

《英语文学名著精读》（上）

——文学基本术语和英美文学史

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Section one:Some Basic Knowledge of Understanding Literature

1. What is literature?

Literature comes from human interest in **telling a story**, in **arranging words** in **artistic** forms, in describing in words some aspects of our **human experiences**. Therefore, we can define literature as language artistically used to achieve identifiable literary qualities and to convey **meaningful messages**. It is characterized by **beauty** of expression and form and by **universality** of **intellectual** and emotional appeal.

Literature refers to **well-structured language** with **artistic** qualities, a reflection of *life* and *human nature*.

2. Purposes of reading literature.

1. **Escaping** the problem and responsibility of our everyday lives and participating in imaginative world of experience that differs greatly from our own. *The Wind in the Willows, A Journey to the West, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, etc*

2. **Gaining information or knowledge:** *Pride and Prejudice, The Red Chamber Dream (or A Dream of the Red Mansion)*

3. Helps to shape and change our **attitudes** and **expectations**(to life) and become **wiser** and more **sympathetic**.

4. **Gaining aesthetic pleasure.** Through literature, we are inspired to perceive the **beauty** of the world which in turn will help us to **transcend** the troubles and sorrows of the present world.

5. Reading for pleasure(**entertainment**) and **relaxation**.

6. Reading for confronting **experience**.

7. Reading for profound understanding about **human nature**, know yourself.

3. Fiction:

1) **The elements of fiction:** plot, character, setting, point of view, theme, symbol , style and tone

2) What is fiction?

Narrowly speaking, fiction refers to the **short story** and the **novel**(coming out in the late 18th century); broadly speaking, it refers to **any narrative**, in **prose**(novel,

short story, drama, biography, history) or in **verse** (epic, ballad, idyll, dramatic monologue), that is wholly or in part the product of the **imagination**.

4. Plot:

The plot of a work of fiction is the deliberately arranged of **interrelated events** that constitute the basic **narrative structure** of a novel or a short story. The major **function** of plot can be said to be the **representation of characters** in action, internal (psychological), or external (physical).

A **plot** is a **well-arranged narrative** of events, which emphasizes **logical** and **causal** (concerned with causes---with 'whys': "The king died, and then the queen died of grief."

A **story** is a narrative of events arranged in their **time-sequence**. It can only supply **curiosity**. "The king died and several years later, the queen died, too.

1) **Exposition**: the exposition is the beginning section in which the author provides the necessary background information, sets the scene, establishes the situation, and dates the action.

2) **complication** (the rising action): the conflict is developed gradually and intensified.

3) **crisis** (climax): the plot reaches its point of **greatest emotional intensity**. It is the **turning point** of the plot.

4) **falling action**: the tension **subsides** and the plot moves toward its appointed conclusion.

5) **Resolution** (conclusion) "unknotting & untying". It records the **outcome** of the conflict and establishes some new stability .

Example: Martin Eden (by Jack London):

Martin and Ruth's first meeting through Arthur(exposition)-----fell in love and began to write(rising action)----- the Morses forced Ruth to cancel her engagement, famous then rich(climax)----life meaningless and aimless(falling action)----suicide (resolution)

5. Orders

1) **Chronological order (physical time)**: detective story, historical novels (1-2-3-4-5-6)

2) **Psychological order** (psychological time). Internal conflict (the conflict is inside the protagonist's mind. "**stream of consciousness**"(random flow of ideas, feelings)

Ulyses, To the Lighthouse, The sound and the Fury.

3) Flashback

6. Expectation :

Expectation occurs when an author leads you to think that some particular thing is going to happen. You will know that an author is leading you to expect something if you find yourself asking: I wonder what she will do, or I wonder if that is going to happen to him? Expectation can be exciting and can create tension in the reader.

7. Interest:

Interest means any way in which you respond to a character; it could be loathing, tenderness, pity or frustration. It covers feelings of approval and disapproval, liking and not liking, hatred and love. If you are interested in a character, you are concerned about what happens to him or her.

8. Surprise:

Sometimes the characters in whom we are interested do not do what we expect; the result is surprise. Other things in a story may surprise us. There may be an unexpected event, or the appearance of a new character. Once we are surprised, we will alter our attitude to the characters and our expectations of the story. It forces us to think again about what we are reading. You are supposed to accept them because they are crucial to the plot of the novel. If expectation holds your interest, it is because you wish to be relieved from the tensions it creates.

9. Relief

Relief is the relaxing of tension that you experience when you discover the outcome of the story. It is a simple and basic experience. You wanted to know something and now you do; you feared something and now you either know it has happened or not; you hoped for something to happen and now you have either been satisfied or disappointed. You experience relief whether the outcome is sad or not.

10. Plots and the Past events

Nobody can change the past. What's done is done. Some characters cannot escape from the past, be the past what they have done themselves or what other people have done. They suffer from the past events all the time; some can successfully come out of the past, and lead a new life.

11. Plots and the aims of characters:

No matter how different novels are in setting and tone, many of them share the common factor of a central character who attempts to achieve *something*, which turns out to be the cause of the plot.

Some want to obtain more power and influence, some want to win back love, others aim at self-knowledge, so on and so forth.

12. Four Kinds of plots:

1) Plots based on journeys:

Some of the earlier novels are either based upon a journey or upon the life of a central character who, so to speak, journeys through a number of experiences. Such books are often called picaresque novels. Now the term has been extended to cover any character who has a series of adventures on a journey or through life. Usually these novels have simple plots, and the central characters have attractive energy

2) Plots based on discoveries:

Many novels show the central characters making discoveries about life. In some novels ideals are shattered, in others false ideas are recognized and replaced by truer ones. The reader can feel the pleasure in witnessing a character's development, growth in understanding, and maturation.

3) Plots based on the workings of society :

Most plots deal with society in one way or another. There are, however, some novels in which one of the central concerns of the plot is to explore how a particular society works. Such plots might show why some characters prosper while others do not. The point about plots based on the workings of society is that characters behave as they do because of the way society runs

4) Plots based on mysteries:

Novels in which some things remain mysteriously hidden from the characters and the reader have an enormous popular appeal. The fact is that we like mysteries. There is pleasure in being held in suspense. In Sherlock Holmes stories, the problems and their intricate solutions generate a great deal of pleasure, simply because the reader wants the mystery to be solved. The plot based upon mystery works by allowing the reader to see that there must be a cause behind the events while keeping the cause concealed. The formula is: there must be a cause, but it is mysteriously hidden. Mysteries arouse the reader's expectations and increase the tension of the book, while the unraveling of the mystery creates surprise and relief.

13. The importance of character:

- 1) Without character there would be no plot, hence no story.
- 2) With character, we are concerned with being able to
 - a) establish the nature and personalities of the characters themselves, their intellectual, emotional and moral qualities;

- b) the methods and techniques an author uses to create, develop, and present characters to the reader;
 - c) whether the characters so presented are credible and convincing.
- 3) What is character:

A character is any individual created by authors in a literary work. The authors first select some aspects of ordinary people, develop some of those aspects whilst playing down others, and put them together as they please. The result is not an ordinary person but a fictional character.

4) Classified by their relationship to plot: Protagonist & Antagonist

(1) **Protagonist** (hero, major character) : major, or central, character of the plot, the essential character, without whom there would be no plot.

(2) **Antagonist**: The protagonist's opponent whom the former struggles against.

A) The antagonist may not be a human being (Moby-Dick, the marlin in *The Old Man and the Sea* Santiago has to fight against;

B): Sometimes the antagonist may not be a living creature at all, but the hostile social or natural environment.

5) Classified by the degree of development they are given by the author: Flat(static)&Round (dynamic) characters:

(1) **Flat**(one-dimensional, single-dimensional, or simple) **characters** are those who represent a single characteristic, trait, or idea, or at most a very limited number of such qualities, usually for humor or satire. These characters and their deeds are always predictable and never vary, they are not changed by circumstance, and they are usually minor characters, though not always so. They rarely have any inner life, never surprise the reader. They are closed, lacking depth, and one-sided.

(2) **Round**(multi-dimensional, complex, dynamic) **characters** embody a number of qualities and traits and are complex multidimensional characters of considerable intellectual and emotional depth who have capacity to grow and change. They are usually major characters. They are open, multi-faceted ,full of depth, and flexible

6) **Telling**: a direct method of revealing character.

It relies on exposition and direct commentary by the author.

(1) By the use of **names**, it provides essential clues to their dominant nature of the character. Mr. Badman, Young Goodman Brown;

(2) Through **appearance**

A: What a character wears: Details of dress may offer clues to background, occupation, and economic and social status;

B: And how he **looks**: Details of physical appearance can help to identify a character's age and the general state of his physical and emotional health and well being, is he strong, weak, happy, sad, or agitated?

- C. Through **commenting** on the nature and personality of the characters, including the thoughts and feeling inside .
- 7) **Showing** involves the author's stepping aside to allow the characters to reveal themselves directly through their dialogue(their speeches) and their actions (what they do)

Showing involves the gradual rather than the immediate establishment of character. Such a process requires the active participation of the reader. Most authors employ a combination of each. Most modern authors prefer showing to telling, but neither method is necessarily better than the other.

8) Analyzing character

Who is the protagonist of the work and who (or what) is the antagonist? Describe their major traits and qualities.

What is the function of the work's minor characters?

Identify the characters in terms of whether they are flat or round, dynamic or static.

What methods does the author employ to establish and reveal the characters? Are the methods primarily of showing or of telling?

Are the actions of the characters properly motivated and consistent?

Are the characters of the work finally credible and interesting?

14. What is setting?

The geographical location; the time (historical period, specific) ;climatic conditions. It is a broad word. It covers the places in which character are presented; the social context of characters, such as their families, friends and class; the customs, beliefs and rules of behavior of their society; and the total atmosphere, mood or feel that is created by these.

- 1) Provide **background** for the action.
- 2) Setting as **antagonist**. Setting in form of nature can function as a kind of causal antagonist, helping to establish plot conflict and determine the outcome of events. *The Old Man and the Sea*. In some novels, setting can be considered as an agent that shapes and determines the lives and fate of the characters.
- 3) Setting as a means of creating appropriate **atmosphere** or **mood**.
Rain, whether, cloudy, sunshine, wind, dust, darkness
- 4) Setting as a means of **revealing character**. The way in which a character perceives the setting, and the way he or she reacts to it will tell the reader about the character and his state of mind . Setting and character are one.
- 5) Setting as a means of **reinforcing the theme**. The war in *A Farewell to Arms*, for example. The setting can reveal the author's view of the world, it can help to establish a distinctive world, and it can be the main source of interest in the book.

6) The possible **implication** of some certain time:

Night: darkness for conspiracy and violence; **Autumn**: coming of winter and of death; **Winter**: death; **Spring-morning**: youth; **Summer-noon**: maturity; **Fall-afternoon**(or twilight): declining years; **Winter-night**: death

7) Analyzing setting:

- What is the work's setting in space and time?
- How does the authors go about establishing setting? Does the author want the reader to see or feel the setting; or does the author want the reader both see and feel it? What details of the setting does the author isolate and describe?
- Is the setting important? If so, what is the function? Is it used to reveal, reinforce or influence character, plot, or theme?
- Is the setting an appropriate one?

15. Point of view

Point of view is the method of narration that determines the angle from which the story is told. It is the means by which the author presents and shapes his materials and by which the readers' knowledge, interest, and sympathy are focused and controlled. The choice of point of view is the choice of who to tell the story and who talks to the reader.

- 1) With **omniscient (all-knowing)** point of view, the narrator retains full and complete control over the narrative. The omniscient narrator is all-knowing . From a position outside the story, the narrator tell us everything directly: what the characters are like and why they behave as they do, record their words and dramatize their actions; or enter their minds to explore directly their thoughts and feelings. This point of view was popular in 18th and 19th centuries. *Vanity Fair*, *A Dream of the Red Chamber* ,etc. In modern literature, writers have been trying to be away from this point of view.
- 2) With limited omniscient (third -person or selective omniscient) point of view, the narrator retains the right of immediate access to the work but moves the point of view inside by selecting a single character to act as the center of revelation. What the reader knows and sees of events is always restricted to what this focal character can know or see.
- 3) The use of first person point of view places still another restriction on the voice that tells the story. The movement from full to limited omniscience essentially involves the narrator's decision to position himself inside rather than outside the story and to limit his omniscience to a single character. First person point of view retains this inside position, but goes one step further by locating the point of view in a character who addresses the reader directly (using "I")
First-person narrators can be protagonists. Like Huckleberry Finn , who tells the stories of his own lives and adventures. The narration is limited to that person's telling.

Not all protagonist-narrators tell their own stories. Sometimes the protagonist-narrator is charged with the responsibility of telling someone else's story, as Nick Carraway, the protagonist of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, is charged with the responsibility of telling Jay Gatsby's.

First-person narrators are sometimes not the protagonist at all, but rather characters whose roles in the plot are clearly secondary. (Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*)

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16. Theme

To some, **theme** may mean the moral or lesson that can be worked out from the work (Aesop's fables)

Theme is also used sometimes to refer to the basic issue, problem, or subject with which the work is concerned, for example, "love" "growing up" "the nature of man" "the discovery of truth" "the initiation into adulthood" or "violence"

Or we may speak of theme as a familiar pattern or motif that occurs again and again in literature, say, the journey theme (*Huckleberry Finn*, *The grapes in Wrath*, Cervantes's *Don Quixote*)

In literature, theme is the central idea or statement about life that unifies and controls the total work. The theme is not the issue, or problem, or subject with which the work deals, Rather, theme is the comment or statement the author makes about that subject, it emerges from the interplay of various elements of the work. (We can say that the novel deals with .

The themes of the novel, you should remember, are there because the author intended them to be. They are the author's **interpretation** and judgment of life,

expressing his or her **view** or **vision** of things.

It is the author's way of communicating and sharing ideas, perceptions, and feelings with his readers or of probing, and exploring with them the puzzling questions of human existence, most of which do not yield neat, tidy, and universally acceptable answer.

One of the works of a great work of literature is the significance of its theme.

Theme is organically and necessarily related to the work's total structure and texture.

The readers may not accept a story's theme, but we must remember that some ideas and insights have the power to liberate our minds and our imaginations and to cause us to reflect critically about our own values, beliefs and assumptions.

Does the work have a theme? Is it stated or implied?

What generalization(s) or statement(s) about life or human experience does the work make?

What elements of the work contribute most heavily to the formulation of the theme?

Does the theme emerge organically and naturally, or does the author seem to force it upon the work?

What is the value or significance of the work's theme? Is it topical or universal in its application?

17. Symbol

A **Symbol** is "something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance... a visible sign of something invisible." For example, *home* symbolizes feelings of warmth and security and personal associations of family, friends and neighborhood, *the Chinese flag* suggests country and patriotism.

In literature, symbols, in the form of words, images, objects, settings, events and characters, are often used deliberately to suggest and reinforce meaning, to provide enrichment by enlarging and clarifying the experience of the work, and to help to organize and unify the whole. It can stimulate and release the imagination, a chief goal of any form of art. *Traditional symbols* are those whose associations are the common property of a society or culture and are so widely recognized and accepted that they can be said to be almost universal. The sea, the moon, and the sun, the colors black, white and red, the seasons of the year are those kinds of symbols.

Original symbols are those whose associations are neither immediate nor traditional and that derive their meaning, largely if not exclusively, from the context of the work in which they are used. *Moby-Dick* may refer to the universe, but outside the novel, it's a whale.

Private symbols are the products of the authors' own peculiar systems of philosophy or belief.

Setting and symbols: the details of setting can be used functionally, to extend, clarify, and reinforce the author's larger intention and meaning. The seasons of the year and the time of day can also be used as symbols.

Plot and symbols: single events of plot, large or small, or plots in their entirety often function symbolically.

Character and symbols: Some characters are given symbolic names to suggest underlying moral, intellectual, or emotional qualities. Roger Chillingsworth: suggests cold intellectuality and lack of human warmth. Robin: springtime, youth, innocence.

What symbols or patterns of symbolism are present in the work? Are the symbols traditional, original or private?

What aspects of the work (e.g., theme, setting, plot, characterization) does the symbolism serve to explain, clarify, or reinforce?

Does the author's use of symbolism seem contrived or forced in any way, or does it arise naturally out of the interplay of the story's major elements?

18. **Style** (the effective use of **language**):

When we talk about an author's words and the characteristic ways he uses the resources of language to achieve certain effects, we are talking about style.

In its most general sense, style consists of diction (the individual words an author chooses) and syntax (the arrangement of those words into phrases, clauses, and sentences), as well as such devices as rhythm and sound, allusion, ambiguity, paradox, and figurative language.

19. **Tone**

Tone is a term used to characterize the special qualities of accent, inflection, and duration in speaker's voice. For example, a mother can tell her child to "Come here!" in a manner that is angry, threatening, concerned, amused, sympathetic, or affectionate. In each case, the mother's meaning is the same--- she wants her child to come.

Tone is a means of creating a relationship or conveying an attitude

- Describe the author's **diction**. Is the language concrete or abstract, formal or informal, literal or figurative? What part of speech occurs most often?
- What use does the author make of **imagery**, figurative devices (simile, metaphor, personification), patterns of rhythm and sound (alliteration, assonance, consonance, onomatopoeia), repetition, allusion?
- Are the sentences predominantly long or short, simple, compound, or complex, loose, periodic, or balanced?
- Describe the author's tone. Is it, for example, sympathetic, detached, condescending, serious, humorous, or ironic? How is the tone established and revealed?

Section Two: Critical Approaches to Literature

Formalist Criticism:

This approach regards literature as "a unique form of human knowledge that needs to be examined on its own terms." All the elements necessary for understanding the work are contained within the work itself. Of particular interest to the formalist critic are the elements of *form*—style, structure, tone, imagery, etc.—that are found within the text. A primary goal for formalist critics is to determine how such elements work together with the text's content to shape its effects upon readers.

Biographical Criticism:

This approach "begins with the simple but central insight that literature is written by actual people and that understanding an author's life can help readers more thoroughly comprehend the work." Hence, it often affords a practical method by which readers can better understand a text. However, a biographical critic must be careful not to take the biographical facts of a writer's life too far in criticizing the works of that writer: the biographical critic "focuses on explicating the literary work by using the insight provided by knowledge of the author's life.... [B]iographical data should amplify the meaning of the text, not drown it out with irrelevant material."

Historical Criticism:

This approach "seeks to understand a literary work by investigating the social, cultural, and intellectual context that produced it—a context that necessarily includes the artist's biography and milieu." A key goal for historical critics is to understand the effect of a literary work upon its original readers.

Gender Criticism:

This approach "examines how sexual identity influences the creation and reception of literary works." Originally an offshoot (分枝) of feminist movements, gender criticism today includes a number of approaches, including the so-called "masculinist" approach recently advocated by poet Robert Bly. The bulk of gender criticism, however, is feminist and takes as a central precept (规则) that the patriarchal attitudes that have dominated western thought have resulted, consciously or unconsciously, in literature "full of unexamined 'male-produced' assumptions." Feminist criticism attempts to correct this imbalance by analyzing and combatting such attitudes—by questioning, for example, why none of the characters in Shakespeare's play *Othello* ever challenge the right of a husband to murder a wife accused of adultery. Other goals of feminist critics include "analyzing how sexual identity influences the reader of a text" and "examin[ing] how the images of men and women in imaginative literature reflect or reject the social forces that have historically

kept the sexes from achieving total equality."

Psychological Criticism:

This approach reflects the effect that modern psychology has had upon both literature and literary criticism. Fundamental figures in psychological criticism include Sigmund Freud, whose "psychoanalytic theories changed our notions of human behavior by exploring new or controversial areas like wish-fulfillment, sexuality, the unconscious, and repression" as well as expanding our understanding of how "language and symbols operate by demonstrating their ability to reflect unconscious fears or desires"; and Carl Jung, whose theories about the unconscious are also a key foundation of **Mythological Criticism**. Psychological criticism has a number of approaches, but in general, it usually employs one (or more) of three approaches:

1. An investigation of "the creative process of the artist: what is the nature of literary genius and how does it relate to normal mental functions?"
2. The psychological study of a particular artist, usually noting how an author's biographical circumstances affect or influence their motivations and/or behavior.
3. The analysis of fictional characters using the language and methods of psychology.

Sociological Criticism:

- This approach "examines literature in the cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or received," exploring the relationships between the artist and society. Sometimes it examines the artist's society to better understand the author's literary works; other times, it may examine the representation of such societal elements within the literature itself. One influential type of sociological criticism is **Marxist criticism**, which focuses on the economic and political elements of art, often emphasizing the ideological content of literature; because Marxist criticism often argues that all art is political, either challenging or endorsing (by silence) the status quo, it is frequently evaluative and judgmental, a tendency that "can lead to reductive judgment, as when Soviet critics rated Jack London better than William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Edith Wharton, and Henry James, because he illustrated the principles of class struggle more clearly." Nonetheless, Marxist criticism "can illuminate political and economic dimensions of literature other approaches overlook."

Mythological Criticism:

- This approach emphasizes "the recurrent universal patterns underlying most literary works." Combining the insights from anthropology 不（人类学），

psychology, history, and comparative religion, mythological criticism "explores the artist's common humanity by tracing how the individual imagination uses myths and symbols common to different cultures and epochs." One key concept in mythological criticism is the *archetype*, "a symbol, character, situation, or image that evokes a deep universal response," which entered literary criticism from Swiss psychologist Carl Jung. According to Jung, all individuals share a "'collective unconscious,' a set of primal memories common to the human race, existing below each person's conscious mind"—often deriving from primordial (原始的) phenomena such as the sun, moon, fire, night, and blood, archetypes according to Jung "trigger the collective unconscious." Another critic, Northrop Frye, defined archetypes in a more limited way as "a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognizable as an element of one's literary experience as a whole." Regardless of the definition of archetype they use, mythological critics tend to view literary works in the broader context of works sharing a similar pattern.

Reader-Response Criticism:

- This approach takes as a fundamental tenet that "literature" exists not as an artifact upon a printed page but as a transaction (交流) between the physical text and the mind of a reader. It attempts "to describe what happens in the reader's mind while interpreting a text" and reflects that *reading*, like writing, is a creative process. According to reader-response critics, literary texts do not "contain" a meaning; meanings derive only from the act of individual readings. Hence, two different readers may derive completely different interpretations of the same literary text; likewise, a reader who re-reads a work years later may find the work shockingly different. Reader-response criticism, then, emphasizes how "religious, cultural, and social values affect readings; it also overlaps with gender criticism in exploring how men and women read the same text with different assumptions." Though this approach rejects the notion that a single "correct" reading exists for a literary work, it does not consider all readings permissible: "Each text creates limits to its possible interpretations."

Deconstructionist Criticism:

- This approach "rejects the traditional assumption that language can accurately represent reality." Deconstructionist critics regard language as a fundamentally unstable medium—the words "tree" or "dog," for instance, undoubtedly conjure up different mental images for different people—and therefore, because literature is made up of words, literature possesses no fixed, single meaning. According to critic Paul de Man, deconstructionists insist on "the impossibility of making the actual expression coincide with what has to be expressed, of making the actual signs [i.e., words] coincide with what is signified." As a result, deconstructionist critics tend to emphasize not *what* is

being said but *how* language is used in a text. The methods of this approach tend to resemble those of **formalist criticism**, but whereas formalists' primary goal is to locate unity within a text, "how the diverse elements of a text cohere into meaning," deconstructionists try to show how the text "deconstructs," "how it can be broken down ... into mutually irreconcilable positions." Other goals of deconstructionists include (1) challenging the notion of authors' "ownership" of texts they create (and their ability to control the meaning of their texts) and (2) focusing on how language is used to achieve power, as when they try to understand how a some interpretations of a literary work come to be regarded as "truth."

Section Three: History of British Literature

Part I. The Anglo-Saxon Period (449—1066)

Chapter 1: The early history. (the early inhabitants were Britons)

1. Before 410 A. D., England was controlled by Roman Empire
2. After the withdraw of the roman troops, England fell into the hands of the Teutonic tribes (Angles, Saxons and Jutes) from the continent.
3. The Anglo-Saxons governed England until 1066. The language spoken then was called Anglo-Saxon, or Old English. The Anglo-Saxon Period witnessed a transition from tribal society to feudalism.

Chapter 2: *Beowulf*

1. It is one long poem over 3,000 lines. It is the national epic of the English people.
2. Though *Beowulf* is the first poem in English, the hero and setting have nothing to do with England, but about Scandinavians (the Geats and Danes) *Beowulf* was a Geat.
3. Three episodes
 - 1) The fight with the monster, Grendel.
 - 2) The fight with Grendel's mother, a still more frightful shemonster
 - 3) The mortal combat with the Fire Dragon. (after being the king of the Geats for 50 years)
4. **Features**
 - 1) The use of alliteration: certain accented words in a line begin with the same consonant sound.
Eg. Kindest to kinsmen and keenest for fame
 - 2) The use of metaphors and understatements
 - a. ring-giver : king
hearth-companions—his attendant warriors
swan's path whale's road: sea
sea-wood—ship
battle-hero, shield-bearer: soldier
 - b. not troublesome: very welcome
need not praise: a right to condemn
(understatement is often regarded as characteristic of English people and their language. It may give an impression of reserve or a tinge of ironical humor.)
 - 3) The poem is the mixture of Pagan and Christian elements
5. **Significance:**
 - 1) It is a dignified noble poem, which affords invaluable insight into the heroic ways of life the Teutonic people.
 - 2) It clearly mirrors their ideals--- valor, the love of glory, honor, and duty, the royalty of the retainer, and the generosity of the lord

- 3) Its chief significance lies in the vivid portrayal of a great national hero, who is brave, courageous, selfless, and ever helpful to his people and his kinfolk.

Part II. The Anglo-Norman Period (1066-1350) (the middle English Period)

Chapter 1: Norman Conquest

1. In the year 1066, at the battle of Hastings, the Normans headed by William, Duke of Normandy, defeated the Anglo-Saxons. Norman conquest makes the establishment of feudalism
2. **The influence of the conquest**
 - 1) the bringing of Roman civilization to England
 - 2) the growth of nationality, a strong centralized government
 - 3) the new language and literature
4. **Three subject groups**
 - 1) the matter of France
 - 2) the matter of Greece and Rome
 - 3) the matter of Briton

Chapter 2: The Romances

1. What is Romance?

A romance was a long composition, in verse or in prose, describing the life and adventures of a noble hero. It generally concerns knights and involves a large amount of fighting as well as a number of miscellaneous adventures.

2. The class nature of the romance:

Loyalty was the repeatedly emphasized theme in romances. It was the corner-stone of feudal morality, without which the whole structure of feudalism would collapse.

The romances had nothing to do with the common people. They were composed for the noble, of the noble,, and in most cases by the poets patronized by the noble.

King Arthur and his Knights of the round Table

3. *Sir Gavain and the Green Knight*

- 1) It is the best of Arthurian romances, the most attractive and beautiful romance of chivalry
- 2) Its theme: The test of courage
The test of loyalty

Chapter 3: *Piers the Plowman*

1. **Author:** William Langland (1332--?) over 7, 000 lines
2. **Features :**
 - 1) It is written in the form of dream vision
 - 2) It is also an allegory

- 3) It is a realistic picture of feudal England
- 4) It presents a portrait of Seven Deadly sins: pride, lechery, envy, wrath, sloth, avarice, glutton
3. **Allegory:** Allegory is a technique for expanding the meaning of a literary work by having the characters, and some times the setting and events represent certain general abstract ideas, qualities or concepts usually moral, religious or political in nature.

Unlike symbolism, the abstractions of allegory are fixed and definite and tend to take the form of simple and specific ideas that, once identified, can be readily understood and easily remembered.

Chapter 4. Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400)

1. Position: The greatest poet of the Middle English period, the father of English poetry. When he died he was buried in Westminster Abbey, thus founding the “poets’ Corner”
2. Contribution to English literature and English language
 - 1) As a master of verse, he introduced from France and Italy the rhymed stanzas of various forms to English poetry.
 - 2) Chaucer did much in making the dialect of London the foundation for modern English Language.
3. **His significance.**
 - 1) He is a forerunner of humanism, hence becoming the forerunner of the age of Renaissance.
 - 2) He affirms men and women’s right to pursue their happiness on earth and negates superstitious and blind belief in fate.
 - 3) He is always keen to praise man’s energy, adroitness, intellect, quick with and the love for life.
 - 4) He is also called “the founder of English realism”
5. ***The Canterbury Tales***
 - 1) Chaucer’s masterpiece and one of the monumental works in English literature.
 - 2) The tales (esp. the prologue) supply a miniature of the English society of Chaucer’s time, its work and play, its deeds and dreams, its fun and sympathy and hearty joy of living .
 - 3) The structure: a general prologue, tales
 - 4) Characters:
 - (1) Monastic orders: prioress, nun, priest, pardoner
 - (2) Upper class: a knight, a square, a yeoman
 - (3) Trade group: merchant, sailor
 - (4) Burgess group: carpenter, cook, wife of a Bath
 - (5) Countrymen: miller, plowman
 - 5) The tales
 - (1) Each tale suits each teller
 - (2) Reflect the reality of medieval times

- a. corruption of the church
- b. emphasis on the money
- c. self-importance of burgess
- d. marriage attitude
 - a) wife of Bath: the happiness of marriage comes from the wife's mastery of the husband
 - b) Oxford clerk: the happiness of marriage comes from the husband's mastery of the wife
 - c) Franklin: mutual trust of the couple
- 6) The ways of linking the stories:
 - (1) The remarks of the boss of the Inn
 - (2) A close relationship between the tales and the prologue

Chapter 5: Popular Ballads

1. Production: They were created collectively by the people and constantly revised in the process of being handed down from mouth to mouth.
2. Definition: ballads are anonymous narrative songs that have been preserved by oral transmission. It is the most important form of popular literature.
3. Kinds of Ballads: historical, legendary, fantastical, lyrical, and humorous.
4. **The Robin Hood Ballads:**
 - 1) The life of Robin Hood:
He was depicted in the ballads as a valiant outlaw, famous in archery, living under the greenwood tree with his merry men, taking from the rich and giving to the poor, waging war against bishops, the king and the barons, and Norman oppressors.
 - 2) Character: The character of Robin Hood is many-sided. Strong brave and clever, he is at the same time tender-hearted and affectionate. He is a man with a twinkle in his eye, a man fond of a merry joke and a hearty laugh. But the dominant key in his character is his hatred for the cruel oppressors and his love for the poor and downtrodden.

Part III. The English renaissance (1485-1603)

Chapter 1: Renaissance

1. **Meaning:** The word "Renaissance" means "rebirth" (of learning). The Renaissance period was marked by a reawaking of interest in learning in the individual and the world of nature.
 - 1) The revival of learning led scholars back to the culture of Greece and Rome. Greek and Latin works were admired as models of literary form.
 - 2) The rebirth of interest in the individual gave rise to a new appreciation of beauty, to a desire for self-expression in varied activities and to the creation of great works of art. People ceased to look upon themselves as living only for god and a future world. Activities of humanity were keenly interested.

- 3) The renewal of curiosity about the natural world ultimately drew men to discover new lands and new scientific truth.

2. Humanism: Humanism is the key-note of the Renaissance.

Humanism was a literary and philosophic system of thought which attempted to place the affairs of mankind at the center of its concerns. According to humanists, man should mould the world according to his own desires, and attain happiness by removing all external checks by the exercise of human intellect and reason.

3. The significance of Renaissance:

The Renaissance, which began in the 14th century in Italy. Was a great cultural and intellectual movement that swept the whole of Europe. It was brought about by the growth of productive forces in the wombs of feudal society, by the development of new forms of social relations. As Engels says, "It was the greatest progressive revolution that mankind has so far experienced, a time which called for giants and produced giants---giants in power of thought, passion, character, in universality and learning."

4. The main traits of the Renaissance Literature.

All in all, the chief characteristic of the Renaissance literature is the expression of secular values with man instead of God as the center of the universe.

It emphasized the dignity of man, affirms and eulogizes the value of man, which often implies a lessening in the power of God.

It advocated the full expression of individualism and the fulfillment of one's abilities, against the cruel rule of feudalism.

It affirms the delight of earthly achievement, as well as man's desire for happiness and pleasure.

Nevertheless, at the same time, there is also the so-called Renaissance melancholy.

Existing side by side with exaltation of man's potentialities are the puzzling doubts and profound mistrust of man's own powers.

Examples(The Renaissance spirit is best expressed through the works of its greatest master---Shakespeare .)

Positive: "What a piece of work is a man! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In appreciation how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals"---- speaks Hamlet. Voicing the brightest visions the Renaissance knew of man's potentialities.

Negative: " tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day to the last syllable of recorded time;

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out , out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and pretends (go by) 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."

---- so says Macbeth, expressing some of the deepest despair experienced by Renaissance men.

5. English literature of the Renaissance may be roughly divided into three stages of development;

- 1) The first stage, the beginning of English Renaissance, is from 1485 to 1558.
- 2) The second stage, which lasts from 1558 to 1603, is called the Elizabethan age.
- 3) The third stage (1603-1660) is sometimes termed as the seventeenth century.

Chapter 2: The Beginning of the English Renaissance (1485-1558)

1. **Thomas More** (1478-1535): A great humanistic leader of 16th century.
2. **Utopia: comes** from two Greek words meaning “no place”. It was adopted by More as the name of his ideal commonwealth.
 - 1) **Utopia, Book One:** is a picture of contemporary England with forcible exposure of the poverty among the laboring classes. He exposed the rich men’s conspiracy against the poor. He was one of the first to see the relation between wealth and poverty, to understand that the rich were becoming richer because they were finding new and more effective ways of robbing the poor.
 - 2) **Utopia, Book Two:** presents a sketch of an ideal commonwealth in some unknown ocean, where property is held in common and there is no poverty. In this commonwealth, the principle that ‘ From everyone according to his capacities to everyone according to his needs’ is considered to be the practical basis for a communist society. He was one of the forerunners of modern socialist thought.

Chapter 3: The Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)

(or The Age of Shakespeare)

1. **Overview:** The Elizabethan Age is generally regarded as the peak of the English Renaissance, and is considered the most creative period in the history of English literature. In this extraordinary age we can always find such highest. Most far-reaching names as : Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Francis Bacon, and the greatest of all, William Shakespeare.
2. **Elizabethan poetry**
 - 1) John Lyly (1554-1606): *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* Lyly was one of the first of those who sought consciously for an artistic style and his curious way of writing, mannered and affected, set the fashion not only at the court but almost throughout literature for a dozen years. At the age of 24, he wrote “ Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit”, a romance written for the “ gentle reader”, concerning the adventures of a young Athenian. The style in which the book was written came to be known as euphuism.
 - 2) **Sir Philip Sidney(1554—1586)**

Sidney is a poet, critic, soldier, courtier, scholar.

 - (1) poet: *Arcadia*
Astrophel and Stella: the first important sonnet sequence.

- (2) Critic: *Apology for Poetry*: literary criticism.
According to him, poetry has a superiority over philosophy and history. He claimed that the poet can create through images what is only a matter for speculation to the philosopher and, through his gift of vision bring us to contemplate the ideal, not only the actual. These views on poetry represent the spirit of literary criticism of the Renaissance.
- (3) Soldier: In 1586, he fought in Flanders and was mortally wounded. As he lay dying, some people brought a cup of water to his fevered lips. He bade them give it to a soldier who was stretched on the ground beside him, saying, “thy necessity, is greater than mine”. These were his last words. He was famous for his beauty, courage, wit, learning and noble character.

3) Edmund Spenser 1552—1599)

- (1) General introduction: he was called the “poet’s poet” Spenser was the greatest non-dramatic poet of the Elizabethan Age, and the first master of English verse. Chaucer is his master. When he died “for want of bread”, he was buried beside Chaucer in Westminster Abbey. He was a friend of Sidney.
- (2) Works:
- a. *The Shepherd’s Calendar* (1579) : new & rich in meter & stanza.
 - b. *The Amoretti*: (the second Sonnet Sequence): rhymed in a way he invented : abab bcba cdcd ee. His sonnets are easy-flowing and musical in the English language.
 - (3) *Faerie Queene*: his masterpiece, the first appeared 1591
 - a. purpose: to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.
 - b. design: The “Faerie Queen” (signifying Queen Elizabeth I) holds a feast of 12 days, and on each day a stranger in distress appears, claiming help against a dragon or giant or tyrant. A knight is assigned to each guest, and the 12 books were to describe the 12 adventures. Further, each knight represents a virtue, as Holiness, temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice and Courtesy; and his warfare represents the strife against a contrary, as Pride or Despair. So the long poem is a continued allegory. The knights as a whole symbolize England, and the evil figures stand for her enemies.
 - c. The dominating thoughts are nationalism, humanism and Puritanism.
 - d. Spenserian Stanza: the poem is written in a nine-line stanza which Spenser invented, the first eight are iambic (iamb: a unit of rhythm, in poetry, that has one short or weak beat followed by a long or strong beat, as in the “alive”) Pentameter (a common pattern of beats in English poetry, in which each line consists of five iambs) lines, and the ninth line has two more syllables, rhyming ababbcbcc

3. Elizabethan Drama: is the highest glory of the English Renaissance.

- 1) **Christopher Marlowe** (1564-1593): The most gifted of the “university wits”. He was the greatest predecessor of Shakespeare and the greatest pioneer of English drama.
- (1) Works:

- a. *Tamburlaine* (1587): It is about the career of Tamburlaine the Mongol conqueror. Tamburlaine was a shepherd who finally became a Khan.
- b. *The Jew of Malta* (1592) : about the passion (greed) for wealth.
- c. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588): the insatiable thirst for knowledge.

(2) Marlowe's literary achievement:

- a. He first made blank verse the principal instrument of English drama.
- b. He created the Renaissance hero for English drama---the hero full of vitality and passion.
- c. His works paved the way for the plays of the greatest English dramatist---Shakespeare.

2) Ben Jonson (1562—1637)

(1) Life: The most well-known of the many contemporaries and successors of

Shakespeare. The greatest comedy writer after Shakespeare.

(2) Works:

- a. *Every Man in His Humor* (1598): telling the story of a jealous husband, a credulous young wife and a boasting coward soldier, gives us an excellent study of "humors" (temperaments or dispositions)

Humors: According to the theory of which, Jonson's plays were written. A humor, according to the physiology and the psychology of the time, was one of the liquid constituents of the body, each of which has its peculiar emotional propensity. Every character in Jonson's comedies personifies a definite humor, so his characters are like caricatures. (determines his thoughts, behavior, matter of speech)

- b. *The Alchemist* (1610): is a satire on alchemy or on swindlers. It makes a mockery of both tricksters and dupes.
- c. *Volpone* (1606) is a miser, greedy for money for its own sake, who was punished at last.

(3) Others: Jonson was also known as a poet and critic. He insisted on careful study of the Old Greek and Roman masters. He was a forerunner of classicism in English literature. During his time, English drama was declining.

3) William Shakespeare (1564—1616)

(1) Shakespeare the person: "a handsome, well-shaped man, very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit."

(2) Shakespeare's dramatic career

A. The experimental period (1590-1594)

This is a period marked by youthfulness and rich imagination, by extravagance of language. During this period of time, he looked upon the world as a just one. Good always overcomes evil in the long run, and justice would eventually win its cause in the end. Love, faith, work, and duty were the four elements that in all ages made the world right.

Romeo and Juliet: a play of youth and love, which combines a tragic situation with comedy and gaiety.

Henry IV : The image of Sir John Falstaff: he is one of the most brilliant creations in Shakespeare's plays. He is a very complicated character. By origin he is a feudal knight. But now he has lost his estates and became an adventurer and parasite. Falstaff is fat old, ugly, gross and guilty of many sins. There is much fun in his torrents of lies and boasts. Lies sprout out of him like mushrooms on a rich and rotten bed of earth. He says he has fought alone against two men. The next moment it is four. Presently we have seven, then eleven, then fourteen, or he would soon be talking of a whole army if he was not stopped in time. When unmasked, he does not lose his temper, and is the first to laugh at his own boasting. Falstaff is selfish, treacherous and cynical. He does not hesitate in the least to seek profit whenever there is a chance.

His soliloquy about his philosophy of honor is well-known:

"Can honor set to a leg? No: or an arm? No; or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honor hath no skill in surgery, then? No. What is honor? A word. What is that word, honor? Air. A trim reckoning who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? No. doth he hear it? No. It is insensible, then? Yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? No. Why? Detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll have none of it; honor is a mere scutcheon(标牌); and so ends my catechism" (part I, V.1)

B. The second period: the period of comedies and histories (1595- 1600)

a. Feature: in this period, Shakespeare was no longer an apprentice to his art. He worked as a master in full command of his medium. It was a period of rapid growth and development of his artistic powers, and his wit was at its best. His keen insight into human nature, his power of expression, his genius for constructing a play insured a delighted audience for whatever he might choose to present.

b. Main works:

a) best history plays:

Richard II

Henry IV (Falstaff)

Henry V

b) Comedies:

A Midsummer Night's Dream

The Merchant of Venice

Much Ado about Nothing

As you like it

Twelfth Night

Julius Caesar

c) a world-famous character : Falstaff

C. The third period: (1601—1607)

a. Feature: The third period is one of gloom and depression combined with masterly workmanship. The sunshine and laughter of the second period has

turned into clouds and storms. There are scenes of murder, lust, treachery, ingratitude and crime. During this period, Shakespeare's belief and trust in mankind had been shattered.

b. Works:

a) Great tragedies:

Hamlet
Othello
King Lear
Macbeth

b) Comedies

All is well that ends well
Measure for Measure

c. Hamlet:

- a) Hamlet is a humanist, a man who is free from medieval prejudices and superstitions. He has an unbounded love for the world instead of the heaven. He cherishes a profound reverence for man, and a firm belief in man's power and destiny.
- b) starting from his humanist love of man, he turned to those around him with the same eagerness. He loves good and hates evil. He cared for nothing but human worth and shows a contempt for rank and wealth. A king and a beggar are all one to him.
- c) His intellectual genius is outstanding. He is a close observer of men and manners. He easily sees through people. His quick perception drives him to penetrate below the surface of things and question what others take for granted. He is not a mere scholar and his nature is by no means simply meditative. On the contrary, Hamlet is a man genius highly accomplished, and educated, a man of far-reaching perception and sparkling wit. He is a scholar, soldier and statesman. His image reflects the versatility of the man of the Renaissance. He does not merely seek personal revenge but expose the roots of the evil and establish a reign of justice.

d. Iago:

A cynical hater of other people's happiness, who crushes everything that is great and noble, is an artistic generalization of envy, selfishness, utter depravity and hypocrisy.

D. The fourth period (the period of dramatic romances 1608-1602)

This period includes is plays of unrealistic compromises and fantasy. It is a period of restored serenity and tolerant resignation. He no longer hated the world but accepted with a smile of resignation. His latest plays have happy endings, but the mirth of the early romantic comedies is no more. However, he finds life once more worth living, and the world beautiful, enchanting, and fantastically attractive.

(3) Shakespeare's achievement as a great playwright:

- a. The progressive significance of his themes
- b. His successful character portrayal.

- c. His masterhand in constructing plays.
- d. the ingenuity of his poetry.
- e. His mastery of English language.

Summary: He was not of an age, but for all time. (universality)

4) Francis Bacon (1561—1626)

- (1) The founder of English materialist philosophy, the first English essayist, the founder of modern science in England.
- (2) **Difference between the writing style of the two.** The language of Shakespeare is the natural flow of water. Sometimes it babbles from rocks to rocks, as if murmuring. Sometimes it lies quietly with ripples on its glassy bosom. Sometimes it is like a cataract, running and jumping down from a mountain precipice. It touches all the range of subjects and all the depth of human emotion. While Bacon's language is neat, prest, and weighty. It is somewhat affected, like the water in the reservoir, restricted and confined.

5) Summary,

The literature of the Elizabethan Age is regarded as the most creative in the history of English literature. It was marked by a strong national spirit, by patriotism, by humanism, by religious tolerance, by social content, by intellectual progress, and by unbounded enthusiasm, occasionally by melancholy.

It is essentially an age of poetry and remarkable for its variety, its freshness, its youthful enthusiasm and romantic feeling.

Part IV: The seventeenth century (1603—1688)

(The Period of Revolution and Restoration)

1. The Puritan Revolution (1640—1660)

Due to the breaking up of old ideals, the breaking up of accepted standards in government and religion, the impossible loves and romances perished, and literature of this period is gloomy. It saddens rather than inspires; it has lost the romantic impulse of youth and become critical and intellectual.

2 . The Restoration Literature(1660-1688)

The literature of this age is often witty and clever, but on the whole immoral and cynical. It aims to entertain rather than to enlighten.

3. Metaphysical school:

It is a name given to John Donne and his followers. The poets of this school were mainly active at the beginning of the 17th century. Their works are characterized by mysticism and use of conceit, (奇思妙想). The poets of this group are mainly: John Donne (1573—1631); George Herbert (1621—1633); Andrew Marvell (1621—1678).

4. The Cavalier Poets ; (骑士诗人)

The other group prevailing in this period was that of Cavalier poets . they were often courtiers who stood on the side of the king. They wrote light poetry, polished

and elegant, amorous and gay, but superficial. Under their light heartedness existed some foreboding of doom. The dealt with the fleeting joy of day. Pessimism is their dominant spirit. John sucking (1609—1642) Richard Lovelace (1618—1658)

6. John Donne (1572—1631)

1) Works :

Songs and Sonnets---- youthful love lyrics

Devotion upon Emergent(紧急的, 突然发生的) *Occasions*

- 2) Features: He was the first to rebel against the conventional romantic, the fashion for the pastoral and the allegory. He sees into the world as deeply as the philosopher. His poetry has arresting and original images and conceits, wit, ingenuity(机灵, 独创性) , dexterous use of colloquial speech, considerable flexibility of rhythm and meter, complex themes, and caustic(讽刺) humor. He put an end to Elizabethans' exquisite compliments with " For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love." In his poetry, one never encounters bleeding hearts, cheeks like roses, lips like cherries, teeth like pearls, or Cupid shooting the arrow of love.

7. John Milton (1608—1674)

- 1) life : The greatest English poet after Shakespeare. He was born in a Puritan family. He was well educated and he was said to be the finest scholar in the university. He was dissatisfied with the subjects and methods of study at the college, the result of which was "to make you a more finished fool." He defined the true aim of knowledge as making the spirit of man "reach out far and wide, until it fills the whole world and the space far beyond with the expansion of its divine greatness"

2) *Paradise Lost*

- (1) The story: taken from the Old Testament.
- (2) Theme: the main idea of the poem is a revolt against God's authority.
- (3) Characterization:
 - God: is no better than a selfish despot. His long speeches are never pleasing. He is cruel and unjust in his struggle against Satan. His Archangel is a bore. His angels are silly.
 - Satan: though defeated in rebelling against God, he is by far the most striking character in the poem. The real hero of the poem.
 - Adam and Eve: Embody Milton's belief in the powers of man. Their longing for knowledge opens before mankind a wide road to an intelligent and active life.

3) Features of Milton's poetry"

- (1) The two most essential points to be remembered about him are his Puritanism and hi republicanism.
- (2) He is a master of the blank verse(无韵诗). He first used blank verse in non-dramatic works.
- (3) Milton is a great stylist, famous for his grand style.
- (4) He has always been admired for his sublimity of thought and majesty of expression.

8. John Bunyan:

- 1) Life: Bunyan was a son of a poor tinker. After the Restoration, he was put into prison. He had a sensitive imagination.
- 2) *The Pilgrim's Progress*
 - (1) It is a religious allegory, which tells the spiritual pilgrimage of a Christian, who, after experienced many perils and temptations, at last comes to the heaven.
 - (2) Character : Christian, Faithful, Hopeful, Hate-good, Envy, Superstition, Mr Badman.
 - (3) Theme: It warns that a Christian in search of salvation will meet many difficulties---that is to say, various kinds of temptation and trials. Only by steadfastness and faithfulness can he win the way to heaven. Christian can be any man who struggles through life searching for goodness.
 - (4) Style: simple and dignified.

9. John Dryden: (1631---1700)

- 1) Life: a poet, playwright, critic, poet laureate
- 2) Works:
 - All for Love*—blank verse tragedy, masterpiece
 - An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*--- a critic article
- 3) Contribution:
 - (1) He established heroic couplet as one of the principle verses
 - (2) He revised English criticism to a new level and became the forerunner of English classicism school.

Part V: The Eighteen Century (1688-1784) (1798)

Chapter 1: The Enlightenment

1. In Europe: On the whole, it is an expression of struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudalism. The enlighteners fought against class inequality, stagnation, prejudices and other survivals of feudalism. It is an intellectual movement. The enlightenment was so called because it considered the chief means for the betterment of the society was the “enlightenment” or “education” of the people. In other words they believed in the power of reason and their watchword (标语, 口号) was “common sense”. The reasoning intellect was applied to everything as the sole measure.

2. Enlightenment in England.

English enlighteners differed in some way from those of France. While the philosophers and writers of France “cleared” the minds of men for the coming revolution, the English enlighteners set no revolutionary aims before them. England had gone through its bourgeois revolution in the 17th century. So English enlighteners of the 18th century strove to bring it to an end by clearing away the feudal ideas with the bourgeois ideology. The representatives are Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Alexander Pope. In their works, these writers

criticized different aspects of contemporary England, discussed social problems, and even touched upon morality and private life. They intended to reform social life according to a more reasonable principle. The 18th century in England has also been called “The Age of reason”

Chapter 2: Classicism.

1. **Introduction:** In late 17th and early century England, there was a change of taste. The intricacy, obscurity, boldness and the extravagance of the literature of late Renaissance were reacted and simplicity, clarity, restraint, regularity and good taste were favored.

The classicists modeled themselves on Greek and Latin authors, and tried to control literary creation by some fixed laws and rules drawn from Greek and Latin works.

For drama: rimed couplet (双行诗句, 对句, 两行同音节而压韵的诗句) instead of blank verse, the three unities of time, place and action, regularity in construction, an the presentation of types rather than individuals.

For Poetry: should be lyric, epic, didactic, satiric or dramatic, each class should be guided by some peculiar principles.

For prose: should be precise, direct, and flexible. In England, classicism was initiated by Dryden, culminated in Pope and continued by Johnson.

2. Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

- 1) Life: the most important English poet in the first half of the 18th century. From the time he was very young, he was weak and deformed. And he lived a life of solitude. He received little school education but he read and studied furiously.
- 2) Works: *Essay on Criticism* : It tells the poets and critics to write and appreciate poetry according to the principles by the old Greek and roman writers. Many lines have become proverbs:

“ for fools rush in where angels fear to tread

“To err is human, to forgive, divine.

“ A little learning is a dangerous thing.

The Rape of the Lock 1714

Essay on Man 1732—1734

- 3) Achievements: Pope was an outstanding enlightener and the greatest English poet of the classical school in the first half of the 18th century. His poems are filled with maxim (格言) and instruction. He is a perfect master of heroic couplet.

3. Johnson (1709—1784)

- 1) Life: Samuel Johnson was a poet, critic and lexicographer. In 1764 he founded the famous Literary club, which included many famous figures of the time. At the gatherings of the club, Johnson’s conversational gifts were fully shown and he gave his verdicts on literature through his talks.
- 2) Works: *The Lives of Great Poets* ----critic, essayist
The Vanity of Human Wishes ---- satire, poet
London -----poetic satires
The Dictionary of English Language ---as a lexicographer

Rasselas --- Satirical novel

4. Periodical literature.

1) Richard Steel (1672—1729) and *The Tattler*

- (1) Life: he was impulsive and affectionate.
- (2) In 1709, he started a paper, *The Tattler*, to enlighten, as well as to entertain

2) Joseph Addison (1672—1719)

- (1) Life: He was cold and reserved.
- (2) *The Spectator* (1711—12). Collaborated with Steele, a daily paper, “to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality,” “to make instruction agreeable, and diversion useful”

3) Their contribution to the literature.

- (1) Their writings afford a new code of social morality
- (2) They gave a true picture of the social life of England in 18th century
- (3) In their hands, the English Essay had completely established itself as a literary genre.

5. Jonathan Swift (1667—1745)

- 1) Life: he was born in Dublin, Ireland, very poor, bitter life.
- 2) Works : *A Modest Proposal*
Gulliver's Travels ---allegory
The Battle of Books
A Tale of a Tub
The Drapper's Letters
- 3) Style :
 - (1) simple, clear, vigorous
 - (2) use of satire and irony. He was an outstanding satirist; his works represent the summit of satire literature.

6. The Rise of English novel.

The modern European novel began after the Renaissance, with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605—1615). The rise and growth of the realistic novel is the most prominent achievement of 18th century English literature. Defoe, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, Smollet, Sterne.

7. Daniel Defoe (1661—1731)

- 1) life: he made the most important advances toward the novel.
- 2) works: *Robinson Crusoe* , *Moll Flanders*

3) *Robinson Crusoe*:

- (1) Character: the author described the man of his capacity for work, his boundless energy and persistence in overcoming difficulties. He struggles hard against the nature and makes nature serve him. In describing Robinson's life on the Island, the author glorifies human labor. Robinson is a representative of English bourgeoisie at the early stage of development. He's the most practical and enact(精打细算) always religious and mindful of his own profit.
- (2) Theme: the praise of human labor
- (3) The Style: easy, plain use of authentic details

8. Samuel Richardson (1689---1761)

- 1) Life: a story-teller, letter-writer and a moralizer
- 2) Works: *Pamela, or virtue Rewarded*, *Clarissa*
- 3) Significance of Pamela:
 - (1) It provides not only entertainment but also moral instruction
 - (2) It describes the life and love of the ordinary people
 - (3) It describes not only the sayings and doings of the characters, but also their thoughts and feelings.

9. Henry Fielding (1707—1754)

- 1) Life: Both a novelist and playwright. The father of English novel.
- 2) Works: *Tom Jones*, *Joseph Andrews* *Amelia*
- 3) *Tom Jones* 1749
 - (1) plot: the myth of tom's birth.
 - (2) Tom Jones: a handsome young man, frank, open, kind but quick tempered. His outstanding quality is goodness of heart. He is always mindful of the misery or happiness of other people. Though good-hearted, he's far from being a model character. He lives by impulse not by reason.
- 4) Features of Fielding's novel.
 - (1) realism
 - (2) satire
 - (3) educational function of the novel
- 5) style: easy, vivid, and vigorous

10. Tobias Smollett (1721—1771)

- 1) Life: He was “ of gentle birth and narrow means.” His father died when he was young. He was poor all his life.
- 2) Works: *Roderick Random*--- a coarse, brutal and picaresque work.
Humphry Clinker---- best and pleasanter. Laughable. One of the three greatest masterpieces of English fiction , the other two are “ Clarissa”, “ Tom Jones”

11. Laurence Sterne (1713—1768)

- 1) Life: a novelist of sentimental school. Born in Ireland.
- 2) Works: *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*
A Sentimental Journey
- 3) Features of his works, especially *Shandy*
The novel is full of digressions. It seems that Sterne tried to catch the actual flow of human mind and sentiment in ordinary life, in the manner of a modern “ stream-of-consciousness” novelists. So he is now considered to be the true father of the postmodernist novel. He described the inner life of his characters, their tears and laughter, griefs and joys.

12. Sentimentalism.

By the middle of the 18th century, sentimentalism came into being. The representatives of the sentimentalism realized the contradictions in the development of capitalism. They were dissatisfied with reason but appealed to sentiment. They

turned to the countryside for materials and showed sympathy for the poor peasants. The sentimentalism marks midway in transition from classicism to romanticism. Thomas Grey, Goldsmith, Sterne.

13. Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751---1816)

- 1) Life: the most important English playwright of the 18th century. Born in Dublin. “ A man may surely be allowed to take a glass of wine by his own fireside.”
- 2) Works: *The Rivals* --- comedy
The Critic
The School for Scandal ---masterpiece, tells the story of upper class, comedy of manners, best English comedy since Shakespeare.

14. Oliver Goldsmith (1728---1774)

- 1) Life: born in Ireland. Full of imagination, poor, amiable but unpractical.
- 2) Works:
 - (1) poems : *The Traveler* (1764) “The Deserted village” (1770)
 - (2) novel: *The Vicar of Wakefield* --- masterpiece.
 - (3) Comedies: *The Good-natured Man*--- a comedy of character
She Stoops to Conquer---a comedy of manners
 - (4) collection of essays: *The Citizen of the World*

15. Edward Gibbon (1737—1794)

- 1) Life: Most eminent historian of 18th century England.
- 2) *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776)
13 centuries of the history of the Roman Empire. Greatest historical working English literature.

16. Pre-Romanticism in Poetry.

In the latter half of the 18th century, a new literary movement arose in Europe called romantic revival. It was marked by a strong protest against classicism by a claim of passion and emotion and by a new interest in medieval literature. In England this movement was showing the trend of pre-romanticism in poetry which was started by Percy, Macphesson represented by Blake and Burns.

17. Blake (1757---1827) William Blake

- 1) Life: a poet and engraver. He showed sympathy for French Revolution. He never went to school
- 2) Works:
Songs of Innocence 1789 full of hope, love, peace
Songs of Experience (1794) full of misery, evil
The French Revolution (1791)
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
- 3) Features:
 - (1). Mystical
 - (2). Use of symbolism
 - (3) strong romantic spirit

18. Robert Burns (1759—1796)

- 1) Life: Born in Scotland, Sympathetic for French Revolution.

- 2) Themes:
 - (1) The common feelings of working people
 - (2) Love and friendship :
A Red, Red Rose

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run"
 - (3) patriotism: Let us do—or Die (sentence)
 - (4) Revolution
- 3) Features of his poems:
 - (1) he is chiefly remembered for his songs written in the Scottish dialect.
 - (2) His poems are usually devoid of artificial ornament and have a great charm of simplicity.
 - (3) His poems are especially appreciated for musical effect.
 - (4) His political and satirical poems are noted for his passionate love for freedom.
- 4) Works:
 - (1) *The Tree of Liberty* --- French revolution
 - (2) *Scots Wha Hae*--- patriotism
 - (3) *The Cotter's Saturday Night*---respect for honest poverty
 - (4) *The Two Dogs*
 - (5) *Holy Willie's Prayer*----Satire on religious hypocrisy.

Part VI. The Age of Romanticism (1798—1832)

(*Lyrical Ballads*—Wordsworth& Coleridge)

Chapter 1: Romanticism in England.

1. Political and social background.

- 1) The French Revolution “liberty, equality, fraternity” influence
- 2) The Industrial Revolution agriculture ---industry

2. Two kinds of classifications:

- 1) Three groups:
 - a. The Lake School: Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey
 - b. The Cockney School: Hunt, Hazlitt, Keats
 - c. The Satanic School: Byron, Shelley, and their followers
- 2) Two groups :
 - a. The Passive Romantic school: the same as 1) a
 - b. The Active romantic School : Byron, Shelley, Keats

3. Special Qualities of Romanticism:

- 1) The spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings
- 2) The creation of a world of imagination
- 3) The return to Nature for material

Chapter 3: The Younger Generation of romantics

1. George Gordon Byron (1788—1824)

- 1) Life: rebellious against English convention school, traveled & adventured
- 2) Poetic works: *When We Two Parted*
- 3) Features of his poems:
 - (1) Byron's poetry was distinguished for the novelty of his subject matter, the exotic quality of his descriptions of oriental scenery.
 - (2) Intermingled with innumerable digressions which express his opinions on different political, social and cultural problems
 - (3) Magnificent descriptions of natural scenery and exquisite lyrics of love and despair, loose, fluent, vivid

2. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792—1822)

- 1) Life: one of the supreme geniuses of English literature. “ The poet's poet”. A man of highest idealism, also of enormous intellectual breadth. Both a poet and critic. His life was characterized by love for freedom, rebellion, pretest against social convention.

Works: Queen Mab 1813
Revolt of Islam 1818
The Cenci 1819
Prometheus Unbound
Ode to the West Wind 1819
To a Skylark 1820
The Cloud
A Defense of Poetry

Two distinct Moods of his poetry

- (1) In one he is the violent reformer, seeking the overthrow of conventional institutions.
- (2) In a different mood, Shelley is like a wanderer, following a vague, beautiful vision, forever sad and forever unsatisfied, always purchasing a ideal

3. John Keats (1795---1821)

- 1) Life: a composer of poetry of wonderful genius, mastery of form and depth of feeling
- 2) Works: *Ode On a Grecian Urn*
to a Nightingale
Ode to Autumn
To Psyche-----four odes
On First Looking in Chapman's Homer
On the Grasshopper and the Cricket---two sonnets
- 3) Features:
 - (1) In his poems, Keats creates a beautiful world of imagination “ truth is beauty; beauty is truth”
 - (2) Strong musical quality

- (3) Colorful images
- (4) Use of Greek allusion

Chapter 4: Non- poetic Literature of the Age

1. Charles Lamb (1775—1834)

- 1) Life: brilliant essayists, led a miserable life, also a critic
- 2) Works: *Tales From Shakespeare* ---first literary success
The Essays of Elia----collection of essays
- 3) Features: He was the romanticist of the city; his imagination was fired with the busy life of London.
Intimate and personal, recollection, humor, archaism (use of old words).

2. William Hazlitt (1778—1830)

- 1) Life: one of the leading critics of his day.
- 2) Works: *Characters of Shakespeare's Play* 1817
Lectures on the English Poets 1818
The Spirit of the Age 1825 (best)
A View of the English Stage -----critical works
- 3) features: graphic, terse(brief), energetic

3. Leigh Hunt (1784—1859)

- 1) Life: English essayist, critic and poet, journalist
The editor of “the Examiner” with his brother
- 2) Works: *The Story of Rimini* (1816)---poem
Imagination and Fancy (1844) ---literary criticism
A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla (1848)--- an essay
Autobiography (1850)

4. Thomas De Quincey (1785—1859)

- 1) Life: essayist, critic
- 2) Works: *The Confession of an English Opium-Eater* 1821—prose work
On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth 1823---critical work

Chapter 5: Novel

1. Jane Austen (1775—1818)

- 1) Life: one of the most important pioneers in the English realistic novel. She brought the English novels, as an art form, to its maturity. In her novels, one can find the rationalism of classicism, the vitality of romanticism, and the truthfully detailed description of realism.

Works: *Sense and Sensibility* *Mansfield Park*
Pride and Prejudice *Emma*
Northanger Abbey *Persuasion*

- 2) Features:
 - (1) Her novels describe a narrow range of society & events
 - (2) Her subject is also limited for most of her novels deal with the subject of getting married.
 - (3) Her interest was but in human nature.

- (4) She focused on the trivial and petty details of everyday living
- (5) Austen is much gifted in character portrayal, especially in drawing young girls.
- (6) Austen's novels are brightened by their witty conversation and omnipresent humor; her plots never leave the path of realism.
- (7) Her language shines with gracefulness, elegant & refined.

2. Sir Walter Scott (1771—1832)

- 1) Life: A Scottish novelist. He was a poet, but mainly he was a novelist of history. (historical novels)
- 2) Works:
 - Waveley* 1814 *Guy Mannering* 1815
 - Old Morality* 1816 *Rob Roy* 1817
 - The Heart of Midlothian* 1818-----on the history of Scotland
 - Ivanhoe* 1819 ----on the history of England (English history)
 - Quentin Durward St. Roman's Wells* 1824 -----history of European countries
- 3) Features :
 - (1) His novels combine historical fact with romantic imagination
 - (2) Historical events are closely connected with the facts of individuals
 - (3) He's not only concerned with the lives and deals of kings, but also with the fates of ordinary people.
 - (4) Beside romantic imaginations, he also relies on careful studies into the details of historical life.
 - (5) He's the founder of historical novels

Part VII: The Victorian Age (1832---1901)

Chapter 1: Chief Literary Characteristics of the Age

- 1. **An age of realistic prose**, especially novel. It is an age realism rather than of romanticism---a realism which strives to tell the whole truth showing moral and physical diseases as they are. To be true to life becomes the first requirement for literary writing. As the mirror of truth, literature has come very close to daily life, reflecting its practical **problems and interests and is used as a powerful instrument of human progress.**
- 2. **Moral purpose:** it departs from purely artistic standard, and is activated by a definite moral purpose. The novelists all wrote with a definite purpose to sweep away error and to reveal the underlying truth of human life. They told a story which depicted human life but at the same time issued a call for the work of social reform, or drove home a moral lesson. Yet, towards the end of the century , this enthusiasm for moral teaching was replaced by aesthetic tendency to seek beauty for its own sake.
- 3. **Optimism Vs Pessimism.**
Owing to a sense of satisfaction in the industrial and political preeminence of England during this period, Victorian writers shared a general optimistic outlook on the world, taking Browning's poetry as an example.

On the other hand, because of the development of technology and biological science, they suffer from a sense of something lost, a sense of being replaced by machines, and a feeling of nothingness in evolution. Therefore, the Victorian Age is also called an age of doubt and pessimism. Hardy's novels and Arnold's poetry.

Chapter 2: Victorian Novel

1. Critical Realism

The Victorian novelists are also called critical realists, for in addition to describing life, they were also critics of the society in which they lived. They exposed severely and truthfully the social evils and injustice of their time. It flourished in the forties and fifties. They not only gave a satirical portrayal of the bourgeoisie and all the ruling classes, but also showed deep sympathy for the common people. They revealed the corrupting influence of the money on human nature.

2. Charles Dickens (1812—1870)

1) Life: he's the greatest critical realist. When he was young, he was leading a humble and humiliating life.

2) Distinct features of his novels:

- (1) He was good at drawing vivid caricatural sketches by exaggerating some peculiarities, he can with a phrase make a character as real as flesh and blood.
- (2) Broad humor and penetrating satire
- (3) Complicated and fascinating plot. Minor plots beside the major one, or two parallel major plots within one novel. The happy ending. The good, who may suffer much as the story goes, are usually rewarded, and the bad, though getting the upper hand, will receive their just punishment.
- (4) The power of exposure.

3) Works : *David Copperfield* (1849—50) *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *Bleak House* (1852—53) *Great Expectations* (1860—61) *Hard times* (1854) *Oliver Twist* (1837—38) *Dombey and Son* (1846—48) *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840—41)

3. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811—1863)

- 1) Life: One of the chief representatives of English critical realism
- 2) Works: *Vanity Fair* ----masterpiece “ a novel without a hero”

The Snobs of England

The History of Henry Edmond----historical

- 3) Features: portrayed the upper half of the society whose parasites, snobbery, greed, cruelty were the theme. His satire was bitter and biting. He is good at describing his characters by making them react authentically to their circumstances.

4. Charlotte Bronte (1816—1855)

- 1) Life: from a poor family.
- 2) Works: *Jane Eyre* 1847----fictional autobiography.

The Novel brings up the question of women's independence and the equality between men and women through the life experience of the heroine.

5. Emily Bronte (1818—1848)

- 1) *Wuthering Heights*: A story of love and revenge
- 2) Characters: Heathcliff, Catherine, Nelly.

6. George Eliot (1819—1880)

- 1) Life: a novelist and philosopher, psychological realism
- 2) Works: *Adam Bede* 1859
The Mill on the Floss 1860
Middlemarch finest novel
- 3) Features:
 - (1) Psychological realism
 - (2) As a realist, she reproduced scenes and characters in real life as she had observed them.
 - (3) As a psychologist, George Eliot sought to represent the inner struggle of the soul and to reveal the motives, impulses and hereditary influences.
 - (4) As a moralist, she shows in each of her characters the action and reaction of universal forces and believes that every evil act must bring inevitable punishment to the man who does it.

7. Thomas Hardy (1840—1928)

- 1) Life: a poet, novelist. (outstanding)
- 2) Works: *Far from the Madding Crowd* 1874
The Return of the Native 1878
The Mayor of Casterbridge 1886
Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891)
Jude the Obscure (1895)
- 3) Features :
 - (1) Hardy's language has the simplicity, and symbolism is an important feature.
 - (2) The cause of tragedy is not man's own behavior or his own fault but the supernatural forces that rule his fate.
 - (3) Hardy is a transitional figure between the Victorian Age and the 20th century.

Chapter 3: Nonfictional prose.

1. General features:

- (1) a wide range of subjects
- (2) social problems were the chief concern
- (3) prose became an instrument of persuasion

2. Thomas Carlyle (1795—1881)

- 1) Life: born in a Scottish family
- 2) Works: *Life of Schiller*

The French Revolution (Blake also wrote in this name)

3) *On Heroes and Hero-worship*

- (1) the hero as divinity (Mohammed)
- (2) the hero as poet (Shakespeare)
- (3) the hero as priest or religious leader; Luther
- (4) The hero as man of letters ---Burns
- (5) The hero as king: Cromwell, Napoleon.

3. John Ruskin (1819—1900)

- 1) life: both the leading Victorian critic of art and an important critic of society concerned with the relationship between art and society & morality.
- 2) works: *Modern Painters* ---greatest work of art criticism.

Chapter 4: Victorian poetry:

1. General situation:

- 1) The poets in Victorian Age were influenced by romantic poetry. They were called the third generation of Romantics.
- 2) The poets shared their concern for social and spiritual problems.
- 3) The poetry is no longer regular in form and meter

2. Tennyson : (Alfred Lord Tennyson 1809—1892)

- 1) Life: the most popular poet of the age, a poet laureate. One of “ The Big Three” (The other two are Arnold and Browning) the Poet of people
- 2) Works: *In Memoriam*---series of elegies
It embodied the poet’s reflections on man’s relation to god and to nature, and recalled his feeling related to the death of his friend. This song cycle contains 131 lyrics. As a whole, this poetic diary is rather a representative of the poet’s thoughts on the problems of life, death and immortality.
- 3) Features : The caressing music of melody and accurate facility in the metrical translation of feelings, the freshness and youthfulness of spirit and astonishing originality and vigor.

3. Robert Browning (1812—1889)

- 1) Life: he created a special : “Dramatic Monologue” He is noted for his optimism and praised as a “ gallant, courageous and high-hearted figure.” He “hacked through a trail that has subsequently become the main road of 20th century poetry, the forerunner of 20th century literature.
- 2) Works: *The Ring and The Book* ---longest and greatest 20,000 lines
Dramatic Lyrics (1842) *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845)
Men and Women 1855, *Dramatic Personae* (1864)

4. Matthew Arnold (1822—1888)

- 1) Life: a poet, critic, and educationalist
- 2) Works: *Dover Beach* 1867 ---much quoted short lyric
The Scholar Gypsy 1853---based on an old legend
Thyris 1860--- an elegy on the death of a poet.
- 3) Features: Arnold’s poetry is elevated and meditative, with a tone of regret, disillusionment, and melancholy. As a poet, he usually records his own

experiences, his own feelings of loneliness and isolation, his longing for an unattainable serenity. He provides an example of “a sick individual in a sick society.” He describes himself as “wandering between two worlds, one dead/The other powerless to be born. Moral values of poetry

- 4) Critical works: *Essays in Criticism* ---literary criticism
Culture and Anarchy---social criticism 1869
St, Paul and Protestantism 1870---religious criticism

5. Pre-Raphaelitism: means before Raphael, an Italian painter(1483—1520), advocating a return to the techniques of the primitives, opposing conventionalism in painting and writing, and emphasized true-to-nature depiction through the use of minute pictorial detail and symbolism. The essence of the movement was opposition of technical skill without inspiration. The Pre-Raphaelitism poets used their poetry as a dream world of refuge from social struggle, which paved the way for aesthetic Movement.

6. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828—1882)

- 1) Life: one of “the small three” (the other two are: William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne), a poet and painter, the leader of Pre-Raphaelitism.
- 2) Works: *The Blessed Damozel* (1850)---best known poem
The House of Life 1881—his masterpiece
- 3) Features: He paid great attention to beauty of diction, beauty of rhythm, and beauty of imagery.

7. William Morris (1834—1896)

- 1) life: Not only a poet and artist, but also a designer, manufacturer and socialist, exert influence on Yeats
- 2) works; *The Defence of Guenevere* 1818
Earthly Paradise
News From Nowhere
The Life and Death of Jason 1867

8. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837—1909)

- 1) life: a poet, critic and playwright, foreshadowed “art for art’s sake”
- 2) works: *Poems and Ballads*----lyrics
Essays on Studies--- literary criticism

Chapter 5: The Aesthetism.

1. The features: The basic theory of the Aesthetic movement--- “Art for art’s sake”---was set forth by French poet, Theophile Gautier (1811—72). The first Englishman who wrote about the theory of aesthetes was Walter Pater, with his “Studies in the History of Renaissance” 1873, and *Appreciations*. The chief representative was Oscar Wilde.

Aesthetism places art above life, and holds that life should imitate art, not art imitate life. All artistic creation is absolutely subjective. Art should be free from any influence of egoism; art should be unconcerned with controversial issues. This was one of the reactions against the materialism and commercialism of the

Victorian industrial era, as well as a reaction against the Victorian convention for morality's sake, or art for money's sake.

2. Oscar Wilde (1856---1900)

- 1) Life: a dramatist, poet, novelist, essayist, born in Dublin.
- 2) Works:
 - (1) Fairy Tales: *The Happy Prince and other Tales*
 - (2) Novel: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* 91
 - (3) Comedies: *Lady Windermere's Fan* 1892
A Woman of No Importance 1893
An Ideal Husband 1895
The Importance of being Earnest 1895
- 3) Features: His critical essays presented the view that the beauty of a work of art stems from the perfection of its form and that social and moral considerations are irrelevant to it.
 - (1) Exposure of the upper class, especially its hypocrisy.
 - (2) Full of witty and epigrammatic(警句的, 讽刺的) dialogue

Part VIII: The Twentieth century (1901---)

Chapter I: General introduction

1. Social and political background

- 1) The end of Victorianism; Intellectuals in the early 20th century could only see the drawbacks and weaknesses of their recent past. Faith was lost and pessimism rose.
- 2) The breakup of the British Empire
- 3) The change of women's position

2. **Modernism:** it involved a radical and deliberate break not only with traditional forms of art but with traditional aesthetic principles reaching back to Aristotle that had formed the bedrock(理论等所依据的基本事实及原理) of western culture. The most important period for Modernism was between 1910 and 1925, characterized by such movements as symbolism, imagism, futurism impressionism stream of consciousness, expressionism, abstractism, cubism, surrealism. In the thirties and following the second world war existentialism prevailed in both literature and philosophy. The theatre of the Absurd, and black humor can also be seen as deriving in some way from modernism. The most important poets were William Buttler Yeats and T.S. Eliot. The most important novelists were James Joyce with his “ stream of consciousness” technique and DH Lawrence with his psychological penetration.

Chapter 2: Twentieth century poetry

1. Thomas Hardy (1840—1928): buried in Westminster Abbey

The Dynasts--- a verse drama 1904
Time's Laughing Stocks 1909
Satires of Circumstances 1914

2. The Georgian poets

The second decade of the 20th century is remarkable for the appearance of a large number of minor poets, who are usually known as the Georgians, (including W. H. Davies, Walter De la Mare, John Mansfield, and Robert Graves) mainly because their writings were published during the reign of George V in a series of anthologies called *Georgian Poetry* (1912—1922). They were not interested in the major changes in poetic technique and attitude initiated by Ezra Pound and the Imagists that would ultimately develop into the modernist movement. They expressed traditional themes and used traditional poetic techniques. Their aim is to protect English poetry from the upsetting forces of modern civilization and to make poetry readable once more.

3. The young war poets

Rupert Brooke (1887—1915) killed in the war

Wilfred Owen (1893—1918) killed in the war, best known of

Siegfried Sassoon (1886—1967) survived

4. Chief Traits of Modernist Poetry

- 1) Direct treatment of things
- 2) Has freer metrical movement
- 3) Introduced into poetry a much higher degree of intellectual complexity
- 4) The modernist poets made use of symbolism
- 5) It brought poetic language and rhythm closer to that of conversation by the use of colloquial expressions and even slangs.
- 6) It employed irony and puns
- 7) It was often international and urban in theme

5. William Butler Yeats (1865---1939)

- 1) Life: An Irish poet and dramatist. He participated in the Irish Nationalist Movement actively. He won Nobel prize in 1923
- 2) Abbey Theatre: His writings gave leadership to a cultural movement now known as the Irish Literary Revival. Together with Lady Gregory, and Irish noblewoman and playwright, he founded the Irish National theater in Dublin to encourage writers to write about Irish life, and later it was renamed as Abbey Theatre.
- 3) Literary career:
 - (1) During the early years of Yeats' literary career, he wrote romantic poetry under the influence of Spencer, Shelley.
 - (2) The nineteen tens were Yeats' period of transition. During this period, he departed from the Romanticism and developed into modernism influenced by T. S. Eliot and metaphysical poets.
 - (3) The years between 1919 and 1939 were Yeats' final period of maturity, in the poems of this period, he dealt with the rise and fall of civilization, with internal beauty in the world of art, with the contrast between youth and old age and with love.
 - (4) Works: Altogether, Yeats wrote 11 volumes of poetry, 26 plays, 9

books of prose, 5 autobiographical volumes and 4 volumes of philosophy

His work is itself a history of English poetry between 1890---1939

poetic works: *The Responsibilities* 1914
The Wild Swans at Coole 1919
The Tower 1928
The Winding Stair 1936

6. T.S. Eliot (Thomas Stearns Eliot) 1888—1965

- 1) Life: a poet, playwright, literary critic. Nobel prize in 1948
- 2) Works: *The Wasteland* 1922 *The Four Quartets* 1943
The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock 1915
Murder in the Cathedral *The Sacred Wood* 1920
The Use of Poetry 1933 *On Poetry and Poets* 1957
- 3) *The Waste Land*

A landmark in English poetry, ending the Romantic period and signifying the emergence of modernism. It reveals the disillusionment and pessimism with contemporary society and is remarkable for its originality in form and content/

7. Poets of the Thirties (Red Decade)

The decade of the 1930's saw the great depression and mass unemployment as well as the rise of Hitler and the Shadow of Fascism. Under those circumstances most of the young intellectuals of the time turned to the political left so that the thirties have often been called the "Red Decade". In England there was a group of young left-wing poets who were later known as the " Auden Group" or the "Auden Generation ", who had studied together at Oxford and were united in their protest against social evils and in their rejection of middle class capitalist society. Auden, Spender, Lewis

8. Wystan Hugh Auden (1907—1973)

- 1) Life: The leader and the most active of this group. The first major English poet born in the 20th century.
- 2) Works: *Poems* 1930 *On this Island* 1937
Another Time 1940 *City Without Walls* 1970

9. Dylan Thomas (1914---1953)

- 1) Life: the most important English poet of the 1940's
- 2) Works: *Eighteen Poems* 1934
Twenty-five Poems 1936, *The Map of Love* 1939
Deaths and Entrances 1946
The Portrait of the Artist as a young Dog 1940
- 3) Themes of his poems : birth, death, and love, and their interrelatedness. He is an original poet of great power and beauty.

10. Philip Larkin (1922—1985)

- 1) Life: Educated at Oxford, with a subtle psychological insight, deep feeling, elegance of expression, conventional technical skill, and a penetrating critical perception of his own work, he made a position for himself which

was never seriously challenged by the other poets of the 1950's.

- 2) Works: four volumes of poetry: *The North Ship* 1945
The Less Deceived 1955 *The Witsun Wedding* (1964)
High Windows 1974.

11. Ted Hughes (1930---)

- 1) Life: The most prominent poet of the 1960's, whose poetry was fiercer and more forceful than that of the Movement poets. Poet Laureate (1985)
Married Sylvia Plath 1932—63
- 2) Works: *Hawk in the Rain* 1957 *Lupercal* 1960
Wodwo 1967 *Crow* 1970
- 3) Trait: the description of the savagery of nature and animal life, and he writes about the natural world from the standpoint of one who knows that he is a part of it. His poetry is often rough and harsh, with controlled violence and disjointed meters

Chapter 3: Twentieth—Century Fiction

1. General introduction: The development of 20th century fiction is characterized by two simultaneous but contrary tendencies .the first is modernism. The second is a continuation of the tradition of realism. At the begging of this century: realism the main trend.

1912---1930: the heroic age of modernist novel

1930's and 1950's; Realism

1940's, 1960's, early 1970's: modernism

2. John Galsworthy (1867—1933)

Life: An outstanding successor to the realistic tradition of Dickens and Thackeray. 1932 won Nobel Prize

Works: The Forsyte Saga

3. Arnold Bennett (1867—1931)

Enoch Arnold Bennett (27 May 1867 – 27 March 1931) was an English writer. He is best known as a novelist, but he also worked in other fields such as journalism, propaganda and film.

- *A Man from the North* – 1898
- *The Grand Babylon Hotel* – 1902
- *Anna of the Five Towns* – 1902
- *The Gates of Wrath* – 1903
- *A Great Man* – 1904
- 1911)
- *Tales of the Five Towns* – 1905 (short story collection)
- *Whom God Hath Joined* – 1906
- *The Ghost--a Modern Fantasy* – 1907
- *The Old Wives' Tale* – 1908
- *The Card* – 1911

4. Henry James (1843---1916)

- 1) Life: he wrote 22 novels, 113 short stories and novelettes. More than ten books of literary criticism. He mainly wrote about international theme. He is good at using detailed psychological description and multiple points of view. His method is called psychological realism. Emphasis is laid on how a character feels rather than how he acts, and the conflicts are moved from the outside world to the inner world of the characters. The emphasis of showing rather telling, of dramatizing and removing the author as controlling narrator.
- 2) Works: *Daisy Moller* 1879
Portrait of a Lady 1881
The Ambassador 1903
The Golden Bowl 1904
The Turn of the Screw 1898
The Art of Fiction 1884---literary criticism

5. Joseph Conrad (1857—1924)

- 1) Life: one of the three giants of the modern English novel (the other two are: Lawrence and Joyce)
- 2) Works:
 - (1) *Nigger of the Narcissus* 1897
Typhoon 1903
Youth 1902-----novels of the sea
 - (2) Novels of the jungle: *Lord Jim* 1900
Heart of Darkness 1902

6. H.G.Wells (Herbert George Wells) (1866-1946)

- 1) Life: prolific writer--- novelist, journalist , philosopher, historian, social reformer
- 2) Scientific fantasies: *The Time Machine*
The Invisible Man
The War of the Worlds
The First Man in the Moon
- 3) Realist novels and social satires:
Kipps
The History of Mr. Polly

7. E.M Forster (1829—1970)

- 1) life: A novelist and critic. In his novel, he uses psychological analysis and symbolism. He combined modernism and realism in a single book. The central theme is personal relationships, in other words, true friendships.
- 2) Works: (1) novels
Where Angels Fear to Tread 1905 *Howard's End* 1910
A Passage to India 1914

- (2) short stories: *The Eternal Movement*
- (3) literary criticism: *Aspects of the Novels*

8. D. H. Lawrence (1885---1930)

- 1) life: a native Englishman
- 2) works: *Sons and Lovers* 1913
Oedipus Complex (autobiographical)
The White Peacock *The Rainbow* 1915
Women in Love 1920
Lady Chatterley's Lover 1928
- 3) Features:
 - (1) The major theme of almost all of Lawrence's novels and short stories is human relationship between men and men, men and women, in the modern world where the natural harmony has been destroyed by industry and modern civilization.
 - (2) His style is the fusion of realism and modernism.
 - (3) His language is highly poetic and symbolic.

9. Stream of Consciousness Fiction

- 1) It reveals the action or plot through the mental processes of the characters rather than through the commentary of an omniscient author.
- 2) Character development is achieved through revelation of extremely personal and often typical thought processes rather than through the creation of typical characters in typical circumstances.
- 3) The action of the plot seldom corresponds to real, chronological time, but moves back and forth through present time to memories of past events and dreams of the future.
- 4) It replaces narration, description, and commentary with dramatic interior monologue and free association. Representatives: Proust (1871—1922), Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner

10. James Joyce (1882 年 2 月 2 日—1941 年 1 月 13 日)

James Joyce is considered one of the greatest writers of the 20th century, with works like

- *Dubliners* (short-story collection, 1914)
- *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (novel, 1916)
- *Ulysses* (novel, 1922)
- *Finnegans Wake* (novel, 1939)

11. Virginia Woolf (1882 年 1 月 25 日—1941 年 3 月 28 日)

- 1) life: a novelist and critic. A disciple of Joyce. Unlike Joyce, who dealt with the lower middle class in Dublin, Woolf mainly described the spiritual life of the English upper class.
- 2) Works:
 - (1) traditional:

The Voyage Out 1915

Night and Day 1919

- (4) first attempt at the new style

Jacob's Room 1922

- (5) stream of consciousness technique

Mrs. Dalloway 1925

To the Lighthouse 1927 masterpiece

The Waves 1931

- (6) critical essays:

The Common Reader 1925

The Second Common Reader 1932

- 3) features of her novel

- (1) rejection of realism

- (2) use of stream of consciousness

- (3) elements of story are reduced as far as she could

- (4) there is a series of impressions and reflections

12. Social satires:

Because of the turbulence of 1930's, the young writers of this period began to face the immediate social problems of their time, and tried to truthfully reflect social reality in their novels. For this reason, literary tendency shifted back to realism, particularly in the form of social satire. Representatives are: Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell

13. Aldous Huxley (1894-1963)

- 1) Life: a prolific and versatile writer

- 2) Works: most of his works are "novels of ideas"

- (1) social satires: *Chrome Yellow* 1921

- (2) *Brave New World* 1932 : presents a horrifying picture of a possible future world in which science and technology have run amuck(横冲直撞), unrestrained by any ethical or moral code.

15. George Orwell (1903—1950)

- 1) Life: born in India

- 2) Works : *Homage to Catalonia* 1938 his finest book

Animal Farm 1945, most popular book

Nineteen Eighty-four 1948

16. The Angry Young Men

In the 1950's appeared a group of rebellious writers known as the "Angry Young men" led by Kingsley Amis, they deliberately revolted against the artistic innovations to which writers like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf had devoted their lives. They were hostile to anything "highbrow" which they labeled as "phony" (false), and created a kind of "antihero". The movement died out in the 60's when those young men were no longer angry"

1) Kingsley Amis (1922--)

Lucky Jim, ridiculed hypocritical, self-important intellectuals at

universities

2) John Wain (1925---) *Hurry on Down*

Living in the Present 1955

Strike the Father Dead 1962

A Winter in the Hills 1970

3) John Osborn (1929--) most important playwright among the angry young men

Look Back in Anger

17. William Golding (1911---)

- 1) Life: Instead of criticizing society, he emphasized the “original sin” in human nature which he believed could be controlled by civilization but not eliminated. He turned to allegory and symbolism to express his view of life, his war experience left him with the insight that there was an innate human evil that constantly destroys efforts to make a good world, and this a recurring theme in his novel. In “fable” he asserts that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey must have been blind or wrong in the head.”
- 2) Works: *Lord of the Flies* 1954 : on the surface, the novel is a popular adventure story about a group of English schoolboys isolated on a tropical island by a plane crash, but it is, in fact, quite different from traditional adventure stories or the so-called “desert island myth” deriving from Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. In the book, most of the boys quickly degenerate into savages, and the few that possess sense and knowledge are either killed or hunted, because in such a lonely place, man’s innate evil can no longer be controlled by society.
- 3) He won Nobel prize in 1983

18. Graham Greene (1904—1991)

The Power and the Glory 1940

The Heart of the Matter 1948

19. Short stories: influenced by Maupassant, Anton Chekhov,

1) Katherine Mansfield (1888—1923)

A short story writer, who made short story a legitimate and important genre of 20th century fiction

2) William Somerset Maugham (1872—1965)

Of Human Bondage 1915

The Moon and Sixpence 1919

Cakes and Ale 1930

The Razor’s Edge 1944

His greatest achievement lies in his 150 short stories. Unlike Katherine Mansfield, he attracted readers mainly by his fascinating plot, strange characters, remote settings, and humor and colloquial language. He insisted on the unity of plot with an explicit beginning, middle, and end, as well as climax, conflict, suspense, and surprise. He seldom tried to reveal the inner lives of his characters.

20. Women writers

- 1) **Iris Murdoch** (1919---) Her novels are characterized by wildly imaginary characters, extremely complicated plots, and imaginary characters, extremely complicated plots, and highly suggestive language, with both realistic and symbolic significance.
Under the Net 1954
A Severed Head 1961
The Black Prince 1973
- 2) **Muriel Spark** (1918---) She combines contemporary events with deep moral questioning about the purposes of the individual.
The Comforters 1957
The girls of Slender Means 1963
- 3) **Doris Lessing** (1919---) Born in Persia and grew up in South Africa. *Children of Violence* (1952—69) (a sequence of 5 novels) *Golden Notebook* 1962, most popular. One of the best short story writer
- 4) **Elizabeth Bowen** (1899—1973) The hotel
She use fiction to explore personal isolation and the subtle factors which jeopardize human relationships
English Novelists 1942
Impressions 1950---as a critic and essayist.
Short-story collections:
Friends and Relations 1932
To the North 1932 *The Cat Jumps* 1934
The Death of the Heart 1938
The Heart of the Day 1949

Chapter 4. Twentieth Century Drama

1. Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

- 1) Life: Born in Dublin, almost completely self-educated. In 1884, he joined the newly—formed Fabian Society. He was very much impressed by the Norwegian dramatist Ibsen. He opposed the idea of “art for art’s sake”, maintaining that “the theatre must turn from the drama of romance and sensuality to the drama of edification.” HE sought from the beginning to expose the hypocrisy, stupidity, and conventionality of the English way of life. His heroes and heroines are always unheroic, unromantic, common sense people, and he used them to convey ideas. Nobel prize 1925
- 2) Works: *Widower’s houses* 1892
Mrs. Warren’s Profession 1894
Man and Superman 1903
Major Barbara 1905
Pygmalion 1912
Heartbreak House 1917
Saint Joan 1924

2. Samuel Becket (1906—1989)

- 1) Life: born in Dublin. He began his career by writing novels. It was his first play, *Waiting for Godot* 1952 that won him public recognition. Nobel 1969
- 2) *Waiting for Godot*: a masterpiece of “Theatre of Absurd”. It is a totally unconventional drama without a plot or conflict. In this play, there are only two characters waiting hopelessly in a bleak place for Godot, who keeps promising them to come but never does. Like other theatre of the Absurd plays, it is both despairing and humorous, expressing the absurdity and meaninglessness of human existence in a style that can be well described as “absurd”
- 3) **Theatre of the Absurd**: Derived from Existentialism, and influenced by symbolism, Expressionism, and surrealism. It is one of the most important and influential literary schools after the second world war. It originated in France in the mid 50’s and soon spread over Europe and America. Eugene Ionesco (1912---) in France. Edward Albee (1928---) in America, and Harold Pinter (1930---) in England.
- 4) **Harold Pinter**:
The Birthday Party 1958 *The Caretaker* 1960
The Homecoming 1966

Section Four: The History of American Literature

Part One: Early American Literature (1620-1770)

Chapter 1: The Seventeenth Century Literature (also called the colonial literature)

1. American Puritanism:

American Puritanism was one of the most enduring shaping influences in American thought and American literature. It has become, to some extent, so much a state of mind, rather than a set of tenets, so much a part of the **national cultural atmosphere** that the American breathes, that we may state with a degree of safety that, without some understanding of Puritanism, there can be no real understanding of America and its literature. (Just like the influence of **Confucian** doctrine upon the **ideology** of Chinese people)

Puritanism is the **practices** and **beliefs** of the **Puritans**. The Puritans were originally members of a division of the Protestant Church, who came into existence in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I. The first settlers who became the founding fathers of the American nation were quite a few of them Puritans. They came to America out of various reasons, but it should be remembered that they were a group of serious, religious people, advocating highly religious and moral principles. As the word itself hints, Puritans wanted to **purify** their religious beliefs and practices. They felt that the church of England was too close to the Church of Rome in doctrine form of worship, and organization of authority. The American Puritans back in England, were **idealists**, believing that the church should be restored to complete "**purity**". They accepted the doctrine of **predestination**, **original sin** and **total depravity**, and **limited atonement (or the salvation of selected few)** through a special infusion of grace from God. But in the grim struggle for survival that followed immediately after their arrival in America, they became more and more practical, they became more and more preoccupied with business and profits, as indeed they had to be. Puritans' lives were extremely disciplined and hard. They drove out of their settlements all those opinions that seemed dangerous to them. And history has criticized their actions. They were also determined to find a place where they could worship in the way they thought true Christians should. They meant to reestablish a commonwealth, based on the teachings of the Bible, restore the lost paradise and build the wilderness into a new Garden of Eden. Influence of Puritanism: sense of **mission**, **symbolism**, and **simple style**.

2. Literature of this period:

1) Characteristics:

Not independent, but based on British literary traditions. The first American literature was not written by an American, but by John Smith, a British captain.

Most writers were born in Britain.

2) Writers:

John Smith: *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Hath Happened in Virginia.*

A Map of Virginia

Edward Taylor (1642-1729): the best puritan poet.

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672): called the “tenth muse” that recently sprung up in the new continent.

Chapter 2: The Eighteenth Century Literature

1. Enlightenment in American literature

An intellectual (philosophical) movement characterized by belief in the power of human reason. It originated in the European continent. The enlighteners regarded “enlightenment” or “education” as the principal means for the development of a society, moreover, they showed larger concerns for civil rights. They began to reconsider the relations among man, Nature and God, suggesting an extension of the principles of equality and social justice. The enlighteners advocated publicly to study “man” instead of “God”, and pointed out the “evils” in human civilization stemmed from the social injustice, not from “original sin.” They emphasized on reason, education and scientific research, believed that man could perfect himself and decide his own destiny. The spokesman is Benjamin Franklin.(1706-1790)

2. Deism (自然神论)

The belief in natural religion. The Deists believed that all things in the nature were the embodiments of gods, and that why man lived in the world was not to suffer so as to exchange for the rebirth of the next generation, but to eliminate the inequality of race, sex and faith and to build up his own “paradise” in the human world. (promoted the American revolution)

- 1) Only one god was worth worshipping
- 2) Man could keep making progress by making use of his own moral sense and of his own intelligence and wisdom
- 3) Man should love truth and do good
- 4) Education and science was an important means to create man’s happiness
- 5) The freedom of citizen’s speech, action, and faith embodied man’s basic benefits
- 6) To serve God best was to do good for the mankind
- 7) Voltaire(1694-1778), Daniel Defoe (1659-1731) Rousseau (1712-1778) belonged to this belief.

3. Calvinism

Calvinism is the doctrine of Calvin, the great French theologian who lived in Geneva. It is a doctrine of predestination, original sin and total depravity, and limited atonement (or the salvation of a selected few) through a special infusion of

grace from God. The Calvinists believed that man was, since the Fall, basically evil and enslaved by his sense of sin, and that God was all, and would in His mercy and love work for man's salvation, but as for man, all he could do (if ever there was anything he could do) was to worship the Almighty and hope. Jonathan Edwards (1702-1758) was a representative.

4. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)

1) Life:

He was born poor and obscure. He received little education, but he was a voracious reader. He was a rare genius in human history. Everything seems to meet in this one man, mind and will, talent and art, strength and ease, wit and grace, and he became almost everything: a printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, scientist, orator, statesman, philosopher, political economist, ambassador---"Jack of all trades". For quite some time he was regarded as the **father of his country**

2). ***Autobiography*** a book on the art of self-improvement , an inspiring account of a poor boy's rise to wealth and fame and the fulfillment of the **American dream**.

Its Importance:

- (1) It is the first of its kind
- (2) The reflection of the age.
- (3) The fulfillment of the American Dream
- (4) Exhibition of a simple style
- (5) A demonstration of Enlightenment
- (6) A Puritan document

5. Jonathan Edwards (1703—1758)

1) Life: Edwards was probably the last great voice to re-assert Calvinism in America. He wanted the people of his congregation to have the same religious passion that the first European settlers in America had. And his goal was to rekindle the original sense of religious commitment of the early settlers.

2) Literary Achievements:

- (1) Sermon: *Sinners of an Angry god*
- (2) Treatises on the freedom of the will and the nature of true virtue: *The Freedom of the will* (1754)
The Nature of True Virtue (1765)
- (3) Spiritual autobiography: *The Personal Narrative*

6. Thomas Paine (1737—1809)

1) life: Paine was one of these political pamphleteers and the most persuasive rhetorician for the cause of independence.

2) Literary Achievements:

Common Sense: if often regarded as the greatest of the Revolutionary

pamphlets.

The American Crisis: It consists of 16 pamphlets written during the War of Independence. They deal with tyranny, human nature, the individual's proper relationship to the state, the spirit of liberty, and the future of colonialism.

7. Philip Freneau (1752—1832)

1) Life

He was the most significant poet of eighteenth-century America. “Father of American Poetry”. He was in turn a school teacher, a newspaper writer, a sailor, a trader, a farmer, and a government official. He supported the Revolution with great enthusiasm, hence being called “ Poet of the American Revolution”. He was a most notable representative of dawning nationalism in American literature. Almost alone of his generation, he managed to peer through the pervasive atmosphere of imitativeness, to see life around directly, to appreciate the natural scenes on the new continent and the native Indian civilization.

2) Literary Achievement:

1. Poems encouraging revolution and glory:

The British Prison Ship,

On the memorable Victory of John Paul Jones.

2. Poems about the order and beauty of the nature:

The Wild honey Suckle

The Indian Burying Ground

To a Caty-Did

3. Political motivated poems:

Part Two: The Age of Romanticism (1770—1875)

Chapter 3 : Early Romantics

1. Common Characteristics of Romanticism:

- 1) Romanticism was a rebellion against the objectivity of rationalism. It placed high importance on the creative function of imagination, and saw art as a formulation of intuitive and imaginative perceptions that tend to speak a nobler truth than that of fact.
- 2) For romantics, the feelings, intuitions and emotions were more important than reason and common sense. They believed that one could find truth through feelings. They believed that the irrational was important in human experience and that not everything could be explained by reason.
- 3) Romantics did not think of the world as a ticking watch made by God. They thought the world was a living, breathing being. They stressed the close relationship between man and nature. They viewed nature as an exemplar and source of vivid physical beauty and as a manifestation of spirit in the universe. With deep love for nature, they saw nature as a revelation of truth, the living garment of God. Therefore, nature was a suitable subject for true art. They

believed that God was immanent in creation. In other words, when they would look at the finite objects in this world, they would find the presence of an infinite god.

- 4) They emphasized individualism, placing the individual against the group, against authority. They saw the individual at the very center of life and art. They emphasized personal freedom and freedom from formalism, tradition, and conformity. They delighted in self-analysis, intricate examination and full exposure of the soul. They cherished no hero-worship, yet believed in the perfectibility of humanity. Romantics

2. American Romanticism

Distinct features: Although there was no denying of the strong European influences on American romantic writers, American romanticism had distinct features of its own. Different from their European counterparts, American romantics tended to **moralize**, to **edify** rather than to **entertain**. American romanticism presented an entirely new experience **alien to** European culture. The **exotic** landscape, the frontier life, the westward expansion, the myth of new Garden of Eden in America, and the Puritan heritage were just a few examples of the native material for an ingenious literature. Evidently, American romanticism produced a feeling of “newness” which inspired the romantic imagination. Early American romanticism was best represented by New England poets William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1851) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851) and Washington Irving (1783-1859) in fiction.

3. Washington Irving(1783-1859)

1) Importance:

- (1) He is the father of American Literature. He is the first romantic writer to gain international fame which proves to be the sign of **independence** of American Literature.
- (2) He started writing **short story** as a **genre**. The short story genre in American literature began with Irving's *The Sketch Book*

2) Style:

- (1) Graceful, refined, fluent and dignified, humorous and vivid, imitative.
- (2) Irving also had important theme, the theme of change, of mutability (易变性, 性情不定). He believed that changes upset the natural order of things.

3) Works:

Rip Van Winkle

The Legend of sleep hollow

The Sketch Book

4) *Rip Van Winkle*:

- (1) It is about man having difficulty facing his advancing age. It shows the conservative attitude towards development.

- (2) Escape from responsibility
- (3) Loss of identity (**hen-pecked**)

4. William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)

- 1) Life: a representative of early American Romanticism in poetry. Sometimes he is called “the American Goldsmith”
- 2) Works: *Thanatopsis* (对于死亡的观察；对死的观感)
 - To a Waterfowl*
 - The Yellow Violet*
- 3) Themes:
 - (1) The beauty and harmony of nature as a source of solace, joy, and escape.
 - (2) The dignity of humanity
 - (3) The sacredness of human freedom
 - (4) The power and beneficence of God

5. James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)

- 1) life: He was the first national writer from inside out. He created a myth about the formative period of the American nation
- 2) Works: three types:
 - (4) on history: *The spy* 1821
 - (5) sea novel: *The Pilot* 1823
 - (6) Frontier novel: *Leatherstocking Tales*
- 3) *The Leatherstocking Tales*
 - (7) *The Pioneers* 1823
 - (2) *The Last Moshicans* 1826
 - (3) *The Prairie* 1827
 - (8) *The Path-finder* 1840
 - (9) *The Deerslayer* 1841
- 4) The significance of *The Leatherstocking Tales*
 - (1) He described the myth of American in formative period in American history.
 - (2) Cooper created typical American hero in Natty Bumpoo
 - (3) Cooper described the conflict between the frontier and the city’s civilization and conflict between freedom and law
 - (4) In a sense the *Leatherstockings* can be called the American myth.
- 5) Style:
 - (1) complicated plots and structure
 - (2) description is not true of life
 - (3) beautiful description of nature
 - (4) sometimes the style is clumsy and the humor is heavy in his description.

6. New England Transcendentalism:

1) In 1836 a little book *Nature* came out. It was written by Emerson. It was considered “the Manifesto of Transcendentalism”. It started with Emerson’s *Nature* and ended with Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855) The Transcendentalists set up a club called “Transcendentalist Club”. They expressed their views published their journal *Dial*. The center place is New England and Concord.

2) Features:

- (1) It can also be called idealism. They placed emphasis on oversoul. Spirit is the most important thing in the world (universe) and believed that nature is a symbol of the great spirit
- (2) This stressed the individual and gave much importance to self-reliance.
- (3) It stressed on man’s subjective initiative
- (4) It liberated people from the Calvinist ideas such as the “original sin” and “predestination”

3) Limitations:

- (1) The shallow optimism made it impossible for them to understand human suffering.
- (2) They cut themselves from life (Thoreau) and were trapped by empty talk. They stressed too much on human intuition.
- (3) They failed to provide solution to problem they found.

7. Ralph Waldo Emerson(1803-1882)

1) Philosophical ideas

- (1) He stressed on oversoul. Nature is a symbol of spirit and nature can purify human beings.
- (2) Individuals are the most important.
- (3) He called for the creation of the real national literature and this literature should celebrate the life and the common.
- (4) He believed that art comes from life. It is better than life. Thus art has the function of teaching.

2) works: *Nature* , *The American Scholar*

3) significance

- (1) He embodied the desire to assert a new nation’s identity.
- (2) By stressing on the individuals he criticized the corrupting society; he was strongly against the materialism of that time.

a) Limitation:

His individualism goes to extreme and becomes a kind of selfishness.

8. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)

1) Life: Another renowned New England Transcendentalist.

2) Works: *Walden* 1854, *Civil Disobedience*

3) The philosophical ideas of *Walden*

- It stressed his belief of self-culturation , self-perfection and self-reliance.

- He believed that the future generation would be better.
- He criticized the material orientation.
- The author believes that the true individualism is self-reliance and self-dependence.

4) Writing style:

- (1) colloquial
- (2) symbolism: *Walden* starts from summer and ends in spring. This faith symbolizes Thoreau's belief in future generation and his optimism.
- (3) vivid and detailed description

9. Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

1) Life: One of the three Transcendentalists (the other two are : Thoreau and Emerson), a transitional figure from Romanticism to realism. The greatest poet in 19th century of America.

2) Writing Style:

- He created a new poem form---“free verse” which means without fixed beat or regular rhyme. Free verse takes lines as rhythmic items and sometimes applies alliteration. It breaks away from traditional iambic pentameter and gives the poets more freedom in writing any subject.
- Symbolism
- Slang, localism, common speech

3) Theme: chiefly wrote about transcendentalism and democratic ideas and social matters.

- unity of man with nature
- equality of all man, different classes and races.
- Cycles of life and death. Death is the beginning of a new form of life.
- Enthusiastic about expression of individualism.
- Anti-slavery
- Brotherhood

4) works:

(1) *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking:*

- The repetition of “O”:
- a. a cycle of life and death;
 - b. mouth of a person weeping

(2) *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*

The relationship of life and death, physical and spirit. It memorializes Lincoln. It envisioned the poet as a hero, a savior and prophet.

(3) *Song of Myself*

Individualism, intuition, praises democracy and working class people.

(4) *There was a Child Went Forth*

It praises expansion.

(5) *Leaves of Grass*

A book of collected poetry

10. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

- 1) Life: He represented pessimism of Transcendentalism, the dark side of Puritanism.
- 2) Dominant ideas in his works:
 - (1) He writes about sin (original sin) with the influence from early puritan ancestors.
 - (2) His attitude towards scientific development is conservative.
 - (3) He is concerned with the moral, emotional and psychological effect of sin of his characters.
- 3) Works:
 - Young Goodman brown* -----sin, evil
 - Rappaccini's Danger* ----conservative idea to science
 - Scarlet Letter* -----Hester, Chillingworth, Dimesdale
 - The House of the Seven Gables*----the wrong doing of one generation will lead to the punishment of the offspring.
 - The Marble Faun* -----The moral maturity of a person can only be achieved through honesty and the punishment of sin can help to bring about moral growth.
- 4) *The Scarlet Letter*
 - setting : 17th New England
 - In this book the author criticized some puritan ideas and expressed some humanist ideals. He advocated true love and true feeling between persons.
 - Hawthorne studies the psychological effects of sin on his characters.
 - Symbolism and ambiguity . Multiple point of view.
 - Red "A": Adultery ----Able----Angel
 - He paid too much attention to the dark side.

11. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882)

- 1) Life: He is the first American writer who has his bust in Westminster Abbey.
First to write narrative poems.
- 2) Works: *The Song of Hiawatha*
The Psalm of Life
The Children's Hour
Voices of the Night
My Lost Youth
The Village Blacksmith
The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls
- 3) Features: His works are highly spiritual. He emphasizes the mysteries of birth, death, and love. Most of his works are simple and easy to read.

12. Edgar Allen Poe (1809—1849)

- 1) Life: Led a tragic life. Controversial and misunderstood. A great genius not recognized in his own day. It is the French symbolist poets such as Baudelaire(1821-1867), Mallarme (1822-1898) who made Poe famous. Poe wrote in a world of symbols, and he often wrote about dreams.
- 2) Significance:
 - His criticism on poetry and short novels are very inspiring
 - He takes part in various literature practice, Poe was father of many things, psychological criticism, detective story of the world.
 - In his stories he explored deeper sides of human mind.
 - Psychological treatment of self
 - As a critic, he emphasized single effect, brevity, beauty, originality, art for art's sake, finality.
 - The death of a beautiful woman is the most potential topic. The immediate object of poetry is pleasure, not truth. Music is essential. His tone is awesome, sad and melancholy.
 - He wrote about dying ladies, about sickness, about abnormal rather than normal love. His subjects and themes are either universal or exotic. He continually emphasized estrangement, disappearance, silence, oblivion, and all ideas which suggest non-being. Unlike other romantics, Poe greatly respected reason—ratiocintin (推理)
- 3) Poe's theme of short story:
 - (1) disintegration of human mind
 - (2) Poe often uses neurotic as his heroes and it seems to him that theme is force in everyone's mind that tends to drive him crazy.
 - (3) He studies people's subconscious mind and he is also interested in the deduction(演绎) and induction (归纳) process of reason.
 - (4) Reason is Poe's force to keep people's mind healthy.
 - (5) Search for identity
- 4) Poe's theory of short story:
 - (1) short story should be short, and can be finished at one sit's reading (brevity)
 - (2) short story should have a single effect from the first sentence and should have a last sentence to assure its finality(完整)
- 5) Poe's theory of poetry:
 - (1) poems should be readable of one sitting.
 - (2) The aim of poem is to write beauty and to raise beauty in the reader's mind.
 - (3) The tone of the poem should be melancholy.
 - (4) The topic of poem should be death of beautiful and young lady.
 - (5) He called for pure poetry and against the didacticism theory
 - (6) Poe put stress on rhythm, he said poetry is rhythmical creation of beauty.

13. Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)

- 1) life: a housewife of six children, a novelist, a representative of abolitionist literature. When he was invited to visit the “white house”, Lincoln praised her as “the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war.”
- 2) Works: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

14. Emily Dickinson (1830—1886)

- 1) Life : Never married. Little traveling experience. Poet.
- 2) Themes: death and immortality, nature (both beautiful and cruel sides)
- 3) Style:
 - usage of images
 - no regular punctuation, the usage of dash instead of comma
 - free usage of capital letters, ungrammatical sentences.
 - Her diction was strange
 - Her poems are often of irregular rhymes
 - Unusual metaphor
 - she emphasized free will and self-perfection. Her attitude towards science was conservative. She studied people’s inner life through Transcendentalist point of view.
- 4) significance
 1. master of lyric personal poems
 2. forerunner of Imagist poetry, unconventional
- 5) works:
 - (1) *Wild nights---Wild nights*
 - (2) *A Narrow Fellow in the Grass* (*the snake*)
 - (3) *1775 short poems in total*

15. Herman Melville (1819-1891)

- 1) Life: went to work at the age of 15 in a variety of trades: a bank clerk, a salesman, a farmhand, a school teacher, a seaman, etc.
- 2) Works:
 - Clarel*
 - Typee* 1846
 - Omoo* 1847
 - Billy Budd* ---from struggle to conformity
- 3) *Moby Dick* (1851`) ---one of the world’s greatest masterpiece
 - (1) It is a Shakespearean tragedy of man fighting against overwhelming odds in an indifferent and even hostile univers.
 - (2) It is a book of alienation between man and amn , man and society, man and nature.
 - (3) It criticized on Emerson’s individual who cut themselves from the society and his fellow man. Melville seems to say that Emerson’s individual could only bring doom to himself to his fellow man.
 - (4) It is a quest. Ishmael was at first an escapist. He ran away from the corrupting society in the quest of the true meaning of life. During his

voyage he gradually seized the fact that only through his love and his companionship can man survive the cold universe.

(5) Symbolism:

white whale: nature, death, beauty, purity and terror at the same at the same time.

Both evil and goodness, the mystery of the universe, both benign and malevolent , both nourishing and destructive.

The captain: Emerson's individualism

Ship: a journey in quest of knowledge and values, search and discovery, the search for the ultimate truth of experience. The whole world, microcosm of American society.

The Whiteness: a paradoxical color, death, corruption, innocence, purity and youth as well. It represents the final mystery of the universe which man will do well to desist (stop) from pursuing.

Part three: The Age of Realism and Naturalism (1875-1914)

Chapter 4: American Literature of the Middle and late 19th century.

1. Realism in general: Realism came as a reaction against "the lie" of romanticism and sentimentalism. Literature began to pay less attention to general ideas and more to the immediate facts of life. In the broadest sense, realist literature is simply fidelity to actuality in its representation on literature". It is based on the accurate, unromanticized observation of human experiences. It insists on precise description, authentic action and dialogue, moral honesty, and a democratic openness in subject matter and style. As a way of writing, realism has been applied in almost every literature throughout history. But as a literary movement, realism is a period concept. It refers to the approach of realist fiction occurred at the latter part of the 19th century. In part, the rise of realism came as a protest against the falseness and sentimentality which the realists thought they saw in romantic literature. They were determined to create a new kind of literature that was completely and totally realistic. It expressed the concern for the world of experience, of the commonplace, and for the familiar and the low.

2. Major Features:

- 1) Familiar aspects of contemporary life and everyday scenes are represented in a straightforward or matter-of-fact manner. It stresses truthful treatment of material, without abstract interest in nature, death, etc.
- 2) Characters from all social levels are examined in depth. Before this time characters served some sort of allegorical or symbolic purpose. They value the individual very highly, stress the function of environment in shaping character,

and take characterization as the center of the story. They have great concern for the effect of action on characters, and a tendency to explore the psychology of people in the story.

- 3) Open ending is also a good example of the truthful treatment of material. It may be puzzling, it tells the reader that life is complex and cannot be fully understood. Open ending leaves much room for the reader to think over the possible conclusion of the story.
- 4) Realism focuses on commonness of the lives of the common people who are customarily ignored by the arts. Realists are interested in the commonplace, the everyday, the average, the trivial, and the representative. These authors are not interested in characters as symbols. They were not stories about kings and queens, princes and princesses, or knights in shining armor. They were about average folks.
- 5) Realism emphasizes objectivity and offers an objective rather than an idealistic view of human nature and human experience. The realistic writers are detached observers of life. The author just tells the reader what the characters do. It is up to the reader to decide what it means.
- 6) Realism presents moral visions. Realists are ethical writers, interested in the problems of the individual conscience in conflict with social institutions. These writers are interested in focusing on the dilemma.
Realists are aware of accepted social standards. They have a strong ethical sense that there are right ways to do things and wrong ways to do things. In their works they re-create real life and show the dilemmas that the people are having as they try to understand what life means in an ethical way.

3. Mark Twain(1835-1910)

- 1) life: He is regarded as the Lincoln of American Literature. Hemingway once wrote, “ All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*... it’s the best book we’ve had... There was nothing before. There has been nothing so good since.”
- 2) Works: *The Gilded Age* 1873--- a satire against corruption, it gave a name to the time he lived in.
The Prince and the Pauper 1882
Life on Mississippi 1883
Innocents Abroad 1869
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer 1876
- 3) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 1884
 - (1) Initiation fiction
 - (2) Satire: A. on the vanity of the poor whites;
B. on the upper-class southerners
C. violence
 - (3) style:
 - A. vernacular language, colloquial, poetic and unpretentious
 - B. local color
 - C. full of folk wisdom and common sense.

Realistic about social problems

4) Importance:

(1) humor: He wrote “tall tale” (a type of frontier humor, anecdote, characterized by exaggeration or understatement(轻描淡写), with realistic details of character and local customs that works towards a humorous effect) and “dead-pan” (when telling a humor, shows no passion with no expectation). He is the first famous humorous writer, who described the breadth of American experience as no one had done before.

(2) His criticism, a combination of tragedy and comedy, satire and humor, abounds (enriches) American literature.

(3) For his colloquial speech, it is from Mark Twain on, colloquial speech became a standard language and it can be used in any kind of literature. He made colloquial speech and accepted history of the country, he used vernacular as art and influenced many later writers.

5) theme of “Huckleberry Finn”

(1) anti-slavery. It is a voyage from slavery bondage to freedom.

(2) It is also a process of boy’s initiation

(3) Mississippi: democracy, equality, freedom.

Bank: evil, vices of American society

4. William Dean Howells (1837-1920)

1) life: He is the champion of realism

2) significance:

(1) He advocates the theory of realism in his critical writing, he practices realism in his own writings.

(2) He helps many young writers and he is a friend of many generations.

(3) He became, naturally, the first president of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

3) critical ideas:

(1) He spoke against the writing of a bleak fiction of failures.

(2) In Howells literature, the expression of democracy and the commonplace is the best material for fictions. A writer should avoid writings of extraordinary and extremes. So characterization is more important than plot.

(3) His realism has been called “the smile brand of realism”. He seems to want to say that literature should concentrate on the good aspect of the life.

4) works: The Rise of Silas Lapham 1885

A Woman’s Reason 1883

A Hazard of New Fortunes 1889

5) limitations:

(1) shallow, lacking depth

(2) smiling aspect

(3) paid too much attention to details

5. Henry James (1843-1916)

1) significance:

- (1) psychological realism
- (2) refined and a little difficult language

2) works:

The America 1877

Daisy Miller 1878

The Portrait of a Lady 1881

The Ambassadors 1903

The Golden Bowl 1904

-----international theme

The Turn of the Screw 1898

- 3) International theme: James usually wrote in international theme. It means to put the innocent Americans in face of corrupted sophisticated Europeans, and to study the psychological effect on the innocent Americans by this kind of confrontation. Henry James indicates the American value is superior to that of Europeans in some aspects.

4) Critical ideas --- The Art of Fiction

- (1) Art represents life and is a reflection of life; art comes from life. Art makes life, and makes interest. So art is superior to life.
- (2) Point of view: the author should avoid interference in the book as much as possible. He should avoid artificial omniscience. We authors should let the characters review themselves. That's to say, showing instead of telling.

5) Differences between Twain, James, and Howells

Twain: the lower class

James: the upper class

Howells: the middle class

6. Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941)

- 1) Importance: He observed human grotesqueness and eccentricity from a Freudian psychological point of view and tried to reveal the abnormal states of mind in a more or less accurate way. Anderson was endowed with a gift for pouring a lifetime into a moment. Anderson was probably the first writer since Mark Twain to write in the colloquial style. For Hemingway Anderson served as his stylistic guide for some time. Faulkner ever said that Anderson was "the father of my generation of American writers and the tradition of American Writing which our successors will carry on". He has been called "a writer's writer". Modern American literature would not have been the same had there not been such a seminal (启发性的) figure as Sherwood Anderson.
- 2) Works: *Winesburg, Ohio* 1919--- a book of grotesques of people each with a ruling kind of passion which distorts their personalities.

Chapter 5: American literature at the turn of the century

1. **Naturalism in America:** Emile Zola (1840-1902) wrote in the late 19th century that the purpose of a novelist was to be a scientist, to place his characters in a situation and then to watch the influence of **heredity** and **environment** destroy them, or they were good enough to overcome the hostile force of heredity and environment. Therefore, heredity and environment had an influence over human ability to survive. This was picked up and applied in American literature as well. In the last decade of the 19th century in America, some intelligent writers began to see that human beings were no longer free and strong in a cold, indifferent world and that human life was governed by the two crushing forces of heredity and environment. They held that Howellsian realism was too restrained and genteel in tone to reveal the harsh reality of American life. Under the French influence, they ushered in a literary movement called Naturalism in America. Naturalism applied the principles of scientific determinism to fiction. It views human beings as animals in the natural world responding to environmental forces and internal stresses and desires, over none of which they have control and none of which they fully understand.

2. Major features:

- 1) Humans are controlled by laws of heredity and environment
- 2) The universe is cold, godless, indifferent and hostile to human desires. Life becomes a struggle for survival
- 3) The literary naturalists have a major difference from the realists. The naturalists also describe life, the way things really are. They do not escape into a world of imagination. But they dismiss the realists as far too “genteel”. The naturalists do not look at the average, but at the violent, sensational, sordid, unpleasant, and ugly aspects of life. They would go to the slums and write about the life of poverty and crime instead of going to a middle-class neighborhood and writing about middle-class life. They think that the true reality is not found in the smiling aspects of middle-class life. The true reality is found when the forces of Nature are most dominant in stopping human desires, in keeping humans from accomplishing their dreams. They write about wars, about prostitution, about criminal, and all of these other aspects of life that are too pleasant to consider.
- 4) However, American naturalistic writers were not as pessimistic about life as French. The reason for this is Americans’ innocent youthfulness and the American romantic tradition. American naturalists could not accept the deterministic attitude of the complete helplessness of man and the view of an amoral predatory(掠夺性的, 故意破坏的) universe and adopt a thoroughgoing scientific attitude in the portrayal of the American scene. Stephen Crane and Theodore Dreiser both had an optimistic strain(血统, 气质). That is why pure naturalism did not flourish in America. But it did have an influence. Rather than a pessimistic feeling when they thought about

Darwinism, the American public had an optimistic feeling, because the country was beginning its time of imperialistic expansion around the world.

3. Stephen Crane (1871-1900)

- 1) Life: The first naturalist writer, also the precursors of Imagist poetry.
- 2) Works:
 - Maggie: *A Girl of the Street* (1893)----first uncompromising naturalistic novel, lower life.
 - The Open Boat*
- 3) *The Red Badge of Courage*
 - 1) theme: a. the animal man in a cold, manipulating world.
 - b. dehumanizing of the war
 - c. good at exploring psychological state of a person during the war.
 - d. consequences of false pride and glory, vanity
 - 2) style: a. colloquial
 - b. imagism
 - c. good at using sound and colors and many animals serve as symbols

4. Edwin Arlington Robinson (1869—1935)

- 1) life: a transitional poet between the 19th and 20th centuries. He lived through the genteel era to the postwar period of disillusionment. The America's greatest living poet in the 1920s. His world is naturalistic in nature. Here God is no longer caring, men suffer from frustrations and want of mutual understanding, and life is in general futile and meaningless.
- 2) Works: *Man Against the Sky* 1916
 - Miniver cheevy*
 - Flammonde*

5. Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945)

- 1) works: *Sister Carrie* 1900
 - Jennie Gerhardt* 1911
- Cowperwood trilogy:
 - The financier* 1912
 - The Titan* 1914
 - The Stoic* (posthumously)
 - The Genius* 1915
 - An American Tragedy* 1925

It is in Dreiser's works that American naturalism is said to have come of age.

- 2) Features:
 - (1) Dreiser stressed **determinism** in his novels.
 - (2) His novels truthfully reflected society and people of his time.
 - (3) His narrative method is natural and free from **artifice**.

6. Frank Norris (1870-1902)

McTeague 1899---has been called the first full-blooded (纯的) naturalistic American novel.

The Octopus 1901

The Pit 1903

7. Jack London (1867-1916)

The Call of Wild 1903

White Fang 1906

The Sea Wolf 1904

Iron Heel 1908

Martin Eden 1909

8. O Henry (William Sidney Porter, 1862- 1910)

1) Life: a short-story writer

2) Works: *The Gift of the Magi*

The Cop and the Anthem

The Four Million

Part Four: The twentieth century American literature (1914-2000)

Chapter 6: American Literature between the two world wars

1. American Modernism:

1) During the first decades of the 20th century, modernism became an international tendency against positivism and representational art in art and literature. It began in Germany in the 1890s, spread worldwide, and ended in the early 1940s. It is assumed that modernism was the consequence of the transformation of society brought about by industrialism and technology in the course of the 19th century. The essence of modernism was a break with the past, and it also fostered a belief in art and literature as an avenue to self-fulfillment. It included a wide range of artistic expressions such as symbolism, impressionism, post-impressionism, futurism, constructivism, and surrealism.

2) Features:

(1) modernism dramatized discontinuity (a sense of disjunction) and imminent severance from the past while making determined efforts to use the past. It values artistic forms by incorporating them in new literary production. These artists had a great sense that what people had written before was not good enough, because it expressed ideas that they could no longer accept. Much of the modern temper was critical of received beliefs, usually from a position of disillusionment after World War I. Thoreau and Emerson also questioned received beliefs, but they were optimistic and exuberant. Affected by the postwar disillusionment and loss of faith and disgusted at government slogans with the cheap commercial values and sham (虚假的) business ethics of the time, they thought of life as diminished. They had

strong feeling of **alienation**, of **loss**, and of **despair**. Representative modernist poets are T.S.Eliot and Ezra Pound.

(2) Modernists had a sense of **fragmentation** in social communities and the fragmentation within the individual himself. Hence fragmentation became a common theme in modern writing. Often in presenting their theme, these writers used an **anti-hero**. An anti-hero is the person who is the main focus of the work as a hero should be. However, he is **weak, ineffective, inapt** (awkward) , not like the romantic hero who is strong, brave, courageous, and can rescue the fair maiden from the tower before the black knight kills her. The anti-hero achieves success through bungling (笨手笨脚), through not being s effective as he would think that he could be.

(3) The distinctive feature of literary modernism was its strong and conscious break with traditional forms, perceptions, and techniques of expression, and its great concern with language and all aspects of its medium. It was persistently experimental. The modernists made great efforts to remake the language of literature, and they were interested in technique and craftsmanship. And the conflict between dismantling narrative and plot continuity, and that between fracture and flow produced some distinctive literary forms in prose. Stream of consciousness, the use of myth as a structural principle, and the primary status given to the poetic image, all challenged traditional representation.

2. Lost Generation

After the first World War, some young disappointed American Writers, such as Hemingway, Pound, Cummings, dos Passos, and Fitzgerald, chose Paris as their place of exile and used their wartime experience as the basis for their works. Most of them had been shocked or wounded in the war. Those young English and American expatriates, men and women, were caught in the war and cut off from the old values and yet unable to come to terms of the new era when civilization had gone mad. They wandered pointlessly and restlessly, enjoying things like fishing, swimming, bullfight and beauties of nature, but they were aware all the time that t6he world is crazy and meaningless and futile. They were called the Lost Generation. This name was given by Gertrude Stein. Hemingway is their spokesman. They rebelled against former ideals and values, but replaced them only by despair or a cynical hedonism.

3. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)

- 1) Life: the spokesman for the lost generation. He won Nobel prize in 1954. His war experience proved shattering and nightmarish that his life and writings were permanently affected.
- 2) Style: His sentences are short and simple; language is vigorous and positive in colloquial style; gorgeous adjectives are avoided; words are concrete, specific and more commonly found, casual and conversational. Apparently natural as his style seems to be, his style is deliberate and polished. Its simplicity can be

disastrously deceptive, as it is highly suggestive and connotative and capable of offering layers of undercurrent of meaning. Iceberg theory: one eighth is above the water; all of the rest is underneath the water. Hemingway's strength lies in his short sentences and very specific details in his restraint and understatement. In his opinion, a writer has got to catch "the whiteness of the bone", to catch the one specific thing and bring it to life and make it vivid for the readers and leave everything else out.

3) Theme:

- (1) "the code hero": One of the important things that makes Hemingway popular is that in a time of general despair and pessimism he wrote stories with heroes that the reader could admire. There is a particular term, "the code hero". The code hero with stoic courage lives by a pattern which gives life meaning and value. Hemingway hero is an average man of decidedly masculine tastes, sensitive and intelligent, a man of action, and one of few words. He is an individualist, alone even when with other people, somewhat an outsider, keeping emotions under control, stoic and self-disciplined in a dreadful place where one cannot have happiness. Frederic Henry is such an example. Hemingway hero is one who is wounded but strong, more sensitive and wounded because stronger, enjoy the pleasures of life (sex, alcohol, sport) in face of ruin and death and maintains, through some notion of a code, an ideal of himself.
- (2) Grace under pressure. He wrote about courage with which people face the tragedies in life, even though sometimes it is sort of "despairing courage". It is this courage that enables a man to behave like a man, to assert his dignity in face of adversity. Take Santiago as an example, he believes that "a man is not made to be defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated".

(3) Anti-war theme

4) works:

- (1) *The Sun Also Rises* 1926---about the disillusionment of the lost generation, Jake Barnes.
- (2) *A Farewell to Arms* 1928---- can be regarded as a footnote to *The Sun Also Rises*. It tells us how the lost generation came into being.
- (3) *For Whom the Bell Tolls*---the hero(Robert Jordan) is keenly aware all the time that he is fighting a losing battle, but he keeps on striking. However, Robert Jordan is no longer a lieutenant Henry, the solitary individual at odds with the forces dealing out nothing but defeat, doom and death to man. Nor is he like a Jake Barnes, trying to accommodate himself to a purposeless and futile existence. He is no longer alone, having a cause to work for and a group to fight with and , more important, someone to love and die for. The war he is fighting is, for him, a metaphor for a struggle for freedom. Nowhere else in Hemingway is the theme of human brotherhood so emphasized. Anti-Fascist
- (4) *The Old Man and the Sea* 1952—Santiago, the hero. Here, the old man,

after fighting a force he knows it is futile to battle with, eventually comes to realization that in going far out alone, “beyond all the people in the world,” he has met his doom, and he feels good to be one of the human and the natural world. That he begins to experience a feeling of brotherhood and love not only for his fellowmen but for his fellow creatures in nature is a proof that Hemingway’s vision of the world has undergone a profound change, also grace under pressure.

4. Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)

- 1) life: a spokesman of the 1920s, the “roaring 20s”. He was both a leading participant in the typically pleasure-seeking and money-making life of the 1920s.
- 2) works:
 - (1) This Side of Paradise 1920---the first American novel depicting the casual dissipations of “flaming youth”.
 - (2) Tales of the jazz Age 1922---like mark Twain’s “The Gilded Age”, gave its name to an important historical period in the history of the country, “the 1920a” or “the Jazz age”
 - (3) The Great Gatsby 1925---deals symbolically with the frustration and despair resulting from the failure of the America dream. It is a story of an idealist who tries to recapture his lost love but in vain and is finally destroyed by the influence of the wealthy people around him
 - (4) Tender is the Night –1934
 - (5) The last Tycoon , published posthumously.
- 3) themes:
 - (1) Fitzgerald’s fiction reveals the hollowness of the American worship of riches and the unending American dreams of love, splendor and desires and shows what America meant in terms of the reckless 1920: Prohibition, speakeasies (非法经营的酒店), new cars, victory abroad, popular fads (风尚), and new wealth.
 - (2) American dream : it means that in America one might hope to satisfy every material desire and thereby achieve happiness. It is deceptive because it proposes the satisfaction of all desire as an attainable goal and identifies desire with material. He ever said, “America’s great promise is that something is going to happen, but it never does. America is the moon that never rose.” Take Gatsby as an example, he pursues his dream of romantic success without ever understanding that it has escaped him. He fails to understand that he cannot recapture the past (his fresh, new love for Daisy) no matter how much money he makes, no matter how much wealth he displays. Daisy, despite Tom’s coarseness and open unfaithfulness, refuses to leave the security of her established position for Gatsby’s adoration and precarious wealth.
 - (3) He dealt most with double theme of love and money.
 - (4) His stories can be regarded as moral fables, they are about morality,

industry, and maturity. He was interested in people's dreams and failures.

- 4) style: his writing style is simple, vivid, graceful, precise, and polished. The pace is light, swift, and impulsive. The plot jumps from one event to another, leaving large blanks in time and space.

5. Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951)

1) life: first American writer to receive Nobel prize for literature in 1930.

2) Works:

- (1) Main Street 1920---a bitter criticism of dullness, hypocrisy, prejudice, and oppression of life in a Middle Western village. It satirizes the smug (自鸣得意的)provincial (俗气的) complacency of the middle class.
- (2) Babbitt—his best book. It depicts the complacency and materialism of the protagonist Babbitt, a real-estate agent and representative middle-class family man from Zenith, a Mid-Western small town. “Babbitt” enters the language to mean energetic shallowness and self-satisfaction(市侩习气, 庸俗).

3) style:

- the pretensions of small-town society, the thinness of its culture, the pathos and pettiness so the lives lived by the businessmen and their wives, and the scenes, the colors, and the appearances and actions of the characters in his novels are portrayed in such a great detail that they produce photographic versimilitude.
- His novels are filled with colloquialism and the cliché of the American language.
- Satiric monologue. The character would talk about sacred principles and then contradict it in his own practice. Therefore, the time when he is preaching would be the moment the author made him appear ridiculous. In characterization, Lewis was inclined to create types that embody the representative qualities of particular classes. By describing their specific responses to all sorts of challenge, he made them appear unique and lifelike, and thus he avoided the defects of stereotypes.

6. William Faulkner (1897-1962)

1) life: America's greatest novelist in the 20th century. He won Nobel prize for literature in 1950. he never repeats himself, never repeats the same technique or theme in different works. He is a highly experimentalism, especially in his language. He developed the stream of consciousness to a new level and in his works he painted a literary history of the American South.

2) Works:

- The Sound and Fury 1929
- As I Lay Dying 1930
- Light in August 1932
- Absalom, Absalom 1936

- Go Down, Moses 1942
- 3) major features:
- Faulkner used the South to talk about the violence and evil in all human beings.
 - There are three emphases in Faulkner's writing: on history and the problem of race, on folk humor of the South, and on horror, violence and the abnormal to arouse moral outrage. He presented grim pictures in general, but not pessimistic in viewpoint.
 - Faulkner was a great avant-garde experimenter. He successfully advanced some modern literary techniques.
 - a) he used the device of stream of consciousness
 - b) he used multiple point of view and a circular form instead of a linear structure.
 - c) He stressed authorial transcendence to avoid authorial intrusion in narration and characterization
 - d) He used an original narrative method which often withholds or gives confusing information.
 - e) The violation of chronology in the narrative structure is matched by a violation of everyday language habits in Faulkner's prose style.
 - f) His prose varies from colloquial, regional, to formal diction and cadences(声调)of American speech.
 - g) "despair" and "doom" are the frequent motifs in a world of racial exploitation and violence, civil wars, macabre murders, suicides, labor pains, etc.
 - h) Faulkner not only provided the reader with more than external events and details, he also probed the inner lives of those who are living in the South and trying to cope with the problems of a society in decline and transition.
 - i) It is not only in his choice of images that Faulkner conveyed the mood, the atmosphere, the emotional and psychological climate of his fictional world. In addition, he displayed time and language to achieve his desired effect. By upsetting out notions of chronology and by violating the conventions of grammar, he captured in words intense emotion, states of mind, and moreover aroused in his readers a feeling of urgency and involvement relating to his characters and themes. His work has four focuses: psychological, social, historical, and reflective .
 - j) His artistic preoccupations and techniques include the exploration of psychological reality, the social structure and mores of a southern community, the nature of time, and the relation of the past to the present and the creation of an anti-hero who is weak, ineffective, different from the romantic hero in legends and myth.

7. Southern literature:

Starting from 1930s, a new trend of literature came into being. That is the southern literature. The major writers include Faulkner, Catherine Ann Porter, Flannery O'Connor, Eudora Welty. It is characterized by

- importance of tradition and family tie
- violence
- religion
- fondness for rhetoric.
- The authors have deep love of the south and their works express a sense history (guilt and defeatism) that comes directly from their experience of the civil war.

8. John Steinbeck (1902-1968)

1) life: John Steinbeck is regarded as the foremost writer of the Great Depression during the 1930s. he was awarded Nobel prize for literature in 1962.

2) Works:

- (1) The Grapes of Wrath” 1939 ---his masterpiece
- (2) Tortilla Flat 1935 --about a few Spanish bums
- (3) Of Mice and Men 1937--- about two migrant workers. One of whom is very strong and powerful physically but mentally weak and deficient, and the other, the younger and smaller, who takes care of the big one.
- (1) The Grapes of Wrath 1939--- a story of the migration of agricultural works from Oklahoma to California, the novel is full of bitterness and pain but not exactly despair. It is essentially its humanity that triumphs.

9. Modern Poetry

Imagism: Imagism was one of the modern literary movements which expressed the modern spirit, the sense of fragmentation and dislocation. It came as a reaction to the traditional English poetics. The first Imagist theorist is the English writer T.E. Hulme. He suggests that modern art deal with expression and communication of momentary phases in the poet's mind. Poetic techniques should become subtle enough to record exactly the momentary impressions. The most effective means to express these momentary impressions is through one dominant image. Each word must be an image seen. Each sentence should be a lump, a piece of clay, a vision seen. Hulme advises the poet to seek the hard, personal word for expression. The Imagist movement lasted from 1908 to 1917.

Three principles of Imagism:

- 1) direct treatment of the “thing”
- 2) to use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation. It stresses economy of expression
- 3) as regarding rhythm, to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase. It concerns a breaking away from conventional prosody(韵体学, 诗体学) and the use of free verse.

The representative Imagist poets are Hilda Doolittle, Amy Lowell, William Carlos

9. Ezra Loomis Pound (1885—1972)

1. life: a seminal figure in modern poetry
2. works:
 - (1) *Cantos*
 - (2) *In a Station of the Metro*
The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

10. T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)

1. life: a poet, playwright, and literary critic. He won Nobel prize for literature in 1948. He was one of the first to sense the futility (无益, 无效) and fragmentation of modern life and see modern society at its most disgusting.
2. Works:
 - (1) *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* 1915---depicts and ineffectual, sorrowful, tragic twentieth-century western man, an intellectual who is divided between passion and timidity, between desire and impotence. His tragic flaw is timidity, his curse is his idealism, knowing everything but able to do nothing, he lives in an area of life and death; and caught between the two worlds, he belongs to neither. He craves love but has no courage to declare himself. He despairs of life. He discovers its emptiness and yet has found nothing to replace it. Thus the poem develops a theme of frustration and emotional conflict.
 - (2) *The Waste Land* 1922
3. Important views:

T.S. Eliot remarked once that the only way the modern writer has of “giving shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporaneous (同时期的, 同时代的) history is by indicating or “manipulating a continuous parallel (比较, 对比) between contemporaneity and antiquity (古代, 祖先).

From the above statement, we can see that Eliot keenly sensed the confusion and fragmentation of modern life. Then, and urgent need is felt to give shape and significance to the meaningless, futile and chaotic experience of modern man. To him, it is the poet's job to form new wholes out of disparate experiences which are chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary. Then the poet advocates that poets should borrow material from the past, the tradition, from authors remote in time. His method is , in part, to rely on past literatures and cultures which fuse in his mind with his own personal and private agonies into something rich and strange. Something universal and impersonal . He uses the past to underscore what is missing from the present. When we read *The Waste Land*, we may be overwhelmed by the despair it exhibits. However, as we read along, we will find that the poem moves, through recurrent reminders of the modern waste land, forward a hope of regeneration and builds towards the

possibility of restoring order and life. There is an underlying desire on the part of the poet to help create order and sense out of a disorderly and senseless existence.

11. Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

1. life: he was successful in two fields of activity which did not seem compatible with one another: he was a very successful business man, while at the same time a father –figure among contemporary poets. He holds that poet lives in two worlds---the world of reality and the world of imagination ---and builds bridges between them. Thus the interrelationship between reality and art becomes a basic theme for him. He sees the role of the poet as “picnicking in the ruins that we live”, which is another way of saying that a poet should find beauty and pleasure and excitement and meaning in the sordidness of reality. So we find in Stevens, the poet as the imaginative man, a heroic type, heroic because capable of imagination, and we find poetry as a major modern form of revelation, revealing, among other things, the heroism of modern man who, even though recognizing the nothingness of modern existence, yet brings order and meaning to its chaos and meaninglessness. The poet operates in the two spheres of the real world and the imagined world and anchors his poetry solidly in the world of the here and now.

2. *Anecdote of the Jar*

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

3. interpretation: the setting is the wild, chaotic and Tennessee, a symbol of the world of nature. Then “I” of the poem places in it a tall, round jar, a man-made object, a symbol of the world of art, and by extension, it controls the whole disorderly landscape, so that “The wilderness rose up to it, / And sprawled around, no longer wild.” The poem seems to talk about the relationship between art and nature. The world of nature, shapeless and slovenly, takes shape and order from the presence of the jar. The world of art and imagination gives form and meaning to that of nature and reality, this

suggesting that any society without art is one without order and that man makes the order he perceives, and the world he inhabits is one he half creates

On the other hand the world of reality exists to determine the limits of art, and imagination can construct only on the basis of the world of nature. Stevens manages to keep a balance between art and life in his creative work. It is true that the jar imposes order and form on the sprawling wilderness around, but the two concluding lines, “It did not give of bird or bush,/Like nothing else in Tennessee”, render the jar something dependent on the physical world as its “central reference.”

12. William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

1. life: He worked all his life as a physician.

He resented bookish, internationalist and intellectual brand of poetry. He said, “We live only in one place at a time, but far from being bounded by it , only though it do we realize our freedom.” What he wanted to achieve is to reach the universal plane of meaning through the representation of the local.

2. *The Red Wheelbarrow*

So much depends
Upon
A red wheel
Barrow
Glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens.

Interpretations: the poem appeals to the imagination because it forces it to visualize and derive aesthetic pleasure from the contemplation which is the reading of the poem. Separately placed in their lines, words as simple as “upon”, “barrow” “water, and chickens assume immediate significance of a kind which they would otherwise not have possessed by any other means. With the animate juxtaposed with the inanimate, and the white color in contrast with the red; here we have in our minds’ eye meaningful textures and clear, delightful colors. We become aware that it is important to perceive them to make life fuller, and that so much depends on how we perceive them both in our life and in our writing of poetry.

13. Robert Frost (1874-1963)

1. life: he was the most popular American poet from 1914 to his death. His verse was at first terrifying and later filled with more sunshine. His poetry is full of life, truth, and wisdom. He wrote about building fences, picking apples, about the universal matters of life and death, good and evil. With the deceptive , rustic(质朴的) simplicity. He showed little interest in experimentation in form. Yet he was regarded as a modern poet because of

his modern thematic concern. In his poems he managed to construct a “momentary stay against confusion”. The grotesque characters under his pen reveal the tension of modern life and alienation among modern people. He used simple language, a graceful style, and traditional forms of poetry. He was often deceptively simple, exploring complexity through triviality. He used symbols from everyday life to express profound ideas.

2. Works:

Birches

Mending wall

The Road not Taken

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

The wood Pie

Design

14. Carl Sanburg (1878-1967)

1. life: his most cherished ideal in life was to be “the word of people”, to articulate in song the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of ordinary men and women.

2. *Fog*

The fog comes

On little cat feet.

It sits looking

Over harbor and city

On silent haunches

And then moves on.

15. e.e. cumings (1894-1963)

1. life: He was probably the most interesting experimentalist in modern American poetry.

2. Works:

O sweet spontaneous

16. Willa Cather (1873-1947)

My Antonia 1918

The Professor's House 1925

17. Thomas Wolfe (1873-1938)

Look Homeward, Angel 1929

You Can't go Home Again 1940

18. John Dos Passos (1896-1970)

U.S.A.-----

The 42nd Parallel 1930

1919 1932

The Big Money 1936

19. Black American Literature

1. Richard Wright (1908—1960)
Native Son 1940
2. Ralph Ellison
Invisible Man 1952
3. James Baldwin (1924-1986)
Go Tell It on the Mountain 1954
4. Langston Hughs (1902-1967)
The Weary Blues----collection of poems
The ways of white ways ----collection of short stories
5. Toni Morrison(1931--)
The Bluest Eye 1970
Sula 1973
Song of Solomon 1977
Beloved 1987
Jazz 1992
Paradise 1998

20. Jewish American Writers

1. Saul Bellow (1915--)
Dangling Man 1944
The Adventures of Augie March 1953
Henderson the Rain King 1958
Herzog 1964
Humboldt's Gift 1975
2. Isaac Bashevis Singer (1904-1991)
The collected Storied of Isaac Bashevis Singer 1982
The Family Moskat 1950
3. Bernard Malamud (1914-1986)
The Assistant 1957
The Nautural to Dubin's Lives 1973
The Magic Barrel 1958
A New Life 1962

21. Women Writers in America.

1. Katherine Anne Porter (1890—1980)
Flowering Judas and other Stories 1930
Pale Horse, Pale Rider 1939
Ship of Fools 1962
2. Joyce carol Oates(1938-)
them 1'969
Wonderland 1971
3. Flanner O'Connor (1925-1964)
The Complete stories 1971
Wise Blood 1952

A Good Man Is Hard to Find 1955

Everything That Rises Must Converge 1965

22. Postmodern fiction:

1. Emergence: In literature, postmodernism has its origins in the rejection of traditional mimetic(模仿的)fiction in favor of heightened(加强, 提高) sense of artifice, a delight in games of words, a suspicion of absolute truth and resulting inclination to stress the fictionality of fiction. The postmodern writers denied the feasibility(可行性, 可能性)of any literary art to represent or bring order to reality because they believed that reality was multiple, elusive(难以捉摸的, 闪避的) and uncertain. They created confusion so that readers would come to terms with(慢慢习惯)the absurd reality. Postmodern fiction did not form a unified movement with a coherent theory. It was characterized by a multiplicity of individual voices. They did share a common sense that all forms of dogma, convention, ideology needed to be reexamined and replaced if necessary by fresher systems more suitable to the times.
 2. Major concepts:
 - 1) postmodern writers emphasized randomness and discontinuity, blurred the distinction between author and fictional character.
 - 2) Postmodern writers rejected the traditional reference, and created text characterized by gimmicks (tricks, traps), playfulness, and narcissism(自我陶醉, 自恋) through parody and burlesque(滑稽、讽刺作品). It tried to render concrete and even visual in its language, the disorder, the chaos, the violence, the incongruity(不和谐), but also the energy and vitality, of American reality.
 - 3) It seems that the fundamental rule of the postmodern fiction is the absurd and the arbitrary(任意的, 随意的)
 - 4) Postmodern writers held that the reality of modern life was too elusive and uncertain for people to rationalize(使合理化, 使理性化) and idealize.
 - 5) The distrust of traditional mimetic genres, allied to the philosophical climate of structuralism and deconstruction, has encouraged postmodernism to embrace popular forms, such as detective fiction, science fiction, and fairy tale. In short, disorder, deliberate chaos, fragmentation, violation, disruption, (崩裂, 中断)dislocation, decentering, contradiction, confrontation(对抗, 冲突), multiplicity(多样性)and indetermination(不确定性)comprise and accompany the postmodern text.
 - 6) A reaction against Modernism
- Modernists tried to control fragmented society through the agency of art and give it an art form, but postmodern writers were too nihilistic to trust their own ability to give shape or significance to the absurd world.

23. Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977)

Lolita 1958--- it deals with Lolita, a girl of 12, who has an abnormal love affair with her stepfather of 40.

24 Donald Barthelme (1931-1989)

Snow White 1967---won him the National Book Award

25. Black Humor: Black Humor refers to the use of the morbid and absurd for darkly comic (喜剧的) purposes. It carries the tone of anger and bitterness in the grotesque(怪诞的) situations of suffering, anxiety and death. It makes readers laugh at the blackness of modern life.

26. Kurt Vonnegut(1922-)

Slaughterhouse Five 1969

27. Joseph Heller(1923-)

Catch-22 1961

28. John Epdike (1932-)

Rabbit, Run 1960

Rabbit Redux 1971

Rabbit Is Rich 1981

29. Norman Mailer (1923-)

The Naked and the Dead 1948

The Armies of the Night 1968---national book award

30. J.D. Salinger (1919--)

The Catcher in the Rye 1951

31. John Barth (1930-)

The Sot-Weed Factor 《烟草代理商》

32. Thomas Pynchon (1937-)

V 1963

The Crying of Lot-49 《拍卖第 49 批》

33. Beat Generation

- 1) The meaning of beat: the word is used as a pun. On the one hand it means "beaten down, destroyed"; on the other it means "beatific" (赐福的, 极乐的). The term itself carries the idea of mystical inspiration. In essence, the word "beat" represents a nonconformist, rebellious spirit toward conventional values concerning sex, religion, education, politics and American way of life in general.
- 2) The beat generation was a generation of men and women in their teens and early twenties who tended to alienate from general society because they rejected conventional social and moral values. They emphasize the free expression of emotions. Their activities were marked by an experimental quest for new way of life.
- 3) Characteristics:
 - (1) the beats were fed up with the official explanations of why things happened.
 - (2) The beats rejected middle class values, commercialism and conformity.
 - (3) The beats withdrew from politics and from the obligations of citizenship.
 - (4) The beats rejected universities and the academic tradition.

- (5) The beats promoted a free, non-materialistic religion with no formal church, but based loosely on the teaching of Buddha, comprising love, gay , and anarchy. Their philosophy of life was based on Zen Buddhism, an oriental mysticism.
- (6) The beats regarded modern American life as so cruel, selfish, and impersonal (没有感情的) that writers and artists were driven to madness.

34. Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)

Howl ---poem 1956, a manifesto of the Beat Generation

35. Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)

On the Road ---novel, journey to look for freedom

36. Modern Drama

1. Eugene O’Neil (1888-1953)
 - 1) life: America’s greatest playwright. He is regarded as American Shakespeare.
 - 2) Works:
 - The Hairy Ape* 1922
 - The Emperor Jones* 1920
 - The Great God Brown* 1926
 - Mourning Becomes Electra* 1931
 - The Iceman Cometh* 1946
 - Long Day’s Journey into the Night* 1956
2. Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)
 - The Glass Menagerie* 1945 《玻璃动物园》
 - A streetcar Named Desire* 1947
 - Cat on a Hot Roof* 1955 《热铁皮屋顶上的猫》
3. Arthur Miller (1915-)
 - Death of a Salesman* 1947

37. Theatre of the Absurd

This is the kind of theatre which develops from the existentialist philosophy, mainly in Europe. Its important playwright include Samuel Beckett (1906--), Eugene Ionesco(1912-), and Albee (1928-

- (1) Basic assumption: human life lacks coherence and is chaotic. Everything is uncertain. People can not count on anything.
- (2) The world is meaningless, so the play appears meaningless.
- (3) It examines the problems of life and death, of isolation and communication.
- (4) It satirizes people who are unaware of the ultimate reality (death)
- (5) In absurd drama, situation is more important than character or events.

38. Edward Albee (1928-)

Zoo Story 1958

The Sandbox 1961

The American Dream 1961

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? 1962