of her youth; she spent over eight years in psychiatric hospitals having been misdiagnosed with schizophrenia. Some of Frame's novels (e.g. *The Edge of the Alphabet*, 1962; *An Angel at My Table*, 1984; *The Carpathians*, 1988) are experiments with **metafiction**.

Allen Curnow (1911-2001) is regarded as New Zealand's foremost poet. His collections of poetry include: *Island and Time* (1941) *Sailing and Drowning* (1943), *At Dead Low Waters* (1943) and *Poems* (1949-57). His *Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45* (1945 and 1951), edited with a critical introduction by Allen Curnow was a landmark in New Zealand literature.

Alan Duff (born 1950) is one of the most famous representatives of New Zealand's new fiction. He is well known as the author of *Once Were Warriors* (1990) and its sequels, *What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?* (1996) and *Jake's Long Shadow* (2002), devoted to Maori issues.

Eleanor Catton (born 1985) is a Canadian-born New Zealand author. Her second novel, *The Luminaries*, won the 2013 Man Booker Prize. The lengthy novel is more than a murder mystery set on the goldfields of New Zealand in the 1860s. It also deals with New Zealand's colonial legacy and its **cultural cringe**, i.e. an internalised cultural inferiority complex.

8.7. Indian literature

Indian literature in English refers to the works by Indian writers living in India and also to the works of members of the Indian diaspora, who write in the English language. The first book written in English by an Indian immigrant to Britain is *The Travels of Dean Mahomet* (1794) by **Dean Mahomet** (1759–1851), a traveller, surgeon and entrepreneur, who also introduced shampooing and established the first Indian take-away curry house restaurant in London. Indian writing in English continued throughout the 19th and the 20th centuries. **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861-1941) was an outstanding Indian poet, novelist, educator and social reformer, whose works in translation enjoyed an enormous popularity in Europe and America. *Gitanjali* is a collection of 103 religious lyrics, originally written in Bengali and translated into English by Tagore himself, who became the first Asian Nobel Prize laureate in 1913. **Nirad C. Chaudhuri** (1897-1999) was a prolific Anglo-Indian writer, whose *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1951) is an important **subaltern** view of Indian history. **R. K. Narayan** (1906-2001) is regarded as India's greatest English language novelist. His most popular novels include a trilogy *Swami and Friends* (1935), *Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The English Teacher* (1945).

Contemporary Indian literature in English is represented by **Shashi Tharoor**, the author of *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), which retells the story of the Mahabharata, the epic of Hindu mythology, in the context of the struggle for independence from the British rule and the first three decades post-independence until the 1980s. The novel includes numerous allusions and references to famous British works about India, such as those by Rudyard Kipling, Paul Scott, and E. M. Forster.

Among the contemporary postcolonial expatriate Indian writers, the most notable are **Salman Rushdie** and **V. S. Naipaul** (see 6.7.2.); **Bapsi Sidhwa** (*Cracking India*, 1991; *Water*, 2006); **Anita Desai** (*Clear Light of Day*, 1980; *In Custody*, 1984) and her daughter **Kiran Desai** (*The Inheritance of Loss*, 2006), **Vikram Seth** (*A Suitable Boy*, 1994).

8.8. Caribbean literature

Anglo-Caribbean or West Indian literature is the term generally used for the literature of the various territories of the Caribbean region, including Antigua, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago.

The term West Indian literature was first used in the 1950s, when writers like **V. S. Naipaul** and **George Lamming** were published in the United Kingdom. However, many renowned West Indian writers left their home territories and settled in the United Kingdom, the United States, or Canada. Therefore, V. S. Naipaul, who has been resident in the United Kingdom since the 1950s ought to be considered a British writer instead of a Trinidadian writer.

A common feature of West Indian writers is a special concern with questions of identity, ethnicity and the Caribbean experience.

Jean Rhys (1890-1979) was born in Dominica as the daughter of a Welsh doctor and a white Creole mother. When she was sixteen she came to England. She published several books before World War I, but it was *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) which made her internationally famous. The novel was inspired by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and is set in Jamaica in the 1830s.

Wilson Harris is a Guyanan author. He first wrote poetry and then wrote over 20 novels including *The Guyana Quartet* (*Palace of the Peacock*, 1960; *The Far Journey of Oudin*, 1961; *The Whole Armour*, 1962; and *The Secret Ladder*, 1963). His novels contain obscure metaphors, puns and symbols in which memory, imagination, dream and reality are mixed.

Two West Indian writers have won the Nobel Prize for Literature: Derek Walcott (1992) and V.S. Naipaul (see p.).

Derek Walcott (1930-2017) was a major West Indian poet and dramatist writing in English. He was born in the Lesser Antilles. At the age of 18, he made his debut with *Twenty-Five Poems*, but his fame as a West Indies poet came with the collection of poems, *In a Green Night* (1962). His most ambitious poem is *Omeros* (1989), a modern epic which describes the wanderings of a present-day Odysseus in the West-Indies, Europe and the United States. Derek Walcott was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1992. He has also written plays which have features of **magic realism**.

Another important Caribbean poet is **Kamau (Edward) Brathwaite**, whose collections *Rights of Passage* (1967), *Masks* (1968) and *Islands* (1969) are records of the distinct West Indian cultural identity.

8.9. South African literature

South African literature includes literary works, mostly written in Afrikaans or English, in South Africa or written by South Africans living in other countries. Among the pre-eminent contemporary writers in South African literature in English are Nadine Gordimer and John Maxwell Coetzee.

Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014) was a short story writer, novelist and political activist and Nobel laureate (1991). Her most important works are *The Conservationist* (1974), *July's People* (1981), *The Pickup* (2001). Gordimer's fiction deals with moral and racial issues, particularly apartheid in South Africa.

John Maxwell Coetzee, who is now an Australian citizen and a highly acclaimed novelist and literary critic, received the 2003 Nobel Prize in Literature. His fiction differs from the genteel tradition of South African literature in the 1950s. He first published two novellas, *Dusklands* (1974), which were followed by several further novels including *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), *Foe* (1986) and *Disgrace* (1999). His most recent novels are *Slow Man* (2005) and *Diary of a Bad Year* (2007). Coetzee's novels deal with universal themes of human existence and the effects of colonisation, segregation and apartheid.

8.10. Nigerian literature

Nigerian literature in English deals with colonial and postcolonial issues. The most acclaimed Nigerian writers who write in English include Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Buchi Emecheta and Ben Okri.

Chinua Achebe (1930-2013) was a novelist, poet, professor and critic. He was best known for his first novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), which is the most widely read book in modern African literature.

Things Fall Apart depicts the life of Okonkwo, a leader and local wrestling champion in Umuofia – a fictional group of nine villages in Nigeria, inhabited by the Igbo ethnic group. In addition it focuses on his three wives, his children, and the influences of British colonialism and Christian missionaries on his traditional Igbo (archaically "Ibo") community during the late nineteenth century.

His novels recount the traditions of Igbo society and describe the clash of values during and after the colonial era. His other novels are *Arrow of God* (1964) and *A Man of the People* (1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

Achebe is also famous for his controversial essay *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness*, in which he described Joseph Conrad as "a bloody racist"⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Achebe, Chinua. *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 1989) 8.

Vole Soyinka, the first African to be honoured by the Nobel Prize (1986) is a poet, playwright and novelist. He has written a novel, *The Interpreters* (1965), which narrative structure has been compared to the fictions of James Joyce and William Faulkner.

Buchi Emecheta was orphaned as a young girl and she spent her early childhood being educated at a missionary school. In 1960, at the age of sixteen, Emecheta married a young student to whom she had been engaged since she was eleven. After their marriage, they moved to London. Over the course of her six-year marriage, Emecheta gave birth to five children. Her mismatched marriage as well as her childhood are alluded to in her famous semi-autobiographical postcolonial novel, *Second-Class Citizen* (1974) about a young Nigerian woman who emigrates to England and struggles to get education and personal freedom. The main characters of her novels show what it means to be a woman in postcolonial society. Emecheta is interested in relationships between gender, education, poverty and enslavement.

Although **Ben Okri** spent most of his life in England, he is regarded as one of the most important African writers in the post-modern and post-colonial traditions. His fiction is sometimes classified as magical realism. He is best known for the novel *The Famished Road* (1991), for which he won the Booker Prize in 1991. Some of his other novels include *Flowers and Shadows* (1980), *Songs of Enchantment*, (1993), and *In Arcadia* (2002), *Starbook* (2007). His more recent book is entitled *Tales of Freedom* (2009). His collection of essays, *A Time for New Dreams*, covering such diverse themes as childhood, self-censorship, the role of beauty, the importance of education and the real significance of the recent economic meltdown, was published in 2011. Okri is also a noted poet.

Characteristic features of other literatures in English

English literature is as diverse as the varieties and dialects of English spoken around the world. Literatures in English have developed through several stages which correspond to the stages of the expansion and dissolution of the British Empire as well as the evolution and the subsequent devolution of the United Kingdom. Literatures in English reflect a great cultural diversity of the English-speaking world.

Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Read and discuss a novel by a contemporary Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Canadian, Australian or a New Zealand author.
2. Read and compare two postcolonial novels in terms of setting, characters and problem/conflict and resolution.

Further reading

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. (1989). *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 2002.

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Chapter Nine

Introduction to Narrative Cinema

In our time film and television have become popular story-telling media. This chapter presents basic concepts and genres of narrative cinema and focuses on affinities between literary and cinematic narrative forms, and it provides a brief overview of the history of American and British cinema.

Suggested viewing: *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *Tom Jones* (1963), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), *Tess* (1979), *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), *A Room With a View* (1985), *Howards End* (1992), *The Remains of the Day* (1993), *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Lolita* (1997), *Atonement* (2007).

9.1. Literature and cinema

There is an important relationship between literature and cinema. Like literature, many films offer profound analyses of human conduct, relationships and actions. Since the beginning of cinema, literature has attracted filmmakers who either made adaptations of literary works or created narrative films based on written scripts. Narrative film can be treated as a visual counterpart to literary fiction. As a work of art, narrative film is analogous to a dramatic play or a novel. Although narrative film has its own specific characteristics, it can be analysed using methods of literary criticism.

Colin MacCabe treats narrative film as analogous to the nineteenth-century realist novel. According to Seymour Chatman, narrative film has two components; the “what” of film narrative is the story and the “way” is its discourse (Chatman 1978: 8). As it is in written narratives, story is what is told and discourse is how it is told. Thus cinematic discourse is the way in which film is used to convey social meanings. However, cinematic discourse differs from that of written fiction because it tells the story not only through language but also through image and sound. Typical narrative components found both in narrative literature and narrative films are plot, characters, setting, themes, point of view, recurring images and symbols. Characteristic narrative techniques are foreshadowing and flashback. Narrative films, and particularly those recorded on DVD, have another affinity with literature; they can be stored in (video) libraries and viewed repeatedly.

9.2. Film theory

Film theory seeks to develop concepts that apply to film analysis and provides tools for understanding the relationship between film and reality, and the other arts. You should not confuse this term with **film criticism**. Film theory can be conveniently subdivided into classical and contemporary theory. The major theorists of the classical film theory include Sergei Eisenstein, André Bazin, Walter Benjamin, Béla Balázs and Ernst Gombrich. Classical film theory was primarily concentrated on theme and content.

Contemporary film theory, which originated in the mid 1960s, employs structuralist semiotics, psychoanalysis, ideological critique, feminism and New Historicism to interpret cinematic forms. Contemporary film theory tries to explain how the film medium works on its viewer. Contemporary film theory has been influenced by the writings of such thinkers as Jacques Lacan, Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva. It employs methods of textual analysis relating to linguistics and semiology. Below are summarised some of the most important film theories.

Auteur theory (in French *auteur* means author) originated in the 1950s. Its main tenet is that a film director is like an author, who creates in his/her films personal creative

vision. Auteur theory is usually associated with the French New Wave and was advocated by the film director and critic François Truffaut in 1954.

Structuralist film theory claims that films convey meaning through the use of certain codes and conventions.

Feminist film theory investigates how film constructs the image of women. For example, the representation of women characters in classical film narratives, such as **film noir**, often suggests a subversive sexuality that can be dangerous to men.

Psychoanalytical film theory is primarily focused on the viewer who wants to identify himself/herself (usually with an acceptable leading character). Jacques Lacan's idea of **mirror stage**, contributed significantly to the emergence of psychoanalytic film theory which has had a great influence on film studies.

9.3. Narrative techniques in film

We can distinguish four narrative techniques in film:

1. narration by external narrator
2. narration by internal narrator
3. camera as narrator
4. modernist narrative

We can also distinguish between linear and nonlinear narration in films.

In linear narration the story is told in chronological order and the nonlinear narration in reverse chronological.

One of the first films that used nonlinear narrative was D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) which presented four stories set in different times.

9.4. Film adaptation

Literary adaptation, i.e. adaptation of a work of literature to film, has a long tradition in the history of cinema. Film adaptations of literary works can be traced to the early history of cinema. The first known adaptation of Shakespeare's play was a three-minute film titled *King John* (1899). Some film adaptations tend to be faithful to the text of the original work of literature. Others preserve only its spirit, but are very different from the original. For example, the famous film by Akira Kurosawa *Throne of Blood* (1957) is believed to be one of the best adaptations of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* although the action of the film takes place in medieval Japan. However, the film adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* (1995), with Demi Moore, Robert Duvall and Gary Oldman, was widely criticised because it changed the original plot.

It seems that, with some notable exceptions, generally a film adaptation simplifies a literary work by reducing its range of interpretations to only one. For example, two famous film adaptations of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1956, 1967) were severely criticised. On the other hand, some film adaptations can revive interest in its literary original. Polanski's adaptation of Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Karel Reisz's adaptation of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), and James Ivory's *A Room With a View* (1985), with Helena Bonham Carter as Lucy Honeychurch, provide evidence that film can successfully explore the hidden messages of literature. All these films have been acclaimed by critics and spectators as a great achievement of modern cinema.

The French Lieutenant's (1981), directed by Karel Reisz, with Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons, is a remarkable film to look at. If you see the movie, the book will still surprise you, and that's as it should be. The film, unlike the book, intercuts the stories of two romantic affairs. One is within a Victorian period involving a gentleman palaeontologist, Charles Smithson, and the complex and neurotic Sarah Woodruff, known as "the French lieutenant's woman". The other affair is between the actors Mike (Jeremy Irons) and Anna (Meryl Streep), playing the lead roles in a modern filming of the story.

We can distinguish three types of film adaptation: 1) adaptation of a literary classic, e.g. *The Great Gatsby* (1974); 2) adaptation of a popular play to screen, e.g. *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951); and 3) adaptation of contemporary popular fiction, e.g. *Harry Potter* movies.

When we begin an analysis of a film adaptation, we should find out: 1) What the film takes from the original text; 2) What the film omits from the original text; 3) What the film adds to the text; and 4) What the film alters in the original text.

9.4. Basic cinema terminology

Elementary film grammar

1. **A frame** is a single still image. It is analogous to a letter.
2. **A shot** is a single continuous recording made by a camera. It is analogous to a word.
3. **A scene** is a series of related shots. It is analogous to a sentence.
4. **A sequence** is a series of scenes which together tell a major part of an entire story, such as that contained in a complete movie. It is analogous to a paragraph.

(Source: Wikipedia)

Film glossary

Action: a rehearsed performance of actors before the camera.

Adaptation: the presentation of one art form through another medium. A literary adaptation is the presentation of literary fiction in film.

Blockbuster: a very successful film; a box-office hit.

British New Wave: a group of British filmmakers (including Tony Richardson, Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz) from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s, who made films set in the industrial North of England, mainly with working-class heroes.

Camera movement: the movement of the camera; the two basic forms of camera movement are panning and tilting. A pan (“panorama”) moves the camera on a horizontal axis. A tilt moves the camera up and down on a vertical axis.

Close-up: a shot taken with the camera at a very close range from the subject.

Continuity: the narrative development of a film created through a combination of visuals and sound; it is like story in print literature.

Crane shot: a shot taken by a camera from a boom (crane) that can move both horizontally and vertically.

Cross-cutting: (parallel action) the camera switches alternately from one scene to another.

Cut: a rapid transition from one film shot to the other; the separation of two pieces of action.

Cyberpunk: a sub-genre of science fiction films, e.g. *The Matrix* (1999).

Director: a person who supervises the creative aspects of a film and instructs the actors and crew.

Dissolve: a technique of making a transition from one shot to another by briefly superimposing one image upon another and then allowing the first image to disappear.

Dolly: a wheeled platform used to transport a film camera about a set.

Double exposure: two distinct images appear simultaneously with one superimposed upon the other.

Editing: the arrangement of individual shots together into a complete film.

Fade: a film technique in which an image disappears gradually until the viewer sees only a black screen (fade-out) or an image slowly emerges from a black screen to a clear and bright picture (fade-in).

Feature film: a full-length film.

Flashforward: a segment of film that breaks normal chronological order by shifting directly to a future time.

French New Wave (Nouvelle vague): a movement in French cinema between 1958 and 1962 including François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Goddard, Louis Malle and Alain Resnais.

German Expressionism: a movement in German cinema which developed from the artistic movement of the same name. The notable German Expressionist films include *The Student of Prague* (1913), *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), *Nosferatu* (1922).

Heritage Cinema: a series of films which depict the English past, often in a nostalgic way. Examples include *A Room With a View* (1986), *Howards End*, (1992), *The Remains of the Day* (1993), *The Wings of the Dove* (1997).

High-angle shot: a shot taken from above a subject.

Intertitle: words shown between scenes describing action or conveying dialogue, used most often in silent cinema.

Jump cut: an abrupt cut from one action to another to create a sense of discontinuity.

Location: a place outside the studio where shooting occurs.

Low-angle shot: - a shot taken from below a subject.

Montage: film editing; a method of putting shots together in such a way that dissimilar materials are juxtaposed to make a coherent composition.

Neorealism: a style in filmmaking developed in Italy after World War II by Roberto Rossellini, Vittorio de Sica, Luchino Visconti, Cesare Zavattini, Federico Fellini and Giuseppe De Sanctis. Italian neorealist cinema used widely documentary techniques, nonprofessional actors and natural settings for fictional purposes.

New Hollywood: the American New Wave which represents a significant shift in filmmaking. Inspired by the French New Wave, it developed in the period between the mid-1960s to the early 1980s when a new generation of young filmmakers came to prominence in America. They included Arthur Penn (*Bonnie and Clyde*, 1967), Mike Nichols (*The Graduate*, 1967), Dennis Lee Hopper (*Easy Rider*, 1969), Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather*, 1972) and Alan J. Pakula (*All the President's Men*, 1976), and the Czech Milos Forman (*Hair*, 1979).

Objective camera: an attempt to suggest that the camera acts only as a passive recorder of action.

Polish Film School: a movement in Polish cinema in the years 1955-1965 influenced by Italian neorealism. The most prominent names of this movement are: Andrzej Wajda (*Kanal*, 1957; *Ashes and Diamonds*, 1958; *Man of Marble*, 1976; and *Man of Iron*, 1981), Andrzej Munk (*Bad Luck*, 1959), Tadeusz Konwicki (*The Last Day of Summer*, 1958), Stanisław Różewicz (*Free City*, 1958), Jerzy Kawalerowicz (*Mother Joan of the Angels*, 1961), Wojciech Has (*How to Be Loved*, 1963).

Post-synchronisation: addition of sound to a scene after it has been shot.

Producer: a person responsible for all the business aspects of making and releasing a film.

Reverse angle shot: a shot taken from the opposite angle of the preceding shot.

Script: scenario; a written description of the action, dialogue, and camera placements for a film.

Tracking shot: a shot in which a camera is moved on tracks.

Trailer: a short segment of film used to advertise a feature film.

Two shot: a shot showing two people, usually in conversation.

Zoom shot: a shot accomplished with a lens which simulates a rapid movement away from (zoom out) or toward (zoom in) a subject using a zoom lens.

9.5. Select film genres

Narrative films have many affinities with imaginative literature. Like literary works, narrative films can be classified according to many film genres. The following list describes some of the most common film genres. It should be noted that some of the genres may overlap.

Action films involve action sequences, such as fighting, stunts, car chases or

explosions. These are more important than characters or complex plot. The genre is closely linked with the thriller and adventure film genres as well as spy films, martial arts films and the disaster films.

Some of the most popular action films include *Dirty Harry* (1971), with Clint Eastwood; *Top Gun* (1986); two films with Tom Cruise, *Mission: Impossible* (1996) directed by Brian De Palma and *Air Force One* (1997) directed by Wolfgang Petersen.

Adventure films include swashbucklers, i.e. films featuring a fearless romantic swordsman or adventurer who wins the heart of a beautiful lady while rescuing society her from a villain. Examples include *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), both directed by Steven Spielberg; *The Three Musketeers* (1993), *The Mask of Zorro* (1997).

Comedy films have plots designed to amuse and provoke laughter by exaggerating the situation, the language, action, relationships and characters. Comedy films are subdivided into a great number of subgenres, such as slapstick, screwball, horror, romantic comedies, black comedy, etc. The early silent comedies were based on the use of visual gags, and chase was their indispensable component. Subsequently, film comedies developed distinct comic characters played by such actors as Max Sennett, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd. After the introduction of sound, visual gags were supplemented by verbal gags in the comedies of Marx Brothers and Laurel and Hardy.

Slapstick comedies are characterised by chases, collisions crude practical jokes and pantomime. Examples of early slapstick comedies include *A Dog's Life* (1918), *The Kid* (1921), *The Gold Rush* (1925), all with Charlie Chaplin; *Safety Last* (1923), with Harold Lloyd; *The General* (1926), with Buster Keaton; *Big Business* (1929), with Laurel and Hardy; *A Night at the Opera* (1935), with Marx Brothers. *Mr. Bean*, played by Rowan Atkinson, is a modern version of slapstick comedy.

Screwball comedies were a popular entertainment for a lot of people between the 1930s and 1940s. Contrary to slapstick comedies, they were based on verbal and situational humour. Some of the most popular screwball comedies include *It Happened One Night* (1934) directed by Frank Capra, with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable; *That Uncertain Feeling* (1941) directed by Ernst Lubitsch; *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944) directed by Frank Capra; *Please Believe Me* (1950).

Some Like It Hot (1959), directed by Billy Wilder, with Marilyn Monroe, Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, has some ingredients of a screwball comedy but its message is much more complex and ambiguous. Some of the funniest scenes in the film concern sexual and gender identity.

Some Like It Hot tells the story of two poor musicians, Joe and Jerry, who witness accidentally a gang execution in a garage, which is reminiscent of the Saint Valentine's Day massacre of 1929⁷⁸. The musicians decide to leave Chicago because they fear that Spats Columbo's gang will kill them. They disguise as women, calling themselves Josephine and Geraldine (later Jerry changes his pseudonym to Daphne) and board a train with a girls' music band heading for Florida. Joe and Jerry both fall in love with the sexy blonde singer and ukulele player, Sugar Kowalczyk known as "Sugar Kane", and compete for her affection while maintaining their disguises. But Sugar treats them as two honest female pals. While in Florida Sugar dreams to find a rich millionaire and get married. Joe (Josephine) assumes a second disguise; he now pretends to be a young millionaire and makes Sugar fall in love with him. At the same time Jerry (Daphne) has attracted a real millionaire, an old cad, Osgood Fielding. During a big mob convention in the hotel, Spats and his gang recognise the true identity of Josephine and Daphne, who have to flee again. But they are joined by Sugar and Osgood. The final scene contains the most memorable quote in film history:

⁷⁸ The Saint Valentine's Day Massacre refers to the murder of seven gangsters as part of a Prohibition Era conflict between two powerful criminal gangs in Chicago in 1929: the Italian gang led by Al Capone and the Irish gang led by Bugs Moran.

Osgood: (steering the boat) I called Mama. She was so happy, she cried. She wants you to have her wedding gown. It's white lace.

Jerry: Osgood. I can't get married in your mother's wedding dress. She and I, ... we're not built the same way.

Osgood: (smiling) We can have it altered.

Jerry: Oh, no you don't! Osgood, I'm gonna level with you. We can't get married at all.

Osgood: Why not?

Jerry: Well, in the first place, I'm not a natural blonde.

Osgood: Doesn't matter.

Jerry: I smoke. I smoke all the time.

Osgood: I don't care.

Jerry: I have a terrible past. For the past three years now, I've been living with a saxophone player!

Osgood: I forgive you.

Jerry: I can never have children!

Osgood: We can adopt some.

Jerry: (giving up) You don't understand, Osgood, (ripping off his wig) I'm a man!

Osgood: Well, nobody's perfect.⁷⁹

Billy Wilder used the gag of cross-dressing, i.e. wearing the opposite sex's clothing, in order to subvert the traditional gender stereotypes. A similar subversion of gender identity can be seen in a more recent screwball comedy, *Tootsie* (1982), with Dustin Hoffman and Jessica Lange.

Romantic comedies deal in a light-hearted, humorous way with misunderstandings of young lovers. They are focused on romantic ideals, such as "true and only love". Some of the most famous romantic comedies are *Adam's Rib* (1949) directed by George Cukor, with Catharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy; *Pretty Woman* (1990), with Julia Roberts and Richard Gere; *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan; *Notting Hill* (1999), with Hugh Grant and Julia Roberts; *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), with Renée Zellweger, Hugh Grant and Daniel Cleaver.

Crime films focus on the sinister actions of criminals, hoodlums and underworld figures. Crime films are often subdivided into film noir, thrillers or detective films.

Film noir (literally "black film"), a term invented by French film critics, includes certain American thriller films of the 1940s and 1950s, such as John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), with Humphrey Bogart; Edward Dmytryk's *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), *Double Indemnity* (1944), Fritz Lang's *The Woman in the Window* (1944); *Gilda* (1946) directed by Charles Vidor, with Glenn Ford and Rita Hayworth; Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955); and Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958). Characteristic features of film noir are images of a night-time urban setting, deserted streets, fog, a deceitful *femme fatale* and a forlorn male character. Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) is a famous remake of film noir.

Thriller films show heroes who fight villains threatening to destroy them, their family, country, or the whole civilisation. They are subdivided into a number of subgenres, e.g. action thrillers (e.g. James Bond films), political thrillers (*The Day of the Jackal*, 1974), spy thrillers (*Casino Royale*, 2006).

Detective films focus on the efforts of a professional or amateur detective, or private investigator. Famous detective films include *Bullit* (1968), with Steve McQueen; *Klute* (1971), with Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland; *The French Connection* (1971); *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) directed by Sidney Lumet and based on the novel of the same name by Agatha Christie; *Chinatown* (1974) directed by Roman Polanski, with Jack Nicholson; *Evil Under the Sun* (1982), based on a novel by Agatha Christie.

Drama films portray realistic characters, settings and life situations. Their plots reveal significant character development. Drama films are subdivided into melodramas,

⁷⁹ Mark Cousins, *Scene By Scene* (London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2002)

epics (historical dramas), romantic dramas and biopics (biographical pictures).

It should be remembered that some of the greatest film dramas are adaptations of literature, e.g. *Of Mice and Men* (1939); *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943); *Great Expectations* (1946); *Hamlet* (1948); *Oliver Twist* (1948); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951); *East of Eden* (1955); *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966); *Romeo and Juliet* (1968); *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1969); *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969); *A Clockwork Orange* (1971); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975); *A Passage to India* (1984); *The Remains of the Day* (1993); *The English Patient* (1996); *The Portrait of a Lady* (1996); *Atonement* (2007).

Melodramas are characterised by a superficial plot, situations with stereotypical characters who reveal exaggerated emotions. The most prominent directors of the Hollywood melodrama were King Vidor, Vincente Minnelli, Douglas Sirk, Frank Borzage, Max Ophuls, George Cukor and others.

Some of the most famous Hollywood melodramas are *All About Eve* (1950), with Bette Davis; *A Place in the Sun* (1951), with Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor; *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952), with Lana Turner and Kirk Douglas; *Love Story* (1970), with Ali MacGraw, Ryan O'Neal; *Terms of Endearment* (1983), with Shirley MacLaine and Jack Nicholson; *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) with Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan.

A recent subgenre of melodrama film is *chick flick film*, which is an equivalent of chick lit, i.e. narratives appealing mostly to female audience. The famous American chick flick films include *The Bodyguard* (1992), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Pretty Woman* (1990), *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006). Actresses and actors often associated with "chick flicks" include Meg Ryan, Julia Roberts, Renee Zellweger, Gwyneth Paltrow, Hugh Grant, Mel Gibson, among others.

Epics/historical films recreate historical, mythic or imagined events and heroic figures, e.g. *Spartacus*, *Cleopatra*, *Gandhi*. They include period films, set in a specific historical period, attempting to give a realistic portrayal of the time and manners, e.g. *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), and war films. Epic films require a monumental hero (usually played by a famous star), numerous secondary characters and huge sets. The greatest epics include *Ben-Hur* (1959), with Charlton Heston; and *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) directed by Anthony Mann, with Sophia Loren, Alec Guinness, Omar Sharif.

Romantic dramas are films in which the central plot focuses on the romantic involvement of protagonists. Some of the great romantic dramas include *Gone with the Wind* (1939), with Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh; *Casablanca* (1942), *An Affair to Remember* (1957), with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr; *Love Story* (1970), with Ryan O'Neal and Ali MacGraw; *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), with Meg Rayan and; *Autumn in New York* (2000), with Richard Gere, Winona Ryder.

Casablanca, directed by Michael Curtiz, tells the romantic story of lost and regained love, honour and duty, self-sacrifice in unoccupied Africa during the early days of World War II. The American expatriate, Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart), the owner of "Rick's Café Américain", meets his former lover, Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman) with her husband, Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), a fugitive Czech Resistance leader sought by the Nazis. Rick has to choose between his love for a woman and helping her and her husband escape from Casablanca to America.

Great biopics include *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933); *Queen Christina* (1933), with Greta Garbo; *Citizen Kane* (1941), directed by Orson Welles; *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959); *Spartacus* (1960), with Kirk Douglas; *Cleopatra* (1963, with Elizabeth Taylor); *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (1965), about Michelangelo, with Charlton Heston; *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), with Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway; *Amadeus* (1984); *Schindler's List* (1993); *Braveheart* (1995), with Mel Gibson; *Rob Roy* (1995), with Liam Neeson; *Evita* (1996), with Madonna; *Wilde* (1997), with Stephen Fry; *Frida* (2002), with Salma Hayek; *The Pianist* (2002) directed by Roman Polanski; *Miss Potter*

(2006), with Renée Zellweger;

Horror films are designed to frighten the audience. There are many subgenres of horror movies: slasher, serial killers, satanic, Dracula, Frankenstein, etc. One of the most famous and influential early horror films was the silent, expressionistic picture *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) about a ghost-like therapist who hypnotises the somnambulist Cesare to reenact murders. Many horror films are based on gothic or horror fiction, e.g. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1943). *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), written and directed by Roman Polanski, is an adaptation of Ira Levin's horror novel of modern day Satanism and occultism, set in Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Musical and dance films combine narrative with music and dance performance. A distinct subgenre is musical comedy in which songs are interwoven into the narrative.

Some of the most famous musical films are *The Wizard Of Oz* (1939), with Judy Garland; *Lullaby Of Broadway* (1951), with Doris Day; *An American In Paris* (1951) and *Singin' In The Rain* (1952), both with Gene Kelly; *South Pacific* (1958); *Oklahoma!* (1956); *West Side Story* (1961), with Natalie Wood; *My Fair Lady* (1964), with Audrey Hepburn; *The Sound of Music* (1965), with songs written by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II; *Hello Dolly* (1969), with Barbra Streisand; *Fiddler On The Roof* (1971), with Topol; *Cabaret* (1972), with Liza Minelli; *Hair* (1979); *All That Jazz* (1979), with Bob Fosse; *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), with Julia Roberts.

Science fiction films deal with quasi-scientific, visionary and imaginative situations. They feature aliens, distant planets, impossible quests, improbable settings and futuristic technology.

Some of the most famous science fiction films include *The Time Machine* (1960); *Star Trek* (1966); *Star Wars* (1977) directed by George Lucas; *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977) directed by Steven Spielberg; *RoboCop* (1977) directed by Paul Verhoeven; *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) directed by Steven Spielberg; *The Terminator* (1984) directed by James Cameron, with Arnold Schwarzenegger; *The Matrix* (1999) directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski.

War (anti-war) films focus on warfare, prisoners of war, military operations. Their narratives may be based real events or fiction. Anti-war films a subgenre of war films which expose the horrors and absurdity of war.

Some of the great British and American war films include *From Here to Eternity* (1953) directed by Fred Zinnemann, with Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Frank Sinatra and Ernest Borgnine; *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) directed by David Lean, with Alec Guinness; *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), with Gregory Peck, David Niven and Anthony Quinn; *The Longest Day* (1962); *The Dirty Dozen* (1967) directed by Robert Aldrich, with Lee Marvin, Telly Savalas, Donald Sutherland, Jim Brown, John Cassavetes and Charles Bronson; *Battle of Britain* (1969) directed by Guy Hamilton; *MASH* (1970) directed by Robert Altman, with Donald Sutherland; *Midway* (1976), with Charlton Heston, Henry Fonda, Glenn Ford, Raymond Spruance and Robert Mitchum; *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), directed by Richard Attenborough; *The Deer Hunter* (1978) directed by Michael Cimino, with Robert de Niro; *Apocalypse Now* (1979) directed by Francis Ford Coppola, with Marlon Brando; *Platoon* (1986) directed by Oliver Stone.

Western films include themes, characters and settings characteristic of the American West, especially of the late 1800s.

The greatest western films include *Stagecoach* (1939) directed by John Ford, with John Wayne; *Fort Apache* (1948), with Henry Fonda; *Winchester '73* (1950), with James Stewart; *High Noon* (1952) directed by Fred Zinnemann, with Gary Cooper; Robert Aldrich's *Vera Cruz* (1954), with Burt Lancaster and Gary Cooper; *Rio Bravo* (1959), with John Wayne, Dean Martin and Ricky Nelson; *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) directed by John Sturges, with Yul Brynner, Steve McQueen and Charles Bronson; *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), with John Wayne and James Stewart.

9. 6. A short overview of the history of *American cinema*

Cinema as a medium of popular culture in the United States began to develop at the beginning of the 20th century. The first narrative films were made by **Edwin S. Porter** (1870–1941). His silent movies, *Life of an American Fireman* (1903) and a western *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), met with immediate success. However, the true pioneer of American cinema was D.W. Griffith (1875–1948), the author of the greatest narrative film of the time, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which was both an artistic and a commercial success. The film was, however, controversial, because it promoted racism and glorified the Ku Klux Klan. Griffith's next film, *Intolerance* (1916), the most spectacular and ambitious silent film ever made, was equally successful. In making his films, Griffith was the first director to use new filming techniques such as altering camera angles, using close-ups in a dramatic way or breaking scenes up into multiple shots. Previously, filmmakers had kept the camera in one position, which was generally twelve feet away from the actors and at a right angle to the set.

After World War I Hollywood became the world capital of the film industry and the seat of the major companies Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia, and Warner Brothers. The 1920s marked the golden age of American comedy, associated with Max Sennett, Charlie Chaplin, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton and Harry Langdon.

Charlie Chaplin (1889–1977) was perhaps the greatest silent film comedian. He was a master of pantomime which he had learned in the London music halls. One of his most impressive early comedies is *Easy Street* (1917) which shows Charlie as a policeman pitted against a giant brute. This film contains a string of “gags” that provoke the audience's incessant laughter. Chaplin's greatest silent movies include *The Kid* (1921), and *The Gold Rush* (1925). Chaplin could evoke both laughter and tears. He is remembered not only for his great talent but also for his unforgettable hobo costume, consisting of baggy trousers, outsize shoes, tight frock coat, bowler hat, cane, and false moustache. The audience not only laughed but also felt sorry for the Little Tramp. Chaplin's “talkies” (sound movies) included such masterpieces as *Modern Times* (1936), *The Great Dictator* (1940), a parody of Adolf Hitler, and *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947).

Other popular comedians were Harold Lloyd (1893–1971), who made his name in *Safety Last* (1923) and *The Freshman* (1925); and Buster Keaton's (1895–1966), whose most successful film was *The General*, a story of a railroad train engineer who dreams of becoming a soldier in the Civil War.

The most outstanding directors of silent movies included Cecil B. DeMille (1881–1959), who made the controversial film *Male and Female* (1919) and was famous for his production of spectacular historical epics and biblical films, such as *The Ten Commandments* (1923) and *The King of Kings* (1927); Josef von Sternberg (1894–1969), who paid extraordinary attention to the visual style of his films. Erich von Stroheim (1885–1957) made adaptation of Frank Norris's novel *McTeague* with his film, *Greed* (1924), which initially lasted over sixteen hours! After several series of cuts, the final version of this silent movie was shortened to a reasonable time length.

With the advent of the sound era, narrative films became increasingly popular and more sophisticated. The period from the end of the silent era in American cinema in the late 1920s to the late 1950s is often referred to as the Golden Era of Hollywood. The era of sound films was heralded by *The Jazz Singer* (1927), the first important motion picture with synchronised sound. The first sound movies were clumsy in comparison with the old silent films, but they brought with them a new type of verbal comedy. Many silent film stars' voices were not well suited to sound films and their film careers therefore quickly ended. But other stars, such as Greta Garbo (1905–1990), successfully adapted to the sound era in cinema. Two silent movie stars, Stan Laurel (1890–1965) and Oliver Hardy (1892–1957), made a successful transition to the talkies, but the greatest practitioners of quick-fire “gags” were the Marx Brothers who came to Hollywood from New York City. Their successful comedies include *Monkey Business* (1931), *Horse Feathers* (1932), *Duck Soup* (1933), *A Night at the Opera* (1935) and *A Day at the Races* (1937). These

films established the images of the four brothers: Zeppo, young, handsome and subordinate; Harpo, romantic, a thief and mischief-maker; Chico, the brains; and Groucho, an outrageously witty charlatan and disrupter.

A new genre of sentimental melodramas became popular in the 1930s, typified by Sternberg's films starring Marlene Dietrich (1901–1992), *The Blue Angel* and *Blonde Venus*. The latter is a drama of a woman wronged, who wants to regain love and happiness. The theme became popular and soon other actresses appeared in similar melodramas, e.g. Jean Harlow (1911-1937) in *Red Dust* (1932) and Irene Dunn (1898-1990) in *Back Street* (1932). Horror movies, such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *Old Dark House*, and the first monster film *King Kong* also enjoyed popularity in the early sound period.

The names of actors Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart are associated with the gangster films of the 1930s and 1940s. The classics of the genre include *Little Caesar* (1931), with Edward G. Robinson as “Rico” Bandello, the boss of a big city gang; *The Public Enemy* (1931), with James Cagney as a young man who starts his career as a petty thief and ends in larceny, bootlegging and murder; and *The Petrified Forest* (1936), with Bogart, whose unsmiling face is one of the most memorable images of American cinema.

Humphrey Bogart (1899–1957) still remains a great legend in the Hollywood pantheon. He always played “tough guy” roles in such films as: a gangster film *Angels With Dirty Faces* (1938), the classic film noir *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), the most romantic of all, *Casablanca* (1942), and *To Have and Have Not* (1944). In 1951, for *The African Queen* Bogart received his only Oscar. He appeared in seventy-five feature films. In 1999, the American Film Institute named Bogart the Greatest Male Star of All Times.

Between the 1930s and 1950s the American Hollywood Studio system produced a new film subgenre: the so-called ‘screwball’ comedy which usually showed couples who had a difficult time getting together. The plots revolved around the theme of divorce and remarriage. The most characteristic films, starring include *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Nothing Sacred* (1937), *My Man Godfrey* (1936), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), *The Palm Beach Story* (1942). Various later films contain features of the screwball comedy, e.g. *Some Like It Hot* (1959). Actors and actresses frequently featured in or associated with screwball comedy include Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, James Stewart or Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Another genre made popular by Hollywood was melodrama. Perhaps the most famous pre-war melodrama was *Gone With the Wind* (1939), directed by Victor Fleming, with Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh. This epic film, adapted from a novel by Margaret Mitchell, is set during the American Civil War and Reconstruction and tells a story of the war and its aftermath from a white Southern point of view.

During the late 1940s and into the 1950s Hollywood changed the formula of old-fashioned musical films to something new. One of the best musical actors was the dancer and singer Fred Astaire (1899-1987), who partnered Ginger Rogers (1911-1995) in ten box-office successes. Some of the most popular and well-known musicals include *An American In Paris* (1951) directed by Vincent Minnelli, with the famous dancer, Gene Kelly; *Singing in the Rain* (1952), directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen; Fred Zinneman's *Oklahoma* (1955), Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music* (1965) and Milos Forman's *Hair* (1979).

The earliest cinema animation was composed of frame-by-frame, hand-drawn images. The predecessor of early animation was the newspaper comic strips of the 1890s. The first animated film was *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (1906) by newspaper cartoonist J. Stuart Blackton. The first animated character that achieved a celebrity status during the silent era was the mischievous Felix the Cat which appeared first in *The Adventures of Felix* (1919).

A classic animator was Walt Disney (1901–1966), who is remembered as a film director, producer as well as an innovator in animation and theme park design. After producing the Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto cartoons, he went on to plan the

first full-length animated feature film – *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). The film was soon followed by other similar productions: *Bambi* (1942), *Cinderella* (1950) and *Peter Pan* (1953).

No film genre is more associated with America than the western, inspired by novels such as James Fenimore Cooper's *The Leatherstocking Tales*. The early westerns with Bronco Billy as the main hero drew on melodrama and the rodeos. American westerns of the 1940s and 1950s, associated with the names of such actors as Gary Cooper, James Stewart, Burt Lancaster, John Wayne, Robert Mitchum, Henry Fonda, Steve McQueen and Clint Eastwood, emphasise the values of honour and sacrifice and give fine portrayals of lonely individuals caught between good and evil. They offer generalised reflections on most fundamental moral issues. The films often depict conflicts with Native Americans.

The most outstanding westerns include *Stagecoach* (1939), *Fort Apache* (1948), *Rio Grande* (1950), *Winchester '73* (1950), *High Noon* (1952), *The Man From Laramie* (1955), *Man of the West* (1958), *Rio Bravo* (1959). Westerns from the 1960s and 1970s, like *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) or *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), often have more pessimistic view, showing the cynicism, brutality and inequality of the American West. Some ignore the traditional conventions and seem to glorify anti-heroes (*McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, 1971; *The Missouri Breaks*, 1976), while others directly make fun of the western code (*Blazing Saddles*, 1974). 1990s, however, saw the revival of the genre with such films as *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *Unforgiven* (1992) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992).

The preeminent American film directors of the Classic Hollywood Era (1930s–1950s) include Ernst Lubitsch, David O. Selznick, George Cukor, King Vidor, John Ford, Howard Hawks and Frank Capra.

Ernst Lubitsch (1892–1947) is associated mainly with witty urban comedies of manners, such as *The Smiling Lieutenant* (1931), with Maurice Chevalier; *Ninotscha* (1939), with Greta Garbo; *Thast Uncertain Feeling* (1941); *To Be or Not To Be* (1942), set in Warsaw at the beginning of WWII. David O. Selznick (1902–1965) discovered such talents as the actress Katharine Hepburn (1907–2003). George Cukor (1899–1983) directed a number of romantic comedies and musicals. His best films include *Adam's Rib* (1949), *A Star Is Born* (musical, 1954), *Les Girls* (1957), *Let's Make Love* (1960), *My Fair Lady* (1964). King Vidor (1894–1982) created a number of films noted for their realism, powerful social comment and psychological complexities. His best films include *The Citadel* (1938), *Duel in the Sun* (1947), *Japanese War Bride* (1952), *War and Peace* (1956). John Ford (1894–1973) turned the western film into a moral allegory. His *Stagecoach* (1939) is a microcosm of society. The drunken doctor, the outlaw, the woman from the dance hall, and the gambler all travel in one coach, which is a metaphor of the human condition. Ford's greatest achievement was the adaptation of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), with Henry Fonda. He also made such popular films as: *Fort Apache*, *Rio Grande* and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, with Lee Marvin. Howard Hawks's (1896–1977) films were excellent psychological portrayals of heroic individuals, such as Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall in *The Big Sleep* (1946) and John Wayne in *Red River* (1948). Frank Capra (1897–1991) provided entertainment for adult audiences. He started in Hollywood by writing silent comedies for Max Sennett. Later, as an independent director, he made melodramas, romances and comedies. Capra made a number of films on contemporary social themes, e.g. *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), in which a naive man (played by James Stewart) is appointed to fill a vacancy in the US Senate. His plans collide with political corruption, but he doesn't back down. The film was probably one of the earliest pictures to suggest the government as corrupt. James Stewart's performance made him a major movie star.

The greatest classic of American cinema during the war period was *Citizen Kane* (1941), with Orson Welles (1915–1985) as both director and actor. The movie revolutionised the art of cinematic narration. Welles used startling camera angles and dramatic lighting. For the first time, the movie used accompanying music to reflect the

shifting moods of the main character. The film shows alienation, degradation and death of the powerful press magnate, Charles Foster Kane (played by Welles) and is a critique of the American myth of success.

The American cinema made images of beautiful people popular around the world and in this way played an important part in the rise of sex symbols. The outstanding actresses who attained the status of sex symbols in the 1930s were Jean Harlow, Marlene Dietrich and Greta Garbo. The icons of the 1940s and 50s were Rita Hayworth, Jane Mansfield and Elizabeth Taylor.

Perhaps the most famous Hollywood star of all time is Marilyn Monroe (1926–1962), whose real name was Norma Jean Mortensen. During World War II she worked in a factory as a parachute packer. She was first photographed at work for a magazine article about women contributing to the war effort. She soon became a photographer's model and started taking drama and singing classes. In 1946, she signed a short-term contract with Twentieth Century Fox. Four years later she played a small but significant role in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), but it was *All About Eve* (1950) that made her popular among fans. Gradually, she achieved the status of a star, appearing in such films as *Let's Make It Legal* (1951), *Monkey Business* (1952) and *Don't Bother To Knock* (1952). In 1953, she played one of the leads in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) and *How To Marry a Millionaire* (1953). Soon she became internationally famous as an American "love goddess". She married several times (the playwright Arthur Miller was her last husband). Her other successful films were film musical *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954), a rather dramatic piece *Bus Stop* (1956), a romantic comedy *The Prince and the Show Girl* (1957), a comedy *Some Like It Hot* (1959), a musical *Let's Make Love* (1960) and *The Misfits* (1961), which combined elements of comedy, western and psychological drama. Marilyn Monroe died of an apparent sleeping pills overdose aged 36 at her home in Beverly Hills. However, revelations that she had an affair with President John Kennedy and his brother Robert sparked rumours that it was murder, not suicide.

After the war the Golden Age of Hollywood was slowly coming to an end, mostly because of the television. Hollywood's glorious past is shown, rather nostalgically, in *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) directed by Billy Wilder. The film tells the story of an ageing star, played by Gloria Swanson, who had lost her celebrity and fame.

The New Hollywood of the late 1950s and 1960s chose to use new methods of storytelling: scrambled chronology, storylines with surprising, unexpected endings, unclear distinction between the hero and the villain. One of the most famous films of the 1950s and a good example of the new direction in Hollywood was a dark film about teenage violence, *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), with James Dean and Natalie Wood.

A new American cinema emerged with the release in 1967 of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) with Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty. Although this film, which was a blend of comedy, violence, romance, and politics, was attacked by the critics, it became the most popular film of the year.

The film tells the story of two young and attractive criminals from the Midwest who during the Depression fall in love, commit robberies and killings, and become national folk heroes. Their targets are not the common people but the avaricious banks and the armies of police that protect them.

Other films which were highly rated in the 1960s included *The Graduate* (1967) and *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), both with Dustin Hoffman, and Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969), with Peter Fonda.

A number of science fiction films caught the imagination of the young generations between the late 1960s and 1980s. Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) dealt with human evolution, technology, artificial intelligence, and extraterrestrial life. In the 1970s the big box-office hit was another science fiction movie *Star Wars* (1977), directed by George Lucas. This film combined sophisticated computerised effects, Dolby stereo sound, and a fantasy-adventure plot. The science fiction genre continued to be a box-office success thanks to *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) directed by Irvin Kershner, and Richard Marquand's *The Return of the Jedi* (1983).

Terminator (1984), directed by the Canadian James Cameron, begins a new wave of science fiction films. A seemingly indestructible cyborg (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is sent from the year 2029 on a deadly mission into the past to kill the yet to be born leader of the future human uprising against the computers' rule.

A wave of action/adventure films were made particularly for younger audiences in the 1980s. Steven Spielberg's *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, released in 1982, soon became a real blockbuster. His other films included *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989).

The gangster film tradition was continued in the 1970s by Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972), with Marlon Brando, portraying the American mafia; and Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), with Jack Nicholson. The best gangster film of the 1980s was perhaps *Prizzi's Honor* (1985) directed by John Huston, with Jack Nicholson.

A number of films made during the late 1970s and the 1980s discussed the issues connected with the war in Vietnam. Michael Cimino's *Deer Hunter* (1978), with Robert De Niro, is a genuine antiwar epic, which presents the lives of three different men who fought in Vietnam. Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) is loosely based on Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness* and shows horrors of the war. It tells the story of an American officer sent to the Cambodian jungle to assassinate an American colonel, played by Marlon Brando, who has turned to cannibalism and murder. The movie is more concerned with visually representing an idea of war than actually presenting the Vietnam war itself. In *Platoon* (1986), Oliver Stone shows the circumstances under which young American boys become murderers of civilians by fear, confusion or inability to discriminate between friend and foe. Lionel Chetwynd's *Hanoi Hilton* (1987) describes the situation of American prisoners of war in Vietnam. Barry Levinson's *Good Morning Vietnam!* reveals the complexities of the war. The film shows Robin Williams as an airman disc jockey who is brought to Saigon in 1965 to boost troop morale. His morning programme on the Armed Forces Network is a mix of jokes, controversial political humour and rock music, which is loved by the soldiers, but disapproved by his superiors. After experiencing the horrors of war first-hand, the DJ insists on telling his listeners the truth instead of the official government line. He is instantly replaced and must struggle to get back on the air.

The 1980s had a number of interesting films of human concern, such as James L. Brooks's romantic comedy *Terms of Endearment* (1983), with Shirley MacLaine and Jack Nicholson; Sydney Pollack's romantic epic *Out of Africa* (1985); and Randa Haines' *Children of a Lesser God* (1986), a moving melodrama about a high school teacher who falls in love with one of his deaf students.

Apart from science fiction and gangster films, comedy has always been one of the most popular genres in American cinema. The most popular comedy films in the last three decades of the 20th century were made by Mel Brooks and Woody Allen.

Mel Brook (born as Maxilimian Kaminsky of Polish-Jewish parents) is famous as a creator of film farces and comedy parodies. His comedies, which mix satire with slapstick, include *Blazing Saddles* (1974), a spoof of Western movies; *Young Frankenstein* (1975), a parody of the horror genre, and *High Anxiety* (1977), a comic version of Alfred Hitchcock's thriller.

Although Woody Allen's films are situated on the margins of mainstream Hollywood comedy, they find a dedicated audience both in America and Europe. The greatest Woody Allen comedies include *Take the Money and Run* (1969), *Annie Hall* (1977), *Manhattan* (1979), *Zelig* (1983), *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1984). Allen's comedies generally reflect the anxieties of affluent and educated urban residents, mostly artists, would-be artists and yuppies living in New York.

Some of the best Hollywood comedies in the 1980s included films with Eddie Murphy, e.g. *Trading Places* (1983), *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984), and *Coming to America* (1988). *Tootsie* (1982), directed by Sidney Pollack, features Michael Dorsey (Dustin Hoffman), an unemployed actor, who dresses as a woman, Dorothy Michaels, and

receives the part in a soap opera. The 1990s saw re-emergence of the romantic comedies, such as *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), *Pretty Woman* (1990), and *American Pie* (1999).

A characteristic genre in American cinema is the music film. One of the earliest musical films was *Lights of New York* (1928), the first all-talking feature film. The classic American music films include *Top Hat* (1935), *Swing Time* (1936) and *Carefree* (1938), with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers; and *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), with Judy Garland; *An American in Paris* (1951) and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), with Gene Kelly.

The Blues Brothers, a 1980 music and action comedy directed by John Landis and starring John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd, has become a cult movie remembered for its wild car chases and songs from such great guest stars as James Brown, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles and Aretha Franklin. The Blues Brothers themselves sing such hits as 'Rawhide', 'Stand by Your Man', 'Everybody Needs Somebody to Love', and 'Sweet Home Chicago'.

In 1990, Kevin Costner's directing debut, *Dances with Wolves*, was a huge success with audiences, critics, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. It won seven Oscars. Other productions from the last decades of the 20th century included such outstanding movies as *Rain Man* (1988) with Dustin Hoffman, *Forrest Gump* (1994) with Tom Hanks, *The English Patient* (1996), and the most expensive film ever made, *Titanic* (1997), directed by James Cameron, with Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio.

In 1993, *Schindler's List*, an extremely well-received biographical film about the World War II Holocaust, won Steven Spielberg his first Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director. The film presents Oscar Schindler, a Nazi businessman, who managed to save 1,200 Jews from the extermination by the Nazis between 1941 and 1943.

Regrettably, contemporary American cinema, with a few exceptions, has been damaged by the concept of the blockbuster, like the box-office hits *Robocop*, *Terminator*, *Die Hard*, or the *Alien* series, which can be defined as disposable fireworks displays for the enjoyment of large and uncritical audiences in multiplex cinemas. These **cyberpunk** movies, although technically excellent, have no character development and no complex storytelling; they mostly show scenes of explosions and car crashes.

An exception to what has been written above is for many viewers the 1999 cyberepic *The Matrix* and its sequels. *The Matrix* series are a combination of science fiction, philosophy, cyberpunk and classical American action movies. The cultural impact of *The Matrix* is "near phenomenal". The critical viewers have found in the Wachowski Brothers' movies numerous allusions to the Bible and Buddha, William Gibson's novel *Neuromancer*, cybernetics and higher mathematics, Hong Kong action films and Japanese anime. *The Matrix* released the adrenaline of millions of moviegoers, but it also caught the angry attention of the moral watchdogs when the fatal shootings at Columbine High School occurred a few weeks after the movie's opening, and it appeared that the two teenage perpetrators had seen the film and were even wearing trench coats like the protagonists of the movie.

Very few contemporary films, however, have the cultural importance of the past masterpieces. Cyberpunk movies usually deal with the life of people in a world dominated by high-tech. They usually show a system in which an oppressive government, a corporation or some fundamentalist religion destroys the lives of ordinary people.

Some of the best-made and thought-provoking American films at the turn of the 20th century were Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), with John Travolta, a sort of gangster comedy consisting of three interconnected stories that take place in the present-day Los Angeles. Sam Mendes' *American Beauty* (1999), with Kevin Spacey, is a social satire on a modern version of the American Dream – a happy suburban life, which turns into a nightmare. Rob Marshall's *Chicago* (2002), with Richard Gere and Catherine Zeta-Jones, is a movie musical with a sensational plot set in the roaring 1920s. Stephen Daldry's *The Hours* (2002) describes three women living in three different decades of the 20th century whose lives are connected by Virginia Woolf's novel, *Mrs. Dalloway*. The first of the stories begins with Virginia Woolf (Nicole Kidman), who fights a severe

depression while working on her famous novel. The second story shows Laura Brown (Julianne Moore) in Los Angeles shortly after World War II, who unsuccessfully tries to find some meaning to her life, and while she reads Mrs. Dalloway she feels empathy with its main character. The final story takes place in modern day New York City and shows Clarissa Vaughan (Meryl Streep), who resembles in a way Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway.

9.7. A short overview of the history of British cinema

The British film industry started before the First World War, but the first significant films date from the 1930s. Alexander Korda (1893–1956) made outstanding historical films, such as *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933), *Things to Come* (1936), and *Rembrandt* (1937). He introduced Hollywood methods into British film studios. Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), while in Britain, made the famous thriller *Thirty-Nine Steps* (1935). After World War Two, David Lean (1908–1991) made his name with the sentimental romance, *Brief Encounter* (1945), Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard; and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), with Peter O'Toole, Alec Guinness and Anthony Quinn.

Although the British film industry could not compete with Hollywood productions, it created a number of significant narrative films.

A characteristically British contribution to cinematic art were comedies made in Ealing Studios in London. The most popular postwar comedies were *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) with Alec Guinness, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), and *The Ladykillers* (1955). In the late 1950s and 1960s the actor Peter Sellers (1925-1980) played in a number of successful comedies, including *The Pink Panther* films.

The British New Wave was a movement in filmmaking in the late 1950s and early 1960s. It aimed to show everyday life of the working class, particularly in the North of England. The most important films of that category include Tony Richardson's *Look Back in Anger* (1958), with Richard Burton; *A Taste of Honey* (1961), with Rita Tushingham; and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962; Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960), with Albert Finney; Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life* (1963); and Jack Clayton's *Room at the Top* (1959).

Adaptations of literature have always been popular in British cinema. David Lean directed Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1946) and *Oliver Twist* (1947). Laurence Olivier (1907-1989) made *Hamlet* (1948) and *Richard III* (1955). John Boulding adapted Graham Greene's *Brighton Rock* (1947) and Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1957).

BBC created some very popular film adaptations of literature, e.g. *The Forsyte Saga* (1967, and 2002 remake by Granada Television), based on John Galsworthy's novel; and *The Pallisers* (1974), based on Anthony Trollope's novel.

The 1960s witnessed a revitalisation of British Cinema and the emergence of diverse films such as *A Hard Day's Night* (1965), with the Beatles; *The Knack...and How to Get It* (1966), directed by Richard Lester; and Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1967), featuring Catherine Deneuve. All these films rejected realism and documentary style of the postwar films, particularly through expressionism and stylisation.

Between 1962 and 2006 the British cinema produced 21 James Bond spy film series inspired by Ian Fleming's novels about the fictional MI6 agent Commander James Bond (codename 007), featured by Sean Connery, George Lazenby, Roger Moore, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan and Daniel Craig.

In the 1980s the British cinema produced a number of spectacular historical films such as *Gandhi* (1982) directed by Richard Attenborough; and David Lean's *A Passage to India* (1984). Some of the films, like Stephen Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), and Kenneth Branagh's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1989), were financed by BBC and had a worldwide commercial success.

The 1990s brought a number of successful films including Merchant Ivory's

Howards End (1992) and *The Remains of the Day* (1993), Richard Attenborough's *Chaplin* (1992) and *Shadowlands* (1993), Neil Jordan's thriller *The Crying Game* (1992), Anthony Minghella's *The English Patient* (1996), and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998).

British Cinema today produces films of almost every genre, but the traditions of social realism, period dramas, crime films and comedies are still vivid. Some of the most interesting social realism films include Mike Leigh's *Secrets & Lies* (1996), Peter Mullan's *Orphans* (1998), Lynne Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* (1999), Ken Loach's *Sweet Sixteen* (2002), Shane Meadows' *This Is England* (2006), and *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002). Guy Ritchie's *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998) is a British gangster film which resembles American crime films of Quentin Tarrantino.

The best British comedies from the turn of the 20th century include; Mike Newell's *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994), Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* (1996); Mel Smith's *Bean* (1997), with Rowan Atkinson; Roger Michell's *Notting Hill* (1999), with Julia Roberts, Hugh Grant and Richard McCabe; Sharon Maguire's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), with Renée Zellweger.

The most popular period films were Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility*, (1995), with Emma Thomson, Kate Winslet and Hugh Grant; Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* (1998), with Cate Blanchett; Joe Wright's *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), with Keira Knightley; and Stephen Frears's *The Queen* (2006), with Helen Mirren.

A popular **fantasy** series based on the Harry Potter novels by J. K. Rowling included *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (2001), *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002), *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood* (2008)

Two interesting recent British literary adaptations are Joe Wright's war romance *Atonement* (2007), based on Ian McEwan's novel, and *Brideshead Revisited* (2008), based on the novel by Evelyn Waugh. Other recent British films worthy of interest are Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), Guy Ritchie's comedy action movie, *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) and Tom Hooper's *The King's Speech* (2010).

9.8. Analysis and interpretation of a narrative film

Step 1	Identify the genre, form and style of the narrative film (comedy, tragicomedy, melodrama, psychological thriller, etc.);
Step 2	Describe the structure of the movie and its particular elements: 1. setting; 2. plot and story; 3. theme (meaning or central idea); 4. dialogue (what is said and how it is said); 5. point of view.
Step 3	Identify the conflict in the movie. Explain its imagery and symbols. Describe particular techniques used in key scenes. What specific scene constitutes the film's climax? How does this scene resolve the central issue of the film?
Step 4	Identify the characters of the movie (What happens to characters and why? What makes characters act as they do? Do the characters change as a result of their actions? What aspect of human nature is reflected in the characters?).
Step 5	Identify the subject, theme and tone of the movie (what is said and how? who said? when and where? who heard it?). Describe the genre of the film. Does music enhance the film? How did the actors portray key character roles?
Step 6	Find out what is implied by the tradition behind this narrative film (form, theme reference to particular film movement or style).

Step 7	Provide your own interpretation of the movie (explain to yourself what the title, subject and situation suggest).
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Assignments for self-study and /or project work

1. Write a film review which will include a short summary (tell enough information to entice the reader but not enough to tell the entire story. Do not tell the ending!), analysis and evaluation of the film.
2. Compare a film adaptation you've watched with its literary original. What does the film take from the text? What does the film omit from the text? What does the film add to the text? What does the film alter significantly?
3. Select one scene from a narrative film you've watched that seems to reveal the heart of the film story and describe it analytically.

Chapter Ten

Introduction to literary analysis and interpretation. Practical suggestions

There is creative reading as well as creative writing.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

American poet, essayist, and lecturer

This penultimate chapter discusses basic principles of critical reading, analysis and interpretation of literary texts. You should bear in mind that critical reading is a matter of literary competence and diligent practice. When you have achieved it, even in some degree, you will be able to understand literary works beneath their surface meanings. You will also notice that reading and writing are inseparable; the better you write about literature, the better you understand it.

10.1. Critical reading and note taking

Critical reading of works of literature requires analysis, interpretation and evaluation. In doing your assignments (both primary and secondary sources), keep in mind to:

- read thoroughly and attentively;
- reread certain complex and important passages;
- make notes while reading.

Your reading should be efficient and productive, i.e. you should read not only for pleasure but with a purpose. Before you start reading, make a preview of your assignment(s) and pay attention to the following data:

- the exact title;
- the author's name;
- the table of contents;

Then, when reading a text, consider the author's principal ideas and the technique the author uses to transmit them to the reader. It is very important to know the historical context of the text you are reading. A knowledge of the period when the author lived and wrote will help you to better understand his or her works. Consult the dictionary and/or encyclopedia when necessary in order to get a better insight into the content of the text you are reading.

After completing critical reading you should be able to define the background and context of a literary work, analyse, evaluate, and finally, write critically about literary works. In order not to forget literary works which you have read, make reading notes, which should include all or most of these items:

- author's name;
- title;
- genre/style/form;
- narrator, point of view, characters and characterisation (narrative and dramatic works) / speaker / voice, persona (lyrical poetry);
- setting;

- themes/subject matter/motifs;
- plot summary (narratives and dramatic works);
- literary devices (symbols, metaphors, etc.);
- significance;
- literary relations;
- quotations (if possible).

Literary analysis consists in distinguishing between the characteristic elements of a literary work and drawing conclusions from them. In order to carry out an analysis of a literary work, first we have to answer the question of whether we are dealing with an epic, lyric or dramatic work. We define its genre and form, next we usually identify its internal organisation (structure), style, tone, etc. As you critically read a literary work, try to make notes about the important ideas, issues and to underline important passages.

Interpretation of a literary work is basically a subjective understanding. When we interpret a work of literature, we explain it to ourselves or to others. We can do it orally or in a written form.

Writing about literature is an integral part of literary study. It is a cognitive process, i.e. you may learn a lot while writing. It requires knowledge of several writing skills. The simplest specimens of critical writing are paraphrase and summary.

Paraphrase is rewriting a literary text in your own words. Summary is a brief account of the main arguments of a literary text. Other forms include overview, description, characterisation, comparison, discussion, etc. A more elaborate form of critical writing is an interpretive or critical essay. An interpretive and/or critical essay are forms of academic writing.

10.2. Writing a research paper, interpretive / critical essay or diploma project

While preparing a research paper, interpretive / critical essay or diploma project, you should first select a topic, consider it, form your own opinion, and then develop it in writing. Your paper should be clearly and logically organised. Once you have a subject to write about, consult the catalogue and bibliographical information in your library and any relevant websites in order to find what reference material is available. Read all the material relevant to your subject and make notes on special source cards.

These cards will enable you to organise your source material and prepare an outline of your paper. On your source cards always include:

1. the author's name, and/or the editor's name followed by the abbreviation (ed.);
2. the title (underline the title of a book and put quotations marks around the title of an article or chapter);
3. publication data (write the place of the publication, the name of the publisher, and the year of publication)
4. the number of the page from which you quoted;
5. library call number (you may need the book again in future), or a website address.

Here is a sample of a source card for a book concerning the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*:

Schlauch, M. *Medieval English Literature and Its Social Foundations* (Warszawa: PWN, 1956) 43.

"... the main story (if not the digressions) is pervasively imbued with Christian attitudes; they do not appear merely in patches".

"On the other hand, it has been noticed that the Christianity of the poem is rather vague and undogmatic."

If you have downloaded your source material from a website, remember to preserve its website address (the URL) and date of access, e.g. Voller, Jack G. "Washington Irving". *The Literary Gothic*. <http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/irving.html> (May 2003).

When you have collected enough primary and secondary source materials, and when you have your purpose clearly in mind, you may start writing your essay. Begin your work by writing an outline. Follow your outline in arranging your notes. Next write a rough draft of your essay. Avoid plagiarism. Revise the draft and make necessary adjustments; correct and edit its content, language, style and spelling. When you are sure that your essay is complete and good enough for presentation, write a clean copy. Examine it to see whether the main ideas of your thesis have been clearly and coherently expressed.

The thesis is the heart of your essay. It consists of a statement (one or two sentences, not more) which expresses your opinion about the topic of your essay. The rest is explication and support of your thesis. A thesis is usually presented in the final paragraph of the introduction, but it is not a rule and you may put it in another section of your essay. The opening paragraph should establish the general purpose of your essay. Avoid summarising your essay in the Introduction, it should be done in the Conclusion.

A literary work, the object of your investigation, may contain a wealth of meanings which will be too great to deal with in your essay. Therefore, you should properly limit its scope. In other words, do not write about everything, focus on a precisely described purpose. You should always bear in mind that a thesis is a generalised opinion which you have to explain, develop and support throughout your essay. An interpretive or critical essay may have the following structure:

Author's name (Your full name)

Title (Your essay / diploma project should have a title page, see example below.)

Introduction (In the Introduction present the topic, but do not give your opinion. Assume that the reader does not know the topic.)

Main Body (The main body of your essay / diploma project consists of **sections** or **chapters**, which are subdivided into **paragraphs**.);

Chapter One (chapter title);

Paragraph 1 (Topic sentence or argument and support sentences);

Paragraph 2 (As above);

Paragraph 3 (As above);

Chapter Two (chapter title);

Chapter Three (chapter title);etc.

Conclusion (In the Conclusion summarise the main thesis of your essay / diploma project.)

Bibliography (In the Bibliography you should include all primary and secondary sources, see **Citation** guide.)

When writing about literature, remember the following points:

1. The title of your essay should suggest your topic.
2. Your essay should begin with a paragraph that starts a vivid argument or thesis, and arouses the reader's interest.
3. Each section of your essay should be an integral part of the whole.
4. Transitions from one paragraph to another should be logical and interesting.
5. Express yourself clearly and succinctly. Avoid repetitions. Be sincere in your opinions. Put down your own views irrespective of what anybody else may have said on the subject.
6. Your essay/diploma project should present a balanced coherent whole.
7. Your argumentation should be founded on a reasoned criticism, i.e. it should be well-thought over.

8. Your essay/diploma project should not contain irrelevant quotes. You should always explain the relevance of your quotes as support for your argument.
9. Besides, in respect of form, remember the following:
 - 9.1. Title of books, newspapers, magazines, journals, plays, films, etc. are italicised (or underlined, e.g. John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Studies in Modern Fiction*, Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*).
 - 9.2. Shorter works, such as poems, short stories, chapter and essay titles, magazine articles, etc. are surrounded with quotation marks, e.g.: John Donne's "The Good Morrow", Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle".
10. When you have completed your essay/diploma project, print it and reread it once or more times for spelling and grammatical errors and for intelligibility.

Remember that each next paragraph should result logically from the preceding one. Do not forget to include footnotes or endnotes when you refer to somebody's text. General information does not have to be credited. But when you make a specific reference or direct quotation from a primary or secondary source, you have to include a footnote or endnote.

10.3. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work, e.g. a sentence, a paragraph, or more from an internet source, periodical, book, or the essay of another student, as your own. It may be done intentionally or unintentionally. In order to realise what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, read an original passage from F. R. Leavis's book *The Great Tradition*. Next read specimens of two plagiarised versions of this text and one proper use of a secondary source.

Original text by F. R. Leavis:

Dickens, as everyone knows, is very capable of sentimentality. We have it in *Hard Times* (though not to any seriously damaging effect) in Stephen Blackpool, the good, victimized working man, whose perfect patience under infliction we are expected to find supremely edifying and irresistibly touching as the agonies are piled on for his martyrdom. But Sissy Jupe is another matter. A general description of her part in the fable might suggest the worst, but actually she has nothing in common with Little Nell: she shares in the strength of the Horse-riding. She is wholly convincing in the function Dickens assigns to her (235). - F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition*. New York: New York University Press, 1964.

Plagiarised version 1:

Charles Dickens, most agree, can be sentimental. We see it in Hard Times, (although it doesn't cause any great problems) in Blackpool, who is an honest worker with whom we sympathize because he suffers a lot. Sissy Jupe is different. Although she sounds like a sentimental character, she is very different from Little Nell. She takes part in riding horses, and Dickens makes her very convincing in that role.

Comment:

Version 1 demonstrates the work of someone who either intends to commit plagiarism or who doesn't realise what plagiarism is. Plagiarism cannot be avoided just by substituting a few words and transforming some sentences. This version is plagiarism because it copies Leavis's sequence of ideas, a type of fingerprint that will give away the guilty student writer. The student has not cited Leavis as the source and has not used the information meaningfully.

Plagiarised version 2:

Sometimes Dickens is sentimental. Examples of his sentimental characters include Blackpool in Hard Times and Little Nell. Sissy Jupe is another character that might be considered sentimental at first glance, but she is different. She has greater depth and is more convincing as a character than the others.

Comment:

Examples like Version 2 typically result from sloppy note taking. The student writer was probably trying to get the bare essentials and intended to put them into his or her own words later. In composing the draft, however, the writer forgot how closely tied these words are to the original. Notice that Version 2 is limited to the ideas in the original. This revision is plagiarism because the student copied Leavis's ideas without giving him credit and because there is no evidence of the student's own thought here. This version could be saved from plagiarism by citing Leavis as the source of the ideas.

Version 3:

Dickens's novel Hard Times rises above sentimentality. Some characters, for instance, Stephen Blackpool, do appear sentimental. Blackpool exceeds all reasonable expectation in tolerating a drunken woman who repeatedly robs him, runs off, and throws herself on his mercy when she needs help. Likewise, his patient, calm manner towards his bully of an employer (never once does he lose his temper) is unrealistic and calculated to squeeze sympathy from a reader. Sissy Jupe, however, is a more complete character. Instead of making her a mere victim, Dickens develops her role. He gives her a consistent strength and point of view. For example, when her teacher asks if a nation with fifty millions of money was a prosperous nation, she answers, "...I couldn't know whether it was a prosperous nation...unless I knew who had got the money, and whether any of it was mine" (Dickens 982).

Comment 3:

Version 3 is an example of the proper use of a source. This student has picked up some ideas but has looked for other examples to support them. Notice that this version has its own topic sentence. This student, therefore, was independently following a plan and not simply taking another author's material.⁸⁰

10.4. Citation and references

Bibliographical citation (quotation) and references can be a problem for a beginner writer because there are many variations and details to follow. The following guidelines are based on MLA (Modern Language Association) citation standards used in British and American literary criticism. For a more detailed description of various styles of bibliographical citation, you may refer to the authoritative reference book: Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers*. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.

Quotations

Quotations which constitute not more than four lines in your paper should be set off with quotation marks (" ") and be incorporated within the normal flow of your text. For

⁸⁰ Adapted from the School District of Springfield Township (PA) Online Research Guide. Copyright 2003 Nauset Public Schools - All Rights Reserved. <http://nausetschools.org/research/plagiarism.htm> (April 2005).

material exceeding that length, omit the quotation marks and indent the quoted language one inch from your left-hand margin. If an indented quotation is taken entirely from one paragraph, the first line should be even with all the other lines in that quotation; however, if an indented quotation comes from two or more paragraphs, indent the first line of each paragraph an additional one-quarter inch. If quotation marks appear within the text of a quotation that already has the usual double-quote marks (“ ”) around it (a quote-within-a-quote), set off that inner quotation with single-quote marks (‘ ’).

Parenthesis reference, footnotes/endnotes

When you make a direct quotation or you refer to a primary or secondary source, you should acknowledge it by reference in parenthesis like this (Eagleton, 5). Of course, you must include the author’s name and the title of his work in Bibliography or References. Alternately, instead of a parenthetical reference, you may include footnotes or endnotes with the author’s name and the full title of the cited fragment in the following way:

1. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory. An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996) 5.

If you refer several times to the same source, you do not have to repeat the entire footnote/endnote. On subsequent citations you may write, e.g.: Eagleton 71. If another Eagleton text is cited elsewhere in your essay, write the author’s name and a short title: Eagleton, *Literary Theory* 107. Cite journal publications or chapters from books in the following manner: 1) On first citation: John Barth, “The Literature of Replenishment”. *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1980, 66; on subsequent citations: Barth 42, or: (if another Barth text is cited elsewhere in your essay) Barth, “The Literature of Replenishment” 45. Do not use abbreviations or acronyms for titles unless they are explained at the outset of your essay or project. Remember that titles of books and journals should be formatted in italics.

The most recent *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (2003) does not recommend the use of the old-fashioned abbreviations, such as *ibid.* (from the Latin *ibidem* meaning ‘in the same place’) and *op. cit.* (from the Latin *opere citato* meaning “in the work cited”.) More commonly, author and page number or numbers are now used instead of *ibid.*, e.g.: Eagleton 120. For second or later mention of the same work with intervening entries, only the author and page number or numbers are used: e.g.: Eagleton 214.

Finally, at the end of your paper you should give a bibliography of all the printed material you have consulted in preparing your essay.

Bibliography/References

The Bibliography is the list of publications you consulted while preparing your essay /diploma project. Bibliography or References should appear on a separate page at the end of your essay /project. All sources cited or consulted must be listed in an alphabetical order. Italicise titles of books, magazines, and scholarly journals. Enclose title of articles, essays, poems, and short stories in quotation marks. Alphabetise entries by author. If no author is given, begin with the title. Remember that all sources cited in the text should be listed in the Bibliography.

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Online citation

The standard format for an online citation is:

The author’s name (last name first, if it is available), the document title, the date of access (URL), e.g.: Mooney, Patrick, “William Blake’s Relevance to the Modern World”,
<http://geocities.com/Athens/5599/BLAKE.HTM> (January, 2004).

“Sillitoe, Alan”, *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia* from *Encyclopaedia Britannica Premium Service*.

<http://www.britannica.com/ebc/article?eu=403995> (January, 2004).

Some abbreviations and terms used in references

c. circa: approximately

cf. confer : Latin for ‘compare with’

e.g. exempli gratia: Latin for ‘for example’

ed. edition; edited by; editor (plural, eds.)

et al. et alii: Latin for ‘and others’

etc. et cetera: Latin for ‘and so forth’

Fig., Figs.: figure(s)

ibid. ibidem: Latin for ‘in the same place’. This word can only be used in the next consecutive reference in a list after an earlier reference to the same work.

i.e. id est: Latin for ‘that is’

ISBN: International Standard Book Number

fl.: abbreviation from ‘flourished’ – a known period of usually an ancient or medieval writer’s activity, when his or her dates of birth and death are not certain

MS: manuscript (plural, MSS)

NB (nota bene): Latin for note well

n.d. no date (of publication known)

no. nos.: number(s)

n.p. no place (of publication known)

op.cit. opere citato: Latin for ‘in the work cited’

p. page (plural pp.)

passim Latin for ‘scattered’. In a book reference it means that several non-consecutive pages are being quoted: e.g. pp. 118-225 *passim*.

sic Latin for ‘thus so’. It is used to show that an author or editor has recognised a unusual

form of spelling or phrase in an original text: e.g. “Tyger” (sic).

viz. *videlicet*: Latin for ‘namely, that is to say’.

vol. volume (plural, vols.)

10.5. Specimen analysis and interpretation of literary works

Analysis and interpretation of a literary text should be treated as a cognitive process which involves a detailed examination and comprehension of the structure and the complex meaning of a literary text. Below you will find a sample of a student’s interpretative essay. Before you start reading it, read carefully Walter Raleigh’s poem “What Is Our Life?”

Analysis and interpretation of Sir Walter Raleigh’s poem “What Is Our Life?” (student essay)

The poem is an example of Metaphysical poetry. The tone of the poem is serious and pessimistic. The poem deals with the existential theme of human life. The poem consists of only one stanza. The rhyme pattern is aa bb cc dd ee. The poet uses many stylistic devices to express his idea of the human condition. The title of the poem contains a powerful metaphor which expresses the poet’s vision of the world. The world is compared to a stage. Human life is “a play of passion”. The poet uses the word “Heaven” instead of God (periphrasis) which is “the judicious sharp spectator” (epithet). Next he uses a complex simile: “Our graves that hide us from the searching sun / Are like drawn curtains when the play is done”. Human life is “a short comedy”. We feel that we are happy, but this happiness lasts only a short time. God does not interfere in human life. He only watches and judges people’s deeds. Life ends at the moment of death. The “drawn curtain” is the metaphor of completed life. Moreover, we are born and die in pain. The idea of human life presented by Sir Walter Raleigh is similar to Shakespeare’s vision presented in some of his plays and sonnets. According to Sir Walter Raleigh, people are merely ridiculous puppets on the world’s stage. (M.A. 1997)

Chapter Eleven

Terms to understand

This final chapter contains reference entries giving concise definitions of some of the terms used in this book which you should remember.

A

Act: a division of the action of a play.

Acknowledgement (also spelled acknowledgement): an expression of gratitude for assistance in creating an original work. It tells the reader who helped the author write the book. Writers usually give acknowledgment to editors, agents, friends, family, teachers, and anyone else who helped them while writing.

Aesthetic approach: a literary belief that art is its own justification and purpose, It was practised by Edgar Allan Poe, Alfred Tennyson, Gabriel Dante Rossetti, Algernon Charles Swinburne, Oscar Wilde and others.

Affective fallacy: according to New Criticism, the error of judging a literary work by its emotional effect upon readers; the readers' response to a poem is not the only indication of its value. The term was coined by W.K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley (1949).

Alexandrine: a line of verse of 12 syllables (or 13 if the last syllable is unstressed). It was the classic poetic form in French poetry (Ronsard, Racine and Corneille), in English poetry it was seldom used.

Allegory is a literary device in which fictional characters or events represent or symbolise hidden messages, ideas and concepts.

Alliteration: the repetition of the same sounds, usually initial consonants in a sequence of words, e.g. *Pride and Prejudice*, western wind; Sara's seven sisters slept soundly in sand.

American Dream: a national ideal or ethos of the United States as a land of great opportunities for everybody. The concept of the American Dream has strongly influenced American literature.

Ambiguity: vagueness or uncertainty of meaning, e.g. consider the double meaning of the following sentence: 'Flying planes can be dangerous.'

Analepsis: see flashback.

Annotated bibliography: a bibliography which includes citation information and a brief commentary about the book or article which is being cited.

Antagonist: a character who opposes the main hero or protagonist.

Archetypal criticism: a type of critical theory that interprets a text by focusing on recurring myths and archetypes (from the Greek *archē*, "beginning," and *typos*, "imprint") in the narrative, symbols, images, and character types in literary work. Its origins are rooted in two other academic disciplines, social anthropology and psychoanalysis. Archetypal criticism was popular in the 1940s and 1950s, largely due to the work of the Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye, whose work, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), helped displace New Criticism as the major mode of analysing literary texts, before giving way to *structuralism* and *semiotics*.

Archetype: an image or symbol which recurs in collective awareness and therefore, it is often used in literature. For example, the mythical phoenix is regarded as a symbol of death and rebirth.

Art for art's sake: a slogan translated from the French *l'art pour l'art*, which was coined in the early 19th century. The phrase expresses the belief that art needs no justification, that it need serve no political, didactic or other end.

Artefact: an object made by human beings for a utilitarian use.

Aside: a remark made by a character directly to the audience that is not "heard" by the other characters. The aside allows direct disclosure of the character's inner thoughts.

Ate: blind, reckless behaviour.

Atmosphere: the mood or dominant feeling in a literary work.

Author: the creator of both literary and non-literary texts.

B

Beast fable: a medieval allegorical tale where animals act in human ways, e.g. Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales*.

Bibliography: a list of printed sources usually organised alphabetically by author's last name. Most research papers will have a bibliography indicating the materials which were used in writing the paper. Your bibliography will consist of all of the works you referred to while writing the paper.

Bildungsroman: a novel about the moral and psychological growth of the main character. One of the earliest novelistic developments of the theme, is Johann von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96). In English literature, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* is the first famous Bildungsroman.

Bloomsbury Group: a circle of Virginia Woolf's friends – writers, artists and philosophers who lived in or around Bloomsbury, a central London district, early in the 20th century. It included Virginia Woolf, Leonard Woolf (Virginia's husband), E. M. Forster (writer), Roger Fry (art critic), Vanessa Bell (Virginia's sister), Clive Bell (Virginia's brother-in-law), John Maynard Keynes (economist) and Lytton Strachey (writer), to name only a few.

Booker Prize: a prestigious annual prize for a work of fiction by a living British, Irish, or Commonwealth writer.

Byronic hero: a kind of hero found in several of the works of the English Romantic poet Lord Byron. Like Byron himself, a Byronic hero is a melancholic and rebellious young man, distressed by a terrible wrong he committed in the past. The first literary Byronic hero is Childe Harold, the protagonist of Byron's epic poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

C

Camera angle: in cinema art, the angle between the camera and the object being filmed; it gives emotional information to an audience about the character or object. Camera angles and movements create a sequence of film images.

Campus novel: a novel whose main action is set in and around the campus of a university.

Caesura: break or pause in line of poetry.

Canon: see **literary canon**.

Canto: a subdivision of an epic or long narrative poem, such as Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It was first employed in English poetry by Edmund Spenser in *The Faerie Queene*. Later Byron popularised it in *Don Juan* and in the 20th century Ezra Pound restored the term in his *Pisan Cantos*.

Causality: one event is caused by another event.

Catastrophe: (Greek for "overturning") the moment in a tragedy that ends the major conflict in the plot by the death of the hero, or protagonist.

Catharsis: a tragedy performed in the theatre was believed by Aristotle to produce an emotionally therapeutic effect in the audience: the purgation of pity and fear.

Characters: imaginary people created by the author in a fiction.

Characterisation: the means by which writers reveal characters.

Circadian novel: a novel whose plot is confined in a single day. Examples include James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*.

Circumlocution, also called **periphrasis** or verbosity, is the use of unnecessarily wordy and indirect language. It's an evasive style of argument, best employed when the speaker doesn't want to say what's on his or her mind. Examples of circumlocution: "the guardians of law" (police), "pillars of justice" (judges), "temple of learning" (university).

Circumstantial detail: use of

Citation: a reference to an item from which a quotation or information was taken or to

which a person is being directed. It includes enough information to locate the original item. For example, a book citation would include author, title, place of publication, publisher and date of publication; an article citation would include author, title, name of periodical, date, and page reference.

Climax: the moment of the greatest emotional intensity in a dramatic play. In tragedy it is the apex of the rising action, the highest point of the hero's powers.

Close reading: a technique of analytical reading of literary texts pioneered by I.A. Richards in England, and developed by New Criticism in the USA in the mid-twentieth century. It is now a fundamental method of a careful, sustained interpretation of a literary text.

Close up: a film shot taken at extremely close range, e.g. a picture of human face.

Comedy of manners: comedy satirising the attitudes and behaviour of a particular social group, often of fashionable society.

Comic relief: comic dialogue or scenes that provide distraction or offer relief from the serious events of a tragedy. Many of Shakespeare's tragedies employ this device, e.g. in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*. Examples: the Nurse scenes in *Romeo and Juliet*; the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet*.

Comics: narratives told by means of a series of drawings with an incorporated text.

Complication or rising action: intensification of conflict between characters.

Conflict: struggle between opposing forces.

Connotation: the associated or secondary meaning of a word beyond its dictionary definition (e.g., "home" often has the connotation "a place of warmth and affection"). Connotative meanings carry emotions, values or images.

Conventions of language: the accepted rules of written and spoken language.

Counterculture: a culture in opposition to the established culture. Its adherents, mostly young people in the USA in the 1960s and 1970s, rejected conventional social norms and adopted alternate lifestyles that emphasised personal freedom and unrepressive sexual mores. The mainstream adherents of the counterculture were often referred to as hippies or flower children.

Courtly love: a quasi fictional code of love behaviour developed in poetry from the 12th to 14th centuries. According to this code, a knight, who had to be a model of wit, passion and purity, when in love with a married woman of high rank, e.g. queen, had to prove his devotion to her by heroic deeds and amorous writing. One of the key notions of courtly love was fidelity. The literature related to courtly love arrived in England from southern France, where troubadours composed numerous love songs. The theme of courtly love is reflected in such works of European medieval literature as *Lancelot* by Chretien de Troyes, *Tristan and Iseult* by Gottfried von Strassburg, *Le Roman de la Rose* [*The Romance of the Rose*] by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, and the numerous Arthurian romances.

Critical approaches: various methods through which a work of literature is evaluated.

Criterion: a standard or guideline for evaluation.

Cultural competence: Cultural competence is the ability to understand behaviour from the standpoint of the members of a culture and to behave in a way that would be understood by the members of that culture in the intended way. Cultural competence involves particularly understanding the social structure, the values and beliefs of the people. For example, it is impossible for a European to speak Japanese or Korean correctly without understanding the social structure of the respective societies, because that structure is reflected in the endings of words and the terms of address and reference that must be used when speaking to or about other people.

Cultural cringe: in cultural studies and social anthropology – an internalised inferiority complex that causes people in a country to dismiss their own culture as inferior to the cultures of other countries.

Cultural heritage: culture and cultural artefacts inherited by the present-day society.

Cultural materialism is a movement in literary theory and cultural studies, initiated in Great Britain in the late 1970s by the theoretical writings of Raymond Williams. Cultural materialism, rooted in Marxism, is concerned with with interaction between literature and its historical context including social, political and economic determinants.

Cut: in film and video editing, a cut is synonymous with the term ‘edit’. The term refers to the physical action of cutting film or videotape.

Cyberliterature, also called **cyberpunk fiction**, is a subgenre of science fiction in a future setting, with focus on advanced technology and science, such as information technology and cybernetics, coupled with a degree of breakdown or radical change in the social order. It often relies on a cyber medium, particularly in order to achieve interactivity.

D

Dandyism: derived from “jack-a-dandy”; a man who gives exaggerated attention to dress. In late 18th- and 19th-century Britain, a dandy was usually a self-made man from the middle class who strove to imitate an aristocratic style of life. Oscar Wilde was a well-known dandy of his period.

Database: a collection of information in electronic format. Some databases have bibliographical information relating to books, articles, and other published material. Other databases provide numeric or statistical information. Databases are found both on CD-ROM discs and on the **World Wide Web**.

Deconstruction: a critical approach to literature that seeks to undermine the notion that a literary text has a fixed meaning

Dénouement: (French for “unknotting”) The resolution of the plot of a play; the final outcome of the conflict.

Denotation: the literal, explicit or dictionary meaning of a word. Denotative meaning excludes emotions, values or images. Scientific language carries as a rule denotative meanings.

Deus ex machina: a Latin phrase meaning “god from the machine,” referring to the practice in ancient theatre of lowering a deity onto the stage to resolve a crisis in the plot. The phrase is now applied to any improbable event, chance or coincidence used by a dramatist to rescue characters from an impossible situation.

Dialogue: an exchange of words between characters.

Diction: an author’s choice of words.

Diegesis: the created world in a narrative; it includes objects, events, spaces, characters, and also attitudes not explicitly presented in the literary work but inferred by the reader.

Discourse: a formal speech or a piece of writing on a particular subject, e.g. religious discourse, scientific discourse, etc. In imaginative literature discourse is the means by which the story is presented. See also **Story and discourse** below.

Disruptive narrative: disordered narrative technique.

Dissociation of sensibility: a term first used by T. S. Eliot to describe the split between thought and feeling that he saw in English literature from the late 17th century onward. Eliot believed that a poem should represent “a fusion of thought and feeling” (Wimsatt and Brooks 623)

Draft: preliminary outline or first attempt at writing an essay or paper.

Dramatic exposition: The presentation through dialogue of information about events that occurred before the action of a play, or that occur offstage or between the actions on the stage.

Dramatic irony: dramatic irony occurs when the audience knows something that a character has not realised.

The reader deconstructs a diegetic world from the information presented in a narrative.

Dream vision: a medieval narrative poem, or literary genre, in which the main character falls asleep and experiences events having allegorical, didactic or moral significance. In the dream there is usually a guide, who imparts knowledge (often about religion) that the dreamer could not have learned otherwise. After waking, the narrator usually resolves to share this knowledge with other people. If the dream vision includes a guide that is a speaking inanimate object, then it employs the trope of prosopopoeia (personification). Examples: “The Dream of the Rood” (anonymous), Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, William Langland’s “Piers Plowman,” and also “The Pearl” (unknown author), Chaucer’s “The

Parliament of Fowls'. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) is also an example of the dream vision convention, also known as dream allegory.

Dynamic or round character: a character who changes in some important way.

E

E-book: digital book (published on the Internet).

Eclogue: a pastoral poem idealising rural life, usually in the form of a dialogue between shepherds.

Ecocriticism is a recent movement in literary criticism that emerged the past few decades. It began in the 1990s first in the US and in the UK with the reappraisal of Romanticism and its cultural progeny, and is a comprehensive study of literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary point of view. The origin of the term can be traced back to William Rueckert's essay 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism' (1978).

Ekphrasis is a literary description inspired by visual arts. Examples of ekphrasis include John Keat's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Electronic literature is a genre of literature that originates within the digital environment and is read on a computer or other digital devices, such as e-readers, tablets, etc. In addition to verbal text, electronic literature usually has multiple links, animation, and reader interaction.

Electronic resources: information sources and tools for writing accessed through computer and internet technology.

Endnote: note citing a particular source or making a brief explanatory comment and placed at the end of the paper rather than at the bottom of a page.

English sonnet: another term for a Shakespearean sonnet.

Epigraph is a phrase or a quotation that is set at the beginning of a poem, story or a novel, or their divisions to suggest its theme.

Essay: a discussion of a topic from an author's personal point of view.

Evolutionary literary criticism (also known as Darwinian literary studies or literary Darwinism) emerged as a response to poststructuralist hegemony. It uses concepts from evolutionary biology and the evolutionary human sciences to formulate principles of literary theory and interpret literary texts. The two representative texts of this current are Joseph Carroll's *Evolution and Literary Theory* (1995) and Robert Storey's *Mimesis and the Human Animal: On the Biogenetic Foundations of Literary Representation* (1996).

Exemplum: a medieval moral tale illustrating a point and often used to embellish a sermon, e.g. Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale."

Explicit judgment: the narrator gives interpretive comments about characters and action.

Expressive theory: the idea that a work of art emanates from the experience and imagination of the artist.

Exposition: background information regarding the setting, characters, plot.

Extratextual: outside a literary text.

F

Fabliau(x): a medieval short comic or satiric tale in low-style verse dealing with lower-class characters, e.g. 'The Miller's Tale' 'The Reeve's Tale', and 'The Summoner's Tale' in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*.

Fabulation: the term was introduced by Robert Scholes, in his work *The Fabulators* (1967), to describe a large and growing class of mostly 20th century novels that do not fit into the traditional categories of realism or romance. Fabulation involves allegory, verbal acrobatics and surrealist effects, blurring traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic.

Fan fiction (also known as fanfic): a phenomenon of the digital era. Fan fiction is about characters or settings from an original work of fiction, created by fans of that work rather than by its creator.

Fantasy, fantasy fiction or fantasy literature: a genre of literature that is removed

from reality and is set in nonexistent worlds, such as an elvish kingdom, on the moon, in Pellucidar (the hollow center of the earth), or in alternative versions of the historical world, but inhabited by supernatural beings. The characters are often something other than humans, or human characters may interact with nonhuman characters such as trolls, dragons, etc. Examples include J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Silmarillion*, *The Hobbit*, and *The Lord of the Ring*, Ursula LeGuin's *A Wizard of Earthsea*.

Feminist literary criticism: a theory based on feminist theory which argues that men and women have different views about literature and the representation of women in literature. Feminist literary criticism is mostly interested in how women and male-female relationships are represented in works of literature written by male and female authors. One of the tasks of feminist literary criticism is to uncover the female tradition of writing, reinterpret literature from a feminine perspective, and to expose sexism in literature.

Fiction: a literary work created by an author, particularly a novel and a short story.

Fictional or narrative film: a film that tells a fictional story or narrative. Narrative films are usually contrasted with documentary films, as well as with some experimental films which do not recount a story.

Figurative language or figures of speech: language characterised by use of figures of speech, especially metaphors.

Figural narrative: Stanzel distinguishes three narrative situations: The 'authorial narrative situation', which is characterised by the dominance of the external perspective (omniscient narrator); the 'first-person narrative situation', in which the events are related by a first-person narrator/character who takes part in the action in the fictional world; and 'the figural narrative situation', which is marked by the dominance of a **reflector character** whose thoughts or reflections provide narrative information to the reader.

Film adaptation: the transfer of a written literary work to a narrative film.

Film criticism: analysis and evaluation of films.

Film noir: a subgenre of crime film that became popular between the early 1940's and the early 1960's, featuring cynical malevolent characters in urban setting and an ominous atmosphere that is conveyed by shadowy photography and ominous background music.

Fin de siècle: in French the end of the (19th) century; this expression usually refers to its specific literary and artistic climate of aestheticism, decadence, sophistication, world-weariness and metaphysical despair.

First-person narrator: a narrator who participates in action but has limited knowledge/vision.

Flashback or analepsis: (a term derived from the language of cinema): it refers to an episode in narrative fiction that happened earlier in the story.

Focalisation, a term coined by Gerard Genette, may be defined as the point of view or perspective from which the story is told.

Footnote: note citing a particular source or making a brief explanatory comment and placed at the bottom of a page rather than at the end of the paper.

Foreshadowing: a suggestion of what is going to happen in the story. A similar device is the flashforward (also known as prolepsis). A hint that is designed to mislead the audience is referred to as a red herring.

Foreword: a short introductory note, placed at the beginning of a literary work. It is usually written by someone other than the author of the work. Later editions of a book sometimes have a new foreword prepended (appearing before an older foreword if there was one), which might explain in what respects that edition differs from previous ones.

Formal realism: a novelistic convention first described by Ian Watt in *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (1957). According to Watt, formal realism was "the narrative method whereby the novel embodies a circumstantial view of life"(32). In other words, it is a narrative method which pays much attention to the description of circumstantial details, such as time and place of action, geographical places and common objects.

Frame narrative: a story in which another story is enclosed (a tale within the tale), e.g.

Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Frame narrator: an impersonal, nameless narrator who introduces the reader to the setting and the primary narrator, usually the less objective first-person narrator, in a work of fiction.

G

Gag: a visual, absurd joke or trick in film comedy which provokes emotional responses of the audience.

Gay and lesbian literary criticism or gay and lesbian literary theory: a new field of study that emerged in the last decades of the 20th century. Generally, it concerns not only books by gay or lesbian writers but also any literary works in which sexual orientation is the fundamental category of analysis and interpretation.

Genre: a class or category of literary works having a particular form, techniques and content, e.g., tragedy, epic, comedy, novel, essay, biography, autobiography, lyric poem.

Grammatology: the study of writing as the basic manifestation of human thought.

Gutenberg galaxy: a term coined by Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) to characterise the new radical social order caused by the development of printing.

Gynocriticism: a term coined by Elaine Showalter to describe the practice of studying texts written by women. Gynocritics look for how women's writing is different from men's. They also seek out a 'feminine aesthetic' and try to establish what ideas and concerns are typically shared by women writers.

H

Hard-boiled fiction is a type of crime fiction developed in the United States in the 1930s. It introduced the first-person narrator – a private tough detective who had to work in a sinister and forbidding urban environment. The most notable representatives of hard-boiled fiction are Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler.

Hamartia: Aristotle's term for a 'tragic flaw' (mistake) which causes the character's downfall.

Hero: the protagonist or antagonist in a dramatic work.

Heroic epic poem: a long narrative poem telling of a hero's deeds, e.g. *Beowulf*; in France medieval heroic epic poems are called *chanson de geste*, e.g. *The Song of Roland*

Heteroglossia describes the coexistence of distinct varieties within a single 'language' (in Greek: hetero- 'different' and glōssa 'tongue, language'). In this way the term translates the Russian *разноречие* [raznorechie], which was introduced by the Russian linguist Mikhail Bakhtin in 1934, published in English as *Discourse in the Novel*.

Hexameter: a line of verse consisting of six metrical feet (e.g. *The Iliad*); the standard epic metre in Greek and Latin; rarely used in English poetry.

Hubris: an excessive pride or insolence that results in the misfortune of the protagonist of a tragedy. Hubris leads the protagonist to break a moral law or ignore a divine warning with disastrous results (e.g. *Macbeth*).

Hermeneutics: the science or art of interpretation of texts.

Hyperlink is an element in an electronic document that links to another place in the same document or to an entirely different document. Hyperlinks are the most essential ingredient of all **hypertext** systems, including the World Wide Web.

Hypertext is an electronic text that links to other information. By clicking on a link in a hypertext document, a user can quickly jump to different hypertext or image.

I

Iambic pentametre: one of the most common metrical forms in English poetry, consisting of lines with five feet in which the iamb (unstressed and stressed syllable) is the dominant foot.

Ideology: a system of concepts and ideas characteristic of an individual or a group of people, e.g. imperial ideology, Marxist ideology, feminist ideology. Louis Althusser defined ideology as "that system of beliefs and assumptions – unconscious, unexamined, invisible – that represent 'the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions

of existence'” (Benstock 238).

Image: a word or an expression that describes a sensation achieved by hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and/or feeling.

Implied author, as suggested by Wayne Booth in his *Rhetoric of Fiction*, is a hypothetical entity that includes ‘not only the extractable meanings but also the moral and emotional content of each bit of action and suffering of all the characters’ (73); a ‘second self’ from the actual historical person who wrote the literary work (173). The implied author is omniscient, seeing and knowing all.

Interactive fiction, often abbreviated IF, is software simulating environments in which users (readers) use text commands to control characters, action and setting. This term is also applied to literary works that can be read in a nonlinear fashion. The most famous example of this form of interactive fiction is the *Choose Your Own Adventure* book series.

Internet directory: a type of Internet search engine that organises and lists Web sites by subject. It is similar to the index at the back of a book. (See **search engine**).

Implied judgment: the narrator gives description and the reader makes the judgment.

Interpretation: a possible explanation of a text’s meaning.

Interpretive literature: literature that provides valid insights into the nature of human life or behaviour.

Intertext: the relationship between texts, or a text in relation to other texts; also a text within a text. Kristeva’s definition of intertextuality (see below) considers every writing as a major form of inter-art or intertext.

Intertextuality: the term introduced by the French semiotician Julia Kristeva in 1966, who objected to the traditional view that the author is “influenced” by earlier authors and their texts. Kristeva argued that all signifying systems transform earlier signifying systems. According to this theory, a literary work is not the product of a single author, but of its relationship to other texts. ‘Any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another’.

Intratextual: within a literary text.

Intrinsic: interior; approaches to literary works which depend solely on literary criteria.

K

Kenning: a compound word in Old English poetry used to replace the usual name, e.g. the *helmet bearer* stands for warrior. Kennings may be metonymies, metaphors, synecdoches, etc.

L

Lexia is the smaller sections of a larger, master text or block or unit of signification. On the Internet, it is any window that pops up when you click on a digital link containing a text, no matter how large.

Limited omniscient perspective: the author tells the story using the third-person narrator. The narrator’s knowledge is limited to the complete knowledge of one character in the story and tells us only what that character sees, knows, thinks or feels.

Literariness: a term first coined by Roman Jakobson in 1921, who suggested that the subject of literary scholarship is not literature, but literariness, or that which makes a given work a work of literature. Generally, literariness refers to specific language enrichment, frequently found in literary texts, such as stylistic variations, rhetorical tropes, metaphors, symbols, polysemous words, imagery, interpretive modifications of conventional concepts and dramatic descriptions, originality, self-reflexivity, coherence and boundedness.

Literary canon: derived from a Latin word that implies rule or law, a canon originally referred to a set of authorized texts, like the books of the Old and New Testament approved by the Church. In modern literary studies a canon refers to a body of writings which are generally considered by scholars, critics and teachers as the most representative, genuine and significant which should be read and studied by educated

people.

Literary confession: a revealing monologue by a character. Chaucer makes use of it in the prologues of the Wife of Bath.

Literary criticism: the evaluation of one or more literary works.

Literary texts: texts that are imaginative or creative pieces of writing, such as stories, poems, plays and essays.

M

Magic realism: The term was first used in 1925 to refer to quasi-Surrealistic painting and later applied to fictional prose works that mix realistic and fantasy elements, particularly the works of Latin American authors, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Alejo Carpentier. In Britain, the fictions of John Fowles, Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan are classified as magic realism.

Mainstream literature: the term 'mainstream' often refers to culture, arts, music (e.g. mainstream jazz) and literature; mainstream literature, which has identifiable genres, is opposed to ethnic, fringe or avant-garde or experimental writings.

Masque: A dramatic entertainment, consisting of dancing, dialogue, pantomime, songs and elaborate stage design, performed at court by masked players representing mythological or allegorical figures, that was popular in England in the 16th and early 17th centuries.

Meaning: sense or significance of a word, sentence or a longer unit of discourse.

Mental schemata: cognitive hierarchical structures and coding systems for organising and storing knowledge in memory. They enable the individual to respond to the shifting patterns of environmental stimuli. They are also called mental maps or mental pictures.

Metafiction: a kind of fiction that raises questions mostly about its own structure and the basic conventions of narrative. Metafiction is usually associated with Modernist and Postmodernist literature. In *The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as: "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. [...] Metafiction explore[s] a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction." [68] Prominent representatives of metafiction include John Barth's *Lost in the Funhouse*, Robert Coover's *The Babysitter* and *The Magic Poker*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*, Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and William H. Gass's *Willie Master's Lonesome Wife*. The term "metafiction" was coined by William H. Gass as specifically fiction about fiction, i.e. fiction which self-consciously reflects upon itself.

Meta-fictional tropes: tropes or devices used in metafiction.

Message: communication from one person or group to another; implicit meaning or moral in a literary work.

Metre: a rhythmic pattern in poetry where stresses (accented syllables) recur at fixed intervals. The word "metre" comes from the Greek word for "measure."

Mimesis: a critical and philosophical term (derived from the Greek word "to imitate") which means the act of imitation or representation. Direct speech (direct presentation) in drama and film are clearly mimetic, whereas the novel consists of both diegetic (mediated presentation) and mimetic elements (See also **diegesis**).

Mimetic theory: the idea that a work of art imitates life. Mimetic theories have been developed by Plato and Aristotle, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Erich Auerbach, and more recently by Paul Ricoeur and Homi Bhabha.

Mirror stage: the term introduced by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. This stage occurs from 6 to 18 months of age when a baby is captivated by his or her own image in the mirror. The mirror stage enables the formation of the ego via the process of identification. According to the psychoanalytical film theory, the film screen serves as a mirror through which the viewer can falsely identify himself or herself as an omnipotent ego similar to the character shown in the film. This identification with the film character provides the viewer with an illusion of absolute power.

Monologue: an extended speech made by one dramatic character.

Mood: the dominant impression on the feelings of a listener, observer, or reader; emotional quality.

Multiple narrator or polyphonic narrator describes the story from the point of view of several protagonists rather than focusing on one main character. See also **polyphonic narrative**.

Myth: an ancient story or narrative that aims to explain the origin of natural or historical phenomena.

N

Narrative or **narration:** presentation of events in a literary text by author to readers. "A narrative is the semiotic representation of a series of events meaningfully connected in a temporal and causal way. Films, plays, comic strips, novels, newsreels, diaries, chronicles and treatises of geological history are all narratives in this wider sense." (Onega and Landa, 3)

Narrativity: the innate human capacity to produce and comprehend narratives.

Narrative structure: organisation of universal elements of plot, character and setting in storytelling.

Narratee: the imaginary listener to the narrator's story.

Narratology: the branch of semiotics that studies narrative or more precisely narrativity.

Narrator: the teller of the narrative; the person imagined by the author who tells a story.

Narreme: a minimal unit of narrative structure.

Nemesis: retribution or fate. Nemesis was the Goddess of Divine Retributive Justice or Vengeance. In tragedy, nemesis, written with a small letter, means a protagonist's opponent (antagonist) who cannot be overcome. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Macduff acts as the nemesis for Macbeth.

Nonsense literature: a subgenre of literature based on pure nonsense. Initially was associated with some forms of children's literature, particularly nursery rhymes. However, literary nonsense can be found in the works of Aesop, Chaucer, Rabelais, Shakespeare, Swift, Sterne and others. Lewis Carroll and Edmund Lear, who were fascinated by language and its vagaries, are considered as the masters of nonsense literature.

O

Objective correlative: the term, originated by T. S. Eliot, refers to a set of objects, a situation, or a series of events that serve as a formula for a particular emotion. Thus the particular emotion is invoked by poetic images.

Omniscience: having infinite knowledge or understanding; a feature of some narrators in fiction.

Omniscient narrator: the all-knowing narrator.

P

Paraphrase: restatement in your own words of a phrase or idea that you found in your research sources. When you paraphrase, you must **footnote** any ideas that you take from your sources.

Peer review: constructive examination of the written work of a student by another student.

Peripeteia (Greek for reversal): reversal of fortune for the protagonist, from failure to success or from success to failure.

Periphrasis, like **circumlocution**, is the use of a longer phrase in place of a possible shorter form of expression, e.g.: 'The Iron Lady' (Mrs Thatcher).

Performance poetry is specifically composed for or during a performance before an audience. During the 1980s, the term, coined by Hedwig Gorski, was used to describe poetry written or composed for performance rather than print distribution. See **slam poetry**.

Plausibility: verisimilitude, appearance of reality, something that is believable.

Plagiarism: conscious or unconscious use of exact words or phrases from a source in your own work without putting quotation marks and references; plagiarism of ideas means presenting someone else's ideas as your own.

Plot: the pattern of events in a drama or a narrative having a particular structure and unity of purpose or theme.

Plot: the arrangement of events and ideas that make up a story.

Persona (plural: *personae*): the first-person speaker of a lyric poem, or the speaker of a poem who is not to be identified with the poem himself.

Polyphonic narrative: a kind of narrative which consists of two or more interconnected narratives differentiated by various points of view. According to Bakhtin, the Russian writer, Fyodor Dostoevsky, was the creator of the polyphonic novel. Examples of polyphonic narratives include Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Graham Swift's *Last Orders*.

Postcolonial literature: earlier called Commonwealth literature, and recently also called New English literatures, covers literary writings in English by authors who were born in countries that were once colonies or dependencies of the British Empire, particularly the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean and Africa. Postcolonial literature often deals with the effects of decolonisation and the cultural identity of people formerly subjugated to British colonial rule.

Poststructuralist theory is a theory of literary criticism which evolved in the late 1960s as a critique of structuralist theory; it denies the validity of structuralism's method of binary opposition and claims that meanings and intellectual categories are shifting and unstable.

Prague Linguistic Circle or The Prague school: an influential group of literary critics and linguists in Prague in the 1920s and 1930s, which included prominent Russian émigré linguists Roman Jakobson and Nikolai Trubetzkoy, and the Czech literary scholars René Wellek and Jan Mukařovský. The Prague School contributed to the rise of structuralism and theoretical linguistics. Its members also developed methods of structuralist literary analysis.

Primary sources: original works of literature which are the subject of analysis and interpretation in your research paper, e.g. Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. See: **secondary sources**.

Prolepsis: see foreshadowing.

Prose or prose fiction: in Latin 'prosa' means 'straightforward discourse', i.e. a direct form of language expression distinct from poetic diction.

Publication: the act of sharing a final written product with an audience.

Pulitzer Prize: a US award for achievements in journalism, literature and musical composition. Famous recipients of the Pulitzer Prize for Literature include Margaret Mitchell, Upton Sinclair, Saul Bellow, Ernest Hemingway, Norman Mailer, Eudora Welty, Harper Lee, William Faulkner, John Updike and Toni Morrison (fiction); Robert Frost (poetry); Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee (drama).

Pulp fiction: a pejorative term for some kinds of popular fiction.

R

Record: the information which describes each book or article in an index. The record includes a citation and descriptors. Some records include an abstract.

Reference: see **citation**.

Reflector character: In his narrative theory, Franz K. Stanzel distinguishes between teller-characters and reflector-characters. Teller-character usually offers an objective account of events, the reflector-character's main function is to reflect, i.e. to mirror in his or her consciousness what is going on in the world outside or inside himself/herself.

Research paper: formal writing assignment on a specific **theme** that usually requires the reading and analysing of primary and secondary sources. Each piece of information taken from sources must have a **footnote** or an **endnote**.

Revision: change a piece of writing in order to make language and content corrections, improve the clarity of ideas, organisation, style, etc.

Rhetoric or **rhetorical discourse**: the art of speaking or writing in a way that can influence people.

Road novel: a form of fiction whose plot takes place during a journey, e.g. *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac.

Roman à clef or **roman à clé** (French for ‘novel with a key’): a novel in which actual persons and events are disguised as fictional characters.

Romance: a story of love, adventure and mystery, whose events are not realistic. In medieval literature a tale of chivalric adventure and action, e.g. Geoffrey Chaucer’s ‘The Knight’s Tale’ and ‘The Wife of Bath’s Tale’ (an Arthurian romance) in *The Canterbury Tales* are medieval romances. They have the following features: a plot about knights and their adventures, improbable, often supernatural elements, inclusion of the conventions of courtly love, standardised characters (the same types of characters appearing in many stories: the chivalrous knight; the beautiful lady; the mysterious old hag)

Rough draft: first version of a written assignment. It is revised and improved in later drafts.

Russian Formalist School, which flourished from 1914 to 1928, was concerned with the formal analysis of literary texts, particularly their **literariness**. Its representatives, such as, Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Tynianov, Vladimir Propp, Boris Eichenbaum, Roman Jakobson, made a radical shift from the moral approach to literature towards a scientific approach, and emphasised the autonomy of literature which makes use of specific techniques of expression and stylistic devices. The movement was condemned by the Soviet authorities in 1929 as elitist and alien to socialist realism, but it soon became influential in the West, particularly in New Criticism and structuralism.

S

Saint’s legend genre: the genre of lives of the saints (also called hagiography) first came into being in the Roman Empire as stories about Christian martyrs. Examples of saints’ legends in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* include “The Prioress’s Tale,” and ‘The Second Nun’s Tale’.

Scene: the smallest subdivision of a dramatic play, or its setting.

Script: the text of a play, broadcast, or movie.

Secondary sources: critical materials containing research findings concerning primary sources, a literary epoch, movement, etc.

Search engine: a program that searches for specified keywords and returns a list of the documents, or web sites, where the keywords were found. **Google** is an example of an effective search engine which looks for documents on the Internet.

Self-reflexivity: the term is applied to literary works that openly reflect upon their own processes of literary composition. Self-reflexivity (or self-referentiality) is a characteristic feature of modern and postmodern works of fiction. Origins of self-reflexivity can be found in Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767).

Setting: the place or location of the action, the setting provides the historical and cultural context for characters. It can sometimes symbolise the emotional state of characters.

Shot: a basic unit of film; the three basic kinds of shots are long shots, medium shots, and close-ups; other types of shots include the extreme long shot, the aerial shot, the bird’s eye shot, the dolly shot (a film shot in which the camera travels on a wheeled cart on tracks), etc.

Skaz: a form of narrative prose wherein characters are mainly identified by their distinctive speech (regional diction and pronunciation), different from the narrator’s voice. A skaz narrative represents a story-telling situation, in which a speaker tells a story to a present audience. A first-person skaz narrator is often characterised by their specific colloquial diction and syntax, and is closely related to the poetic genre of the dramatic monologue.

Slam poetry: poetry recited at poetry slam (competition).

Soap opera: a television or radio series featuring the daily life of a group of people; examples: *Coronation Street*, *Eastenders*, *Dallas*; and in Poland *Plebania*, *Klan*, etc.

Soliloquy: a long speech delivered by a dramatic character directly to the audience. It usually expresses his or her thoughts and feelings.

Stage directions: a playwright's instructions in a play concerning tone of voice, action, entrances and exits, lighting, music, sound effects, etc.

Static character: a character who remains the same.

Steampunk fiction is a subgenre of post cyberpunk fiction which incorporates elements from fantasy, horror, historical fiction, alternate history, and other branches of speculative fiction. The first use of the word in a title was in Paul Di Filippo's 1995 *Steampunk Trilogy*, consisting of three short novels: *Victoria*, *Hottentots*, and *Walt and Emily*, which, respectively, imagine the replacement of Queen Victoria by a human/newt clone, an invasion of Massachusetts by Lovecraftian monsters, and a love affair between Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

Stock characters: conventional character types whom the audience can easily recognise. Example: the shrewish wife, the incompetent physician, the cowardly soldier.

Story and discourse: the basic structure of all narrative forms. Story refers to the chronological sequence of events as they actually occur in the fictional universe of the narrative. Discourse refers to the author's way of presenting the story, including use of stylistic devices, e.g. metaphors, metonymies, etc. Michel Foucault defines discourse as 'socially and historically situated use of language'. (Benstock et al. 235) "Discourse is the use of language for communicative purposes in specific contextual and generic situations, called discourse situations. These can be described at different levels of specificity: there is written discourse in general, but also specific fictional written discourse." (Onega and Landa 8)

Structure: framework or a structural organisation of a literary work.

Subtext: the hidden or implicit connotative meaning of a text.

Suspense: a sense of anxiety established by the author.

Symbol: a sign that has an arbitrary (conventional) connection with a referent.

Symbolism: symbolic meaning in general.

Sitcom: a situational comedy like the Polish series *Kiepscy*.

Southern Gothic: a style of writing practised by a number of writers of the American South, such as William Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, Catherine Anne Porter, Flannery O'Connor, Carson McCullers, Eudora Welty, Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote. It is a subgenre of modern Gothic fiction characterised by the use of grotesque or mentally disturbed characters, situations or settings. Examples of Southern Gothic include William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (1930), Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1948) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), Flannery O'Connor's *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* (1955), Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). The Southern Gothic tradition can be seen in many American films as well.

Spiritual autobiography: a personal story of religious experiences and strivings, e.g. the writings of Julian of Norwich (c. 1342-after 1416) and Margery Kempe (c. 1373-c.1439).

Sprung rhythm: a poetic rhythm which approximates the natural rhythm of speech, developed by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889).

Stanza (from Italian, a stopping place) is a unit of verses separated from other such units in a poem and often sharing a common rhyme scheme.

Standard English: the most widely accepted variety of English in which most educational and informational texts as well as government and media publications are written.

Story: the entire content of the narrative, which includes characters, a sequence of actions or events, setting, etc.

Subaltern: inferior, subordinate in postcolonial theory; the term is often referred to minority or marginalised groups and the lower classes. The term was coined by Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), an Italian philosopher, writer and political theorist. For further reading: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1988).

T

Text: material created by author in both print and non-print media.

Theme: The main idea of a story formulated as a generalisation. Some of the themes that we can find in fictions are: innocence and experience, life and death, love and hate, free will, fate, madness and sanity, society and individual, urban and rural life, etc. Theme is also a particular part of a general topic that you have chosen or been assigned for research. A theme sets limits on the area to be investigated and the points that will be made.

Thriller: a book, play or film that tells a story about crime and violence.

Trope: a semantic figure of speech which varies the meaning of a word or phrase. Examples include metaphor, metonymy, personification, etc.; figurative language generally.

Theatre of the Absurd: a type of theatre which presents characters cut off from religious and social roots and who live in meaningless isolation in an alien (absurd) universe.

Topic: a general subject area chosen or assigned for preliminary research.

Tragic relief: a tragic or near-tragic episode in a comedy.

U

Unities. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle said that a tragedy should have a single action, take place within a short time, and be confined to one location (one day, one major action and one setting).

University Wits: a group of English dramatists, who studied at Oxford or Cambridge and wrote during the late 16th century. They included Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, Thomas Nashe (all graduates of Cambridge), and Thomas Lodge, Thomas Lyly and George Peele (all graduates of Oxford). Another of the wits, although not university-trained, was Thomas Kyd.

V

Verisimilitude: the appearance of being true or real; plausibility.

Verism: extreme, unadorned realism in art and literature; from Italian 'verismo': 'vero' meaning 'true'.

Verse: poetic expression.

Visual writing: a kind of contemporary postmodern writing that uses a visual dimension in the narrative including images, type settings, spaces and even blank pages an integral part of the writing itself.

W

Weltanschauung: in German a world view – a comprehensive conception or apprehension of the world especially from a specific standpoint.

Writing outline: framework for writing a research paper / interpretive or critical essay / diploma project. It serves as a guide in writing the rough draft of the paper / essay / project.

Writing process: a series of steps followed in producing a piece of writing (e.g., pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing).

12. Select Bibliography and Suggestions for Further Study

This Bibliography comprises a list of **primary** and **secondary sources** directly useful in writing this book, and more generally, of writings which are recommended for further study of literary theory and criticism and the history of English, American and other literatures in English, including suggested reading lists of canonical or significant works of literature.

Titles of secondary sources printed in bold letters have a special, historic significance for the development of literary theory and/or English and American literary studies. A selection of books published in Poland includes translations of foreign authors and studies of Polish scholars. Many of these books can be found in Polish university libraries, a lot more are digitalised and can be found online. References – publications quoted in the present book – are indicated at the end of this Bibliography.

Primary sources

Reading List

The following Reading List contains some of the most representative and recommended works of English and American literature as well as other literatures in English.

English literature

1. “Beowulf” (fragment)
2. Caedmon, “Hymn”
3. “The Dream of the Rood” (fragment)
4. Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Canterbury Tales: The General Prologue*; “The Nun’s Priest’s Tale”.
5. “Pearl” (fragment)
6. William Langland: “Piers Plowman” (fragment)
7. “Sir Gawain and the Green Knight” (fragment)
8. “Sumer Is Icumen In”
9. “Lord Randal”
10. *Everyman* (fragment)
11. Christopher Marlowe: “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”
12. Walter Raleigh: “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd”
13. Thomas Wyatt: “I Find No Peace”
14. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. “Love that doth reign”
15. Philip Sidney: from *Astrophel and Stella*: sonnet I: “Loving in Truth”
16. Edmund Spenser: from *Amoretti* (three sonnets 1, 26, 75)
17. William Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet*; *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; Sonnets: 18, 63, 130, 138; from *Twelfth Night* “O Mistress Mine Where Are You Roaming” [optionally: *King Lear* or *The Tempest* or *Much Ado About Nothing*]; film adaptations: *Henry V*
18. John Donne: “The Flea”, “The Good Morrow”, from *Holy Sonnets*: “Death Be Not Proud”; “Batter My Heart”
19. Ben Jonson: “To Celia”
20. Andrew Marvell: “To His Coy Mistress”
21. Robert Herrick: “To the Virgins, To Make Much of Time”
22. Richard Lovelace: “To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars”
23. George Herbert: “The Pearl”; “The Collar”
24. John Milton: *Paradise Lost* (fragments); sonnet: “On His Blindness”
25. John Bunyan: *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (fragment)
26. Daniel Defoe: *Robinson Crusoe*
27. Jonathan Swift: *Gulliver’s Travels*
28. Alexander Pope: “An Essay on Man” (fragment); “The Rape of the Lock” (fragment)

29. Samuel Richardson: *Pamela* (fragments)
30. Henry Fielding: *Tom Jones* (fragments)
31. Laurence Sterne: *Tristram Shandy* (fragments)
32. Mary Wollstonecraft: *A Vindication of the Right of Woman* (Norton selection)
33. Robert Burns: "O my Luve's like a red, red rose"; "My Heart's in the Highlands"
34. William Blake: "The Lamb"; "The Tyger"; "The Chimney Sweeper"; "London"
35. William Wordsworth: Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*; "Tintern Abbey"; "Daffodils", "We Are Seven"
36. Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"; "Kubla Kahn"
37. Percy Bysshe Shelley: "Ode to the West Wind"
38. Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* (fragments)
39. John Keats: "Ode to a Nightingale"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"
40. George Gordon Byron: "She Walks in Beauty"; "When We Two Parted"; "So, we'll go no more a-roving"; from *Child Harold's Pilgrimage*: "Adieu Adieu! My Native Shore"; *Don Juan* (fragments)
41. Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice*, or *Sense and Sensibility*
42. Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights*
43. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
44. Charles Dickens: *The Pickwick Papers* (fragments); *Great Expectations*;
45. William Makepeace Thackeray: *Vanity Fair* (book or film)
46. George Eliot: *The Mill on the Floss*; film adaptation: *Middlemarch*
47. Thomas Hardy: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*; poem: "Neutral Tones"
48. Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
49. Alfred Tennyson: "The Lady of Shalott"; "Mariana"; "In Memoriam" (XI);
50. Elizabeth Browning: *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (43)
51. Robert Browning: "My Last Duchess"; "Home Thoughts from Abroad"
52. Gabriel Dante Rossetti: "The Blessed Damozel"; "Introductory Sonnet";
53. Christina Rossetti: "Life and Death"
54. Matthew Arnold: "Dover Beach"
55. Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland* (fragments); "Humpty Dumpty's Song"
56. Gerard Manley Hopkins: "Pied Beauty"; "God's Grandeur"
57. Robert Louis Stevenson: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
58. Bram Stoker: *Dracula*
59. William Butler Yeats: "Sailing to Byzantium"
60. T.S. Eliot: "The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock"
61. Robert Brooke: "The Soldier: If I Should Die"
62. Wilfred Owen: "Disabled"
63. Dylan Thomas: "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night"
64. Joseph Conrad: *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostramo*
65. Ford Maddox Ford: *The Good Soldier*
66. Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*
67. E.M. Forster: *A Room With a View*, *Howards End*, *A Passage to India*
68. James Joyce: "Araby" from *Dubliners*; *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*; *Ulysses* (fragments, including the last chapter)
69. Virginia Woolf: *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*
70. D.H. Lawrence: *Sons and Lovers*, *Women in Love*, *The White Peacock*
71. Arthur Conan Doyle: *The Hound of the Baskervilles*
72. Graham Greene: *Brighton Rock*
73. Aldous Huxley: *Brave New World*
74. George Bernard Shaw: *Pygmalion*
75. George Orwell, *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
76. Kingsley Amis: *Lucky Jim*
77. John Osborne: *Look Back in Anger*
78. Samuel Beckett: *Waiting For Godot*
79. Harold Pinter: *The Dumb Waiter* or *The Birthday Party*
80. William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*
81. Anthony Burgess: *A Clockwork Orange*
82. John Fowles: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Magus*
83. Doris Lessing: *The Golden Notebook*

84. Muriel Spark: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*
85. Malcolm Bradbury: *The History Man*
86. David Lodge: *Small World, Nice Work*
87. V.S. Naipaul: *A House for Mr. Biswas*
88. Kazuo Ishiguro: *The Remains of the Day*
89. A. S. Byatt: *Possession*
90. Angela Carter: *Wise Children*
91. Salman Rushdie: *Midnight's Children*
92. Julian Barnes, *England, England*
93. Hanif Kureishi: *The Buddha of Suburbia*
94. J. G. Ballard: *Crash*
95. Martin Amis: *Money*
96. Ian McEwan, *Atonement*
97. Fielding, Helen, *Bridget Jones's Diary*
98. Jeanette Winterson: *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*
99. Zadie Smith: *White Teeth*
100. Sarah Waters, *Affinity*

American literature

1. William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (fragment).
2. Anne Bradstreet: "To My Dear and Loving Husband"
3. Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (fragment).
4. St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, from *Letters from an American Farmer*: "What Is an American".
5. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* (fragment, Part I).
6. Washington Irving, *Rip Van Winkle*.
7. James Fenimore Cooper, Preface to the *Leather-Stocking Tales, The Deerslayer*
8. Edgar Allan Poe: "The Raven", *The Fall of the House of Usher*
9. Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Self-Reliance* (fragment).
10. Henry David Thoreau: from *Walden*: "Civil Disobedience".
11. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*.
12. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (fragments)
13. Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (1, 2, 5-11,15), "I Hear America Singing", "When Lilacs in the Door-yard Bloom'd", "O Captain! My Captain".
14. Emily Dickinson: poems: "I Never Saw a Moor", "There is No Frigate Like a Book", "Hope", "I am Nobody"
15. Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
16. Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage, The Open Boat*
17. Henry James, *Daisy Miller; The Wings of the Dove*
18. Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*
19. Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*
20. Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie, An American Tragedy*
21. Jack London, *Martin Eden*
22. Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*
23. Sinclair Lewis, *Main Street, or Babbitt*
24. Willa Cather, *My Antonia*
25. John Dos Passos, *42nd Parallel* (fragment)
26. Edgar Lee Masters: Selection from *The Spoon River Anthology*: "The Hill", "Lucinda Matlock",
27. Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "The Death of a Hired Man".
28. Carl Sandburg: "Fog", "Pennsylvania".
29. Hilda Doolittle: "Sea Rose".
30. Amy Lowell: "Autumn Haze"
31. Ezra Pound: "In a Station of the Metro"; "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter"
32. Marianne Moore: "The Fish".
33. William Carlos Williams: "This is Just to Say", "Young Woman at a Window"; "The Red Wheelbarrow"
34. e.e.cummings: "somewhere i have never traveled".
35. Langston Hughes: "Epilogue. I, too sing America"

36. Eugene O'Neill: *A Long Day's Journey into the Night*
37. Sherwood Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*
38. Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises, A Farewell to Arms, The Old Man and the Sea*
39. F.Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*
40. William Faulkner: *As I Lay Dying, Light in August, Rose for Emily*
41. John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men*
42. Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*
43. Richard Wright, *Native Son*
44. Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*
45. James Baldwin: *Go Tell It On the Mountain.*
46. Raymond Chandler , *The Big Sleep, Farewell, My Lovely, The Long Goodbye*
47. Dashiell Hammett, *Red Harvest, The Maltese Falcon*
48. Henry Miller , *Tropic of Cancer, Tropic of Capricorn*
49. Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman.*
50. Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*
51. Tennessee Williams: *The Glass Menagerie, A Street Named Desire*
52. Robert Penn Warren , *All the King's Men*
53. William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*
54. Norman Mailer, *The Naked and the Dead*
55. Flannery O'Connor: "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
56. Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day, The Adventures of Augie March*
57. Allen Ginsberg: "The Howl"
58. Lawrence Ferlinghetti: "Dog"
59. Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*
60. Joseph Heller, *Catch-22*
61. Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles, Fahrenheit 451*
62. James Jones, *From Here to Eternity*
63. Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
64. Theodore Roethke, "The Premonition"
65. Adrienne Rich: "Face to Face"
66. Anne Sexton: "Sylvia's Death"
67. Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita; Pale Fire*
68. Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse-Five*
69. Henry Miller: *Tropic of Cancer*
70. William Styron, *Lie Down in Darkness, The Confessions of Nat Turner,*
71. Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
72. Carson McCullers: *The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter*
73. Truman Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's, Other Voices, Other Rooms, In Cold Blood*
74. Salinger, J.D., *The Catcher in the Rye*
75. Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar; "Lady Lazarus"*
76. Jack Kerouac: *On the Road*
77. James Baldwin: *Go Tell It on the Mountain, Another Country*
78. Ursula LeGuin, *The Lathe of Heaven, Dancing at the Edge of the World*
79. John Updike: *Rabbit, Run*
80. John Barth: *Lost in the Funhouse*
81. Philip Roth: *Goodbye Columbus, Portnoy's Complaint, American Pastoral*
82. E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*
83. Donald Barthelme, *Snow White*
84. Don DeLillo: *White Noise, Underworld*
85. Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest.*
86. Alice Walker, *The Color Purple*
87. Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon, Beloved Beloved, The Bluest Eye*
88. Raymond Carver, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*
89. Saul Bellow: *Seize the Day*
90. Thomas Pynchon: *Gravity's Rainbow or The Crying of Lot 49*
91. William Gibson: *Neuromancer*
92. Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*
93. Joyce Carol Oates, *Them*
94. Kingston, Maxine Hong, *The Woman Warrior*
95. Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian or, the Evening Redness in the West*

96. David Mamet, *Glengarry Glen Ross*
97. John Kennedy Toole, *A Confederacy of Dunces*
98. Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
99. Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho*
100. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

Other literatures in English

1. Margaret Atwood (Canada), *Handmaid's Tale*
2. Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), *Things Fall Apart*
3. Edna O'Brien E. (Ireland), *The Country Girls*
4. Flann O'Brien (Ireland), *At Swim-Two-Birds*
5. J. M. Coetzee (Australia, South Africa): *Disgrace*
6. Anita Desai (India), *The Village By the Sea*
7. Buchi Emecheta (Nigeria), *Second Class Citizen*
8. Janet Frame (New Zealand), *An Angel at My Table*
9. Seamus Heaney (Ireland), "Mid-Term Break", "Bog Queen"
10. Marian Keys (Ireland), *Watermelon*
11. Malcolm Lowry (Canada, England): *Under the Volcano*
12. David Malouf (Australia), *Remembering Babylon*
13. Jean Rhys (Dominica), *Wide Sargasso Sea*
14. Alasdair Gray (Scotland), *Lanark*

Recommended more recent fictions

1. Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*
2. Paul Auster, *New York Trilogy*
3. Nicholson Baker, *The Mezzanine*
4. J.G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*
5. John Barth, *Giles Goat-Boy*
6. Donald Barthelme, *60 Stories*
7. William S. Burroughs, *Naked Lunch*
8. Don DeLillo, *Great Jones Street*
9. E.L. Doctorow, *City of God*
10. Jonathan Safran Foer, *Everything Is Illuminated*
11. William Gaddis, *JR*
12. William Gass, *The Tunnel*
13. John Hawkes, *The Lime Twig*
14. Ben Marcus, *Notable American Women*
15. Tom McCarthy, *Remainder*
16. Joseph McElroy, *Women and Men*
17. Steven Millhauser, *Edwin Mullhouse*
18. 19. Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
20. Harvey Pekar, *American Splendor*
21. Philip Roth, *The Counterlife*
22. W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*

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13. Useful Internet links

Selected web sites: English and American literature

There is an enormous number of web sites related to literature in English. The following sites have been selected for their relevance to courses offered in English departments and teacher training colleges.

1. **American Authors on the Web**
<http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/AmeLit.html>
2. **British and Irish Authors on the Web**
<http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/UK-authors.html>
2. **Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia**
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>
3. **Middle English Compendium**
<http://www.hti.umich.edu/mec/index.html>
4. **Sixteenth century Renaissance English Literature (1485-1603)**
<http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/>
5. **Shakespeare**
<http://the-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html>
6. **Restoration and Eighteenth Century Studies**
<http://www.sunysb.edu/english/18thcentury/18TH.HTM>
7. **Romantic Circles**
<http://www.inform.umd.edu/RC/rc.html>
8. **The Victorian Web**
<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/hypertext/landow/victorian/victov.html>
9. **Victorian Women Writers Project**
<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/>
10. **Voice of the Shuttle: English Literature**
<http://humanitas.ucsb.edu/shuttle/english.html>
11. **Postcolonial and Postimperial Literature**
<http://www.postcolonialweb.org>
12. **LibriVox** (Acoustical liberation of books in the public domain)
https://librivox.org/author/37?primary_key=37&search_category=author&search_page=1&search_form=get_results#

Useful websites for background on British cinema are:

<http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk>
<http://www.bfi.org.uk>
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[na tylnej okładce]

Podręcznik *Introduction to the Study of Literature and Film in English* jest przeznaczony głównie dla studentów studiów filologicznych na kierunku anglistyka oraz słuchaczy nauczycielskich kolegów języka angielskiego. Ponadto może być wykorzystywany na lektoratach języka angielskiego w szkołach wyższych na kierunku filologia w grupach zaawansowanych. Celem podręcznika jest zapoznanie studentów z najważniejszymi problemami i pojęciami z zakresu wiedzy o literaturze i filmie oraz wyrobienie umiejętności analizy i interpretacji utworu literackiego w języku angielskim. Materiały zawarte w podręczniku mają służyć studentom w przygotowaniu się do zajęć z literaturoznawstwa, a także do samodzielnego studiowania oraz analizy dzieł autorów anglojęzycznych, w tym adaptacji filmowych oraz filmów narracyjnych. Sprawdzeniu i utrwaleniu wiadomości służą zamieszczone w końcowej części każdego rozdziału pytania i zadania. W podręczniku zamieszczono także praktyczne sugestie pisania prac seminaryjnych i dyplomowych z zakresu literaturoznawstwa, wykaz najważniejszych utworów literackich w języku angielskim oraz bogatą bibliografię prac krytycznych i wybrane adresy internetowe dotyczące literatury angielskojęzycznej.

Z recenzji:

Skrypt łączy staranność opracowania z walorami praktycznymi, dzięki którym doskonale się sprawdza w dydaktyce, także na poziomie uniwersyteckim. Ponadto fakt, że napisany jest po angielsku wypełnia istotną lukę: dostępne tego typu podręczniki są głównie w języku polskim, natomiast angielskie nie są dostosowane do programu i potrzeb studentów anglistyki w Polsce.

Profesor dr hab. Krystyna Stamirowska, Uniwersytet Jagielloński

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