

What is Literature?

Literature is considered as one of the most important forms of art that has ever been invented. It has helped a lot in the development of early civilizations and the modernization of the world as a whole. Experts also agree that literature is instrumental in bridging the gap and differences among nations of different culture.

Literature is defined as the linguistic evidence of the mental and emotional attempt of people to shed light on human struggles and aspirations. Since it is made and written in a particular time, it has cultural aspects that must be taken consideration. These also refer to the achievements of a particular time in areas like history, politics, education, religion, and most importantly, in the arts.

Literature is derived from the Latin term "*Littera*", which means "letters". It is the enduring expression of significant human experiences in words well-arranged. These are referred to as significant human stories that are passed from one generation to another by word of mouth. It is also considered as the art of using the language. Some experts define it as the author's ultimate expression of his thoughts and feelings. Words are considered to be flesh and blood of literature (Rodil, Cuntapay, Lusito, & Garay 2014).

Literature **is** a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature may be classified according to a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter.

According to Rexroth (2007), definitions of the word *literature* tend to be circular. The 11th edition of *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* considers literature to be "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest." The 19th-century critic Walter Pater referred to "the matter of imaginative or artistic literature" as a "transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinitely varied forms." But such definitions assume that the reader already knows what literature is. And indeed its central meaning, at least, is clear enough. Literature is first and foremost humankind's entire body of writing; after that it is the body of writing belonging to a given language or people; then it is individual pieces of writing. But already it is necessary to qualify these statements. To use the word *writing* when describing literature is itself misleading, for one may speak of "oral literature" or "the literature of preliterate peoples." The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page; they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond "mere" pleasure. Literature also functions more broadly in society as a means of both criticizing and affirming cultural values.

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What is World Literature?

"I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men... I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach."

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, speaking to his student, Johann Peter Eckermann, in 1827 (Germany).

"The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed... National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature."

—Karl Marx, writing on the Communist Manifesto in 1847 (Germany)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe introduced the concept of *Weltliteratur*—"world literature"—in 1827 to describe the growing availability of literary texts from other nations.

Karl Marx used the term in his Communist Manifesto in 1847 to describe the “cosmopolitan character” of bourgeois literary production.

Although anthologies and books of “world literature” have often used the term to market a largely Western—European and American—canon, the past decades have given rise to a much more expansive selection of works.

Aims of Literature

- *Inspire and Uplift the taste* – A person gets to appreciate a literary work if it would inspire him to become a better person. He/she is able to realize certain values and virtues essential for living.
- *To read for pleasure* – Reading is a very good pastime because one could learn a lot from it. This activity enhances people’s perspective and thereby enables them to think rationally and analyze critically so that one could come up with an informed opinion. Reading also develops one’s vocabulary, which could be helpful in expressing ideas and thoughts.
- *Widens experiences* – Experience, as it is said, is the best teacher. By reading these literary texts, readers get to experience the things which they have not encountered before. This encounter is one of the priceless values that literature could offer.

Values Derived from Literature

- *Intellectual* – the way how a particular work is presented and what are the basic truths realized. It gives us more knowledge of things. It feeds our hungry minds so that we could learn more and be more informed.
- *Emotional* – the personal appeal made to the reader. A particular literary work could touch our soul by the emotional value that it carries and imparts. It could also bring the best ideas and at times, the worst among people. The emotional appeal made on the reader is one tool in measuring the effect or impact of a work.
- *Aesthetic* – concerns with the beauty enclosed in a particular literary work, in terms of how it has been written, the lines, and most especially the message it conveys.
- *Didactic* – this value of literature imparts moral aspects in which it can bring about improvement in the customs and norms of the society
- *Functional* – defines the use of literature. Most writers use their works as avenues in expressing their ideas and thoughts while others use their works in order to echo their grievances on a social and political system either presently or in the past.

Literary Standards

The following are important standards that must be considered in studying literature:

1. *Artistry* – It appeals to the sense of beauty.
2. *Intellectual value* – It can stimulate one’s intellect and can enrich mental activity by realizing the basic truths in life and human nature.
3. *Suggestiveness* – A good literary work moves and stirs deeply the feeling and imagination
4. *Spiritual value* – Literature elevates the spirit by bringing out moral values which can motivate readers to become a better person.
5. *Permanence* – A great work of literature endures. It can be read repeatedly for its appeal is lasting.
6. *Universality* – A great literary piece is timeless and timely. Forever relevant, it appeals to one and all, anytime, anywhere because it deals with universal and fundamental truths and conditions.
7. *Style* – It is the unique way in which a particular writer sees life, forms ideas, and presents them to the readers.

Two (2) Literary Genres

1. *Fiction* – It is defined as narrative literary work whose content is produced by the imagination and is not necessarily based on fact. In fiction, something is feigned, invented, or imagined, called a made-up story.
2. *Nonfiction* – It is a short literary composition that reflects the author's outlook or point of view. It corresponds to a short literary composition on a particular theme or subject that is usually in prose and is generally analytic, speculative, or interpretative.

Ingredients of Literature

These refer to the very important aspects in a literary work that writers must adhere to.

1. *Form* – It is a verbal and artistic structuring of idea in any literary piece. It may be in the form of stanzas, rhyme, meter for poetry; of arrangement of incidents in a particular plot or of the sequence in which ideas are developed for the novel, of the development and sequence of ideas for the essay. It is somehow always connected with arrangement and, in the large sense, the satisfaction of man's need for significant patterns.
2. *Subject* – Any work of literature is about something, and for this reason, it has a subject. It usually refers to a person or idea, events, and human condition or system of value in which the topic of the poem deals with it.
3. *Point of View* – This is referred as the angle of vision of the narrator – first person, omniscient, modified omniscient, etc. It could also mean the tone of the utterance that is the sense that the reader gains from the author's attitude toward the subject. It deals with the problems of persons and irony, where the statement of characters and/or narrator are not necessarily those of the author. It is the voice through which a writer tells a story.

History and Timeline of Literature

Mark (2009) stated that literature is the written work of a specific culture, sub-culture, religion, philosophy or the study of such written work which may appear in poetry or in prose. Literature, in the west, originated in the southern Mesopotamia region of Sumer (c. 3200) in the city of Uruk and flourished in Egypt, later in Greece (the written word having been imported there from the Phoenicians) and from there, to Rome. Writing seems to have originated independently in China from divination practices and also independently in Mesoamerica and elsewhere.

The first author of literature in the world, known by name, was the high-priestess of Ur, Enheduanna (2285-2250 BCE) who wrote hymns in praise of the Sumerian goddess Inanna. Much of the early literature from Mesopotamia concerns the activities of the gods but, in time, humans came to be featured as the main characters in such poems as *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* and *Lugalbanda and Mount Hurum* (c.2600-2000 BCE) (Mark, 2009).

For the purposes of study, literature is divided into the categories of fiction or non-fiction today, but these are often arbitrary decisions as ancient literature, as understood by those who wrote the tales down, as well as those who heard them spoken or sung pre-literacy, was not understood in the same way as it is in the modern-day.

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According to Rodil, Cuntapay, Lusito, & Garay (2014), literature began as soon as the different forms of writing were invented by the early people who put into writing everything that they have observed in their surroundings. Among the early forms of handwriting are:

- *Cuneiform* – a form of writing made up of wedge-shaped characters.
- *Hieroglyphics* – picture writing seen in some pyramids found in Egypt and in other ancient countries. These pictures depict the events that took place and are regarded as significant for they have divine and religious

symbolisms. Further development took place when the Greeks and the people from Phoenicia invented the alphabet. It made up of:

Phoenician Consonant Scripts + Greek Vowels = Real Alphabet

Timeline of Literature

These periods are spans of time in which literature shared intellectual, linguistic, religious, and artistic influences. In the Western tradition, the early periods of literary history are roughly as follows:

- **Ancient Periods (Beginnings to 100 A.D.)**

- A. *Invention of Writing and Earliest Literature*

Writing was not invented for the purpose of preserving literature; the earliest written documents contain commercial, administrative, and legal information, and were created by the first “advanced” civilizations in an area. The oldest writing was pictographic; later, hieroglyphic and cuneiform scripts were invented to record more complicated information. Begun in 2700 BC and written down about 2000 BC, the first great heroic narrative of world literature, Gilgamesh, nearly vanished from memory when it was not translated from cuneiform languages into the new alphabets that replaced them. Gilgamesh was reintroduced to the world when a portion of it, Utnapishtim’s “Story of the Flood”, which is almost similar to the biblical story of the flood, was accidentally discovered in 1872.

- B. *Poetry and Thought in China*

The Classic of Poetry is a lyric poetry collection that stands at the beginning of the Chinese literary tradition. The fusion of ethical thought and idealized Chou traditions associated with Confucius were recorded in the Analects by Confucius’ disciples following his death. During the period of the Warring States, Ssu-ma Ch’ien produced the popular Historical Records, chronicling the lives of ruling families and dynasties in a comprehensive history of China up to the time of Emperor Wu’s reign.

- C. *India’s Heroic Age*

“The ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity of India’s billion people has given rise to a diverse written and oral literary tradition that evolved over 3,500 years. The first known writings, originating from the Aryans, are the Vedas. They are the primary scriptures of Hinduism and consist of four books of sacred hymns that are typically chanted by priests at ceremonies marking rites of passage. Two (2) epics that express the core values of Hinduism are the “Ramayana” and the “Mahabharata”. Several core concepts of Hindu thought permeate the early literature of India. *Dharma* is the guiding principle of human conduct and preserves the social, moral, and cosmic integrity of the universe. It refers to sacred duties and righteous conduct, and is related to three (3) other spheres that collectively govern an ideal life: *artha* (wealth, profit, and political power); *kama* (love, sensuality); *moksha* (release, liberation). All four (4) castes, or *varna*, of Hindus—*brahmans* (priests), *ksatriyas* (warriors), *vaishyas* (merchants), and *sudras* (laborers)—are bound by a specific set of duties, or *dharma*, but only *brahmans*, *ksatriyas*, and *vaishyas* can work toward *moksha*. Ultimately, because Hinduism and its important texts such as the Bhagavad-Gita were able to synthesize tenets and ideas from the other religions, it was able to triumph in India. Hindus also believe in a triad of gods—Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; Shiva the destroyer—who are responsible for the lives of all creatures on a cosmic scale. It is believed that worshipping Shiva or Vishnu eventually helps creatures escape from the cycle of karmic rebirth.

- D. *The Roman Empire*

Literature in Latin began with a translation of the Greek “Odyssey” and continued to be modeled after Greek sources until it became Christian. Borrowing from Greek sources by Roman writers was done openly and proudly. Virgil based his epic, the “Aeneid”, on the Homeric epics, but chose the coming of the Trojan War as his theme. Left unfinished at the time of his death, Virgil’s “Aeneid” combines the themes of the Homeric epics: the wanderer in search of a home from the “Iliad”, and the hero at war from the “Odyssey”. The 116 poems by Catullus that survived include a wide variety of topics: imitations of Greek poets, long poems on Greek mythological themes, scurrilous personal attacks on contemporary politicians and private individuals, light-hearted verses designed to amuse his friends, and a magnificent marriage hymn. The lyric poems that Catullus wrote about his love

affair with the married woman he called *Lesbia* range in tone from passionate to despairing to almost obscene. Born into the prosperity that followed civil strife, Ovid focused on themes associated with the sophisticated and racy lives of the Roman urban elite. As with Catullus, he adapted aspects of Greek Alexandrian works to his own ends. Ovid's extraordinary subtlety and psychological depth make his poetry second only to Virgil's for its influence on western poets and writers of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and beyond. Later exiled from Rome, Ovid's erotic poetry, particularly the "Art of Love", may be read as a political critique of the moral reforms instituted by Augustus. With its unrelated characters, none of which represents state values in the way that Aeneas does, the "Metamorphoses" can be read as an anti-Aeneid.

E. Roman Empire – Christian Europe (100 A.D. – 1500)

The life of the Hebrew prophet Jesus ended in the agony of the crucifixion by a Roman governor, but his teachings were written down in the Greek language and became the sacred texts of the Christian church. Jesus' death on the Cross and resurrection provided his followers and their converts with an unforgettable symbol of a new religious dispensation: the suffering of the son of God in human form to atone for the sins of humanity. The teachings of Jesus were revolutionary in terms of Greek and Roman feeling, as well as the Hebrew religious tradition. Unlike Greek and Roman religions, which were outward and visible, Christianity was inward and spiritual, emphasizing the important relationship between the individual and God. The Hebrew conception of God was broadened from one who was personal, non-anthropomorphic, omnipotent, omniscient, and infinitely just to one who was also infinitely merciful in his justice. The four (4) gospels were written in Greek about 40 to 60 years after the death of Jesus. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain a central core of material that is believed to have come from a now-lost source, known today as the Q document. Each of these Gospels addresses a different audience: Matthew wrote for a Jewish public, Mark for a Gentile audience, and Luke for cultured Greek readers. The Gospel of John draws upon different sources. The four (4) gospels were collected with other documents to form the New Testament, which Pope Damasus had translated from Greek to Latin by the scholar Jerome in 393–405. This translation soon became known as the Vulgate, the 'common' or 'popular' version.

- **Early Periods**

A. *The Classical Period (1200 BCE – 455 CE)*

- I. **Homeric or Heroic Period (1200 – 800 BCE)** - Greek legends are passed along orally, including Homer's "The Iliad" and "The Odyssey". This is a chaotic period of warrior-princes, wandering sea-traders, and fierce pirates.
- II. **Classical Greek Period (800 – 200 BCE)** - Greek writers, playwrights, and philosophers such as Gorgias, Aesop, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Euripides, and Sophocles. The fifth century (499-400 BCE) in particular is renowned as **The Golden Age of Greece**. This is the sophisticated period of the *polis*, or individual City-State, and early democracy. Some of the world's finest art, poetry, drama, architecture, and philosophy originate in Athens.
- III. **Classical Roman Period (200 BCE-455 CE)** - Greece's culture gives way to Roman power when Rome conquers Greece in 146 CE. The **Roman Republic** was traditionally founded in 509 BCE, but it is limited in size until later. Playwrights of this time include Plautus and Terence. After nearly 500 years as a Republic, Rome slides into dictatorship under Julius Caesar and finally into a monarchical empire under Caesar Augustus in 27 CE. This later period is known as the Roman Imperial period. Roman writers include Ovid, Horace, and Virgil. Roman philosophers include Marcus Aurelius and Lucretius. Roman rhetoricians include Cicero and Quintilian.
- IV. **India's Classical Age** - During the rule of the Guptas in ancient India, great achievements were made in mathematics, logic, astronomy, literature, and the fine arts. The development of Sanskrit, a literary language meaning 'refined, classified, and perfected', is also closely

associated with Gupta classicism. Classical Sanskrit literature deals extensively with courtly culture and life. Aiming to evoke aesthetic responses, many of the works admitted into the literary canon were poetic works written and performed by learned poets (*kavi*) who were under the patronage of kings. A highly stylized form of poetry, *kavya* literature consists of four main genres—the court epic, short lyric, narrative, and drama. Two (2) important collections of tales that have influenced tales around the world—the *Pañcatantra* and the *Kathasaritsagara*.

- V. **Patristic Period (c. 70 CE-455 CE)** - Early Christian writings appear such as Saint Augustine, Tertullian, Saint Cyprian, Saint Ambrose, and Saint Jerome. This is the period in which Saint Jerome first compiles the Bible, when Christianity spreads across Europe, and the Roman Empire suffers its dying convulsions. In this period, barbarians attack Rome in 410 CE and the city finally falls to them completely in 455 CE.

B. *The Medieval Period (455 CE – 1485 CE)*

- I. **The Old English (Anglo-Saxon) Period (428-1066 CE)** - The so-called "Dark Ages" (455 CE -799 CE) occurred when Rome fell and barbarian tribes moved into Europe. Franks, Ostrogoths, Lombards, and Goths settle in the ruins of Europe and the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes migrate to Britain, displacing native Celts into Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Early Old English poems such as *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, and *The Seafarer* originate sometime late in the Anglo-Saxon period. The **Carolingian Renaissance** (800- 850 CE) emerges in Europe. In central Europe, texts include early medieval grammars, encyclopedias, etc. In northern Europe, this time period marks the setting of **Viking sagas**.
- II. **China's Middle Period** - Confucianism declined in importance; Taoism and Buddhism in fact began to acquire a more important status. With an emphasis on personal salvation, they offered an alternative to the Confucian ideals of social and ethical collective interests.
- III. **The Golden Age of Japanese Culture** – Although Japanese poetry, drama, literature, and other writings of the Golden Age elaborate on a wide range of philosophical, aesthetic, religious, and political topics, and while literature and culture have flourished in Japan for over a thousand years, many misconceptions about Japanese literature persist. One of the earliest monuments of Japanese literature, the "Man'yōshū" (The Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves), appears to have been intended as an anthology of poetry anthologies. The "Kokinshū" combines great poems of the past with great poems of the present; it also integrates short poems into longer narrative sequences, thereby becoming more than a mere collection of poems. Murasaki Shikibu's "Tale of Genji", arguably the first significant novel in world literature, was written in the early 11th century. Although Shintoism, the native religion emphasizing the protective powers of supernaturalism, enjoyed widespread popularity, Buddhism began to play an increasingly important role in pre-modern Japan, most notably in the arenas of literature and drama.
- IV. **Mystical Poetry of India** - The literary genre of the medieval era, lyric poetry, was associated with *bhakti*, or mystical devotion to God. *Bhakti* is a populist literary form that is usually composed by poet-saints of all castes and both genders in their native tongues. *Bhakti* poetry is composed in many different regional languages and eulogizes Shiva, Krishna, and other important Hindu deities.
- V. **The Middle English Period (c. 1066-1450 CE)** - In 1066, Norman French armies invaded and conquered England under William I. This marks the end of the AngloSaxon hierarchy and the emergence of the 12th Century Renaissance (c. 1100-1200 CE). French chivalric romances--such as works by Chretien de Troyes--and French fables--such as the works of Marie de France and Jean de Meun--spread in popularity. Abelard and other humanists produce great scholastic and theological works. **Late or "High" Medieval Period** (c. 1200-1485 CE): This often tumultuous period is marked by the Middle English writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, the "Gawain" or "Pearl" Poet, the Wakefield Master, and William Langland. Other

writers include Italian and French authors like Boccaccio, Petrarch, Dante, and Christine de Pisan.

C. *The Renaissance and Reformation (c. 1485-1660 CE)*

(The Renaissance takes place in the late 15th, 16th, and early 17th century in Britain, but somewhat earlier in Italy and Southern Europe, somewhat later in northern Europe.)

- I. **Africa: The Mali Epic of Son-Jara** - The founding of the Mali empire is attributed to Son-Jara Keita, whose life and exploits are the subject of the Son-Jara, the national epic of the Manding people. The epic of Son-Jara developed by accretion, which together with its oral transmission, may account for its three (3) distinct generic layers. The ideological function of the epic is the construction of a Manding common identity under a founding hero.
- II. **Native America and Europe in the New World** - On November 8, 1519, Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes and a battalion of 400 soldiers entered and seized Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital of the emperor Montezuma. Although contact with the Europeans devastated the cultures of the native American groups, efforts were also made to preserve Aztec verbal arts.
- III. **Early Tudor Period (1485-1558)** - The War of the Roses ended in England with Henry Tudor (Henry VII) claiming the throne. Martin Luther's split with Rome marks the emergence of Protestantism, followed by Henry VIII's Anglican schism, which created the first Protestant church in England. Edmund Spenser is a sample poet.
- IV. **Elizabethan Period (1558-1603)** - Queen Elizabeth saves England
- V. From both Spanish invasion and internal squabbles at home. The early works of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Kydd, and Sidney mark Elizabeth's reign.
- VI. **Jacobean Period (1603-1625)** - Shakespeare's later work, Aemilia Lanyer, Ben Jonson, and John Donne.
- VII. **Caroline Age (1625-1649)** - John Milton, George Herbert, Robert Herrick, the "Sons of Ben" and others write during the reign of Charles I and his Cavaliers.
- VIII. **Commonwealth Period or Puritan Interregnum (1649-1660)** - Under Cromwell's Puritan dictatorship, John Milton continues to write, but we also find writers like Andrew Marvell and Sir Thomas Browne.
- IX. **Vernacular Literature China** - When the Mongol (Yuan) armies overran northern China and the southern Sung dynasties, they established themselves as a dynasty, abolishing governmental principles derived from Confucian teachings. Often building on works of classical literature, vernacular literature (dealing with sex, violence, satire, and humor) became known for its ability to elaborate creatively on plots of earlier works by filling in details or perhaps even by articulating what had been omitted. Under the Ch'ing Dynasty, and especially during the period known as the 'literary inquisition', classical Chinese writing suffered a devastating blow.
- X. **The Ottoman Empire** - On the 10th night of Muharram in 1040 (August 19, 1630), Evliya Celebi dreamed that the Prophet Muhammad appeared to him and encouraged him to pursue his wanderlust. Sometimes traveling in an official capacity and sometimes traveling as a private individual, Evliya Celebi recorded his observations in a vivid anecdotal style. The 10 volumes of his "Book of Travels" provided an unparalleled account of life in the Ottoman empire during the mid-17th century. Under Mehmed II the Conqueror, the Ottomans established an architectural style that symbolized their imperial ambitions, a new legal code, and a policy of imperial expansion. They continued and enriched Arabic and Persian literary traditions.

- **Later Periods of Literature**

- A. *The Enlightenment (Neoclassical) Period (c. 1660-1790)*

"Neoclassical" refers to the increased influence of Classical literature upon these centuries. The Neoclassical Period is also called the "**Enlightenment**" due to the increased reverence for logic and disdain for superstition. The period is marked by the rise of Deism, intellectual backlash against earlier Puritanism, and America's revolution against England.

- I. *Restoration Period (c. 1660-1700)* - This period marks the British king's restoration to the throne after a long period of Puritan domination in England. Its symptoms include the dominance of French and Classical influences on poetry and drama. Sample writers include John Dryden, John Lock, Sir William Temple, Samuel Pepys, and Aphra Behn in England. Abroad, representative authors include Jean Racine and Molière.
- II. *The Augustan Age (c. 1700-1750)* - This period marks the transition toward the upcoming Romanticism though the period is still largely Neoclassical. Major writers include Dr. Samuel Johnson, Boswell, and Edward Gibbon who represent the Neoclassical tendencies, while writers like Robert Burns, Thomas Gray, Cowper, and Crabbe show movement away from the Neoclassical ideal. In America, this period is called the **Colonial Period**. It includes colonial and revolutionary writers like Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Thomas Paine.
- III. *The Rise of Popular Arts in Pre-modern Japan* - Ihara Saikaku is known as a founder of new, popular 'realistic' literature, writing about the foibles of the merchant class in urban Japan. After the death of his friend and poetry companion, Matsuo Basho moved to Edo (now Tokyo) to better his chances at establishing a career as a teacher and corrector of poetry. Cultivating the persona of the lonely wayfarer, Matsuo Basho's austere existence was the antithesis to Saikaku's prosperity. As a prose equivalent of a linked sequence of haiku, Basho embedded haiku into the travel narrative of "The Narrow Road of the Interior".

- B. *Romantic Period (c. 1790-1830)*

Romantic poets write about nature, imagination, and individuality in England. Some Romantics include Coleridge, Blake, Keats, and Shelley in Britain and Johann von Goethe in Germany. Jane Austen also writes at this time, though she is typically not categorized with the male Romantic poets. In America, this period is mirrored in the **Transcendental Period** from about 1830-1850. Transcendentalists include Emerson and Thoreau. **Gothic writings**, (c. 1790-1890) overlap with the Romantic and Victorian periods. Writers of Gothic novels (the precursor to horror novels) include Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, and Victorians like Bram Stoker in Britain. In America, Gothic writers include Poe and Hawthorne.

- C. *Victorian Period and the 19th Century (c. 1832-1901)*

Writing during the period of Queen Victoria's reign includes sentimental novels. British writers include Elizabeth Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, and the Brontë sisters. **PreRaphaelites**, like the Rossettis and William Morris, idealize and long for the morality of the medieval world. The end of the Victorian Period is marked by intellectual movements of **Aestheticism** and "the **Decadence**" in the writings of Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde. In America, **Naturalist writers** like Stephen Crane flourish, as do early free verse poets like Walt Whitman and common measure poets like Emily Dickinson.

- D. *Modern Period (c. 1914-1945)*

In Britain, modernist writers include W. B. Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden, Virginia Woolf, and Wilfred Owen. In America, the modernist period includes Robert Frost and Flannery O'Connor as well as the famous writers of **The Lost Generation** (also called the writers of **The Jazz Age**, 1914-1929) such as Hemingway, Stein, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner. "**The Harlem Renaissance**" marks the rise of black writers such as Baldwin and Ellison. **Realism** is the dominant fashion, but the disillusionment with the World Wars lead to new experimentation.

- E. *Postmodern Period (c. 1945 Onward)*

T. S. Eliot, Morrison, Shaw, Beckett, Stoppard, Fowles, Calvino, Ginsberg, Pynchon, and other modern writers, poets, and playwrights experiment with metafiction and fragmented poetry. Multiculturalism leads to increasing canonization of non-Caucasian writers such as Langston Hughes, Sandra Cisneros, and Zora Neal Hurston. **Magic Realists** such as Gabriel García Márquez, Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier, Günter Grass, and Salman Rushdie flourish with surrealistic writings embroidered in the conventions of realism.

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Retrieved from <https://www.wwnorton.com/nawol/welcome.htm> last February 28, 2017.

Critical Approaches to the Study of Literature

Critical Approaches are different perspective we consider when looking at a piece of literature. According to Rebecca Hooker of . They seek to give us answers to these questions in addition to aiding us in interpreting literature:

1. What do we read?
 2. Why do we read?
 3. How do we read?
- **Deconstruction** is a school of literary criticism that suggests that language is not a stable entity, and that we can never exactly say what we mean. Therefore, literature cannot give a reader any one single meaning, because the language itself is simply too ambiguous. Deconstructionists value the idea that literature cannot provide any outside meaning; texts cannot represent reality. Thus, a deconstructionist critic will deliberately emphasize the ambiguities of the language that produce a variety of meanings and possible readings of a text.
 - **Feminist criticism** tries to correct predominantly male-dominated critical perspective with a feminist consciousness. This form of criticism places literature in a social context and employs a broad range of disciplines, such as history, psychology, sociology, and linguistics, to create a perspective that considers feminist issues. Feminist theories also attempt to understand representation from a woman's point of view and analyze women's writing strategies in the context of their social conditions.
 - **Marxist criticism** is a strongly politically-oriented criticism, deriving from the theories of the social philosopher Karl Marx. Marxist critics insist that all use of language is influenced by social class and economics. It directs attention to the idea that all language makes ideological statements about things like class, economics, race, and power, and the function of literary output is to either support or criticize the political and economic structures in place. Some Marxist critics use literature to describe the competing socioeconomic interests that advance capitalistic interests such as money and power over socialist interests such as morality and justice. Because of this focus, Marxist criticism focuses on content and theme rather than form.
 - **New criticism** evolved out of the same root theoretical system as deconstructionism, called formalist criticism. It was popular between the 1940's and the 1960's, but can still be found in some mutated forms today. New criticism suggests that the text is a self-contained entity, and that everything that the reader needs to know to understand it is already in the text. New critics totally discount the importance of historical context, authorial intent, effects on the reader, and social contexts, choosing to focus instead on the layers in the text. This school of criticism works with the elements of a text only – irony, paradox, metaphor, symbol, plot, etc. – by engaging in extremely close textual analysis.
 - **New historicism** focuses on the literary text as part of a larger social and historical context, and the modern reader's interaction with that work. New historicists attempt to describe the culture of a period by reading many different types of texts and paying attention to many different dimensions of a culture, including political, social, economic, and aesthetic concerns. They regard texts as not simply a reflection of the culture that produced them but also as productive of that culture by playing an active role in the social and political conflicts of an age. New historicism acknowledges and then explores various

versions of “history,” sensitizing us to the fact that the history on which we choose to focus is colored by being reconstructed by our present perspective.

- **Psychological criticism** uses psychoanalytic theories, especially those of Freud and Jacques Lacan, to understand more fully the text, the reader, and the writer. The basis of this approach is the idea of the existence of a human consciousness – those impulses, desires, and feelings about which a person is unaware but which influence emotions or behavior. Critics use psychological approaches to explore the motivations of characters and the symbolic meanings of events, while biographers speculate about a writer’s own motivations – conscious or unconscious – in a literary work.
- **Queer theory, or gender studies**, is a relatively recent and evolving school of criticism, which questions and problematizes the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation in literary texts. Queer theory overlaps in many respects with feminist theory in its aims and goals, being at once political and practical. To many queer theorists, gender is not a fixed identity that shapes actions and thoughts, but rather a “role” that is “performed.” It also challenges the notion that there is such a thing as “normal,” because that assumes the existence of a category for “deviant.” Queer theorists study and challenge the idea that these categories exist at all, but particularly in terms of sexual activities and identities.
- **Reader-response criticism** removes the focus from the text and places it on the reader instead, by attempting to describe what goes on in the reader’s mind during the reading of a text. Reader-response critics are not interested in a “correct” interpretation of a text or what the author intended. They are interested in the reader’s individual experience with a text. Thus, there is no single definitive reading of a text, because the reader is creating, as opposed to discovering, absolute meanings in texts. This approach is not a rationale for bizarre meanings or mistaken ones, but an exploration of the plurality of texts. This kind of strategy calls attention to how we read and what influences our readings, and what that reveals about ourselves.

Retrieved from <http://www.unm.edu/~hookster/Critical%20Approaches%20to%20Literature.pdf> last March 2, 2017.

Literary Devices

The literary devices are a collection of universal artistic structures that are so typical of all works of literature frequently employed by the writers to give meanings and a logical framework to their works through language. When such works are read by readers, they ultimately recognize and appreciate them. Because of their universality, they also allow the readers to compare a work of one writer to that of the other to determine its worth. They not only beautify the piece of literature but also give deeper meanings to it, testing the very understanding of the readers along with providing them enjoyment of reading. Besides, they help motivating readers’ imagination to visualize the characters and scenes more clearly.

- **Literary Elements** have an inherent existence in literary piece and are extensively employed by writers to develop a literary piece e.g. plot, setting, narrative structure, characters, mood, theme, moral etc. Writers simply cannot create his desired work without including Literary Elements in a thoroughly professional manner.
 - Plot: It is the logical sequence of events that develops a story.
 - Setting: It refers to the time and place in which a story takes place.
 - Protagonist: It is the main character of story, novel or a play e.g. Hamlet in the play Hamlet
 - Antagonist: It is the character in conflict with the Protagonist e.g. Claudius in the play Hamlet
 - Narrator: A person who tells the story.
 - Narrative method: The manner in which a narrative is presented comprising plot and setting.
 - Dialogue: Where characters of a narrative speak to one another.
 - Conflict: It is an issue in a narrative around which the whole story revolves.
 - Mood: A general atmosphere of a narrative.
 - Theme: It is central idea or concept of a story.

- **Literary Techniques**, on the contrary, are structures usually a word s or phrases in literary texts that writers employ to achieve not merely artistic ends but also readers a greater understanding and appreciation of their literary works. Examples are: metaphor, simile, alliteration, hyperbole, allegory etc. In contrast to Literary Elements, Literary Techniques are not unavoidable aspect of literary works.

Common Literary Techniques

- **Imagery**: It is the use of figurative language to create visual representations of actions, objects and ideas in our mind in such a way that they appeal to our physical senses.
 - The room was dark and gloomy. -The words “dark” and “gloomy” are visual images.
 - The river was roaring in the mountains. – The word “roaring” appeals to our sense of hearing.
- **Simile and Metaphor**: Both compare two distinct objects and draws similarity between them. The difference is that Simile uses “as” or “like” and Metaphor does not. For example:
 - “My love is like a red red rose” (Simile)
 - He is an old fox very cunning. (Metaphor)
- **Hyperbole**: It is deliberate exaggeration of actions and ideas for the sake of emphasis. For example:
 - Your bag weighs a ton!
 - I have got a million issues to look after!
- **Personification**: It gives a thing, an idea or an animal human qualities. For example:
 - The flowers are dancing beside the lake.
 - Have you see my new car? She is a real beauty!
- **Alliteration**: It refers to the same consonant sounds in words coming together. For example:
 - Better butter always makes the batter better.
 - She sells seashells at seashore.
- **Allegory**: It is a literary technique in which an abstract idea is given a form of characters, actions or events. For example:
 - “Animal Farm”, written by George Orwell, is an example allegory using the actions of animals on a farm to represent the overthrow of the last of the Russian Tsar Nicholas II and the Communist Revolution of Russia before WW II. In addition, the actions of the animals on the farm are used to expose the greed and corruption of the Revolution.
- **Irony**: It is use of the words in such a way in which the intended meaning is completely opposite to their literal meaning. For example:
 - The bread is soft as a stone.
 - So nice of you to break my new PSP!
- **Foreshadowing**: It is a literary device in which a write gives an advance hint of what is to come later in the story. For example:
 - Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” is rich with foreshadowing examples. One of which is the following lines from Act 2, Scene 2:

*“Life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love”*

In the balcony scene, Juliet is concerned about Romeo’s safety as she fears her kinsmen may catch him. Romeo says, in the above lines, that he would rather have her love and die sooner than not obtain her love and die later. Eventually, he gets her love and dies for her love, too.

- **Flashback**: It is a literary device in a story that provides some background information on events, situations, or a character’s past history; author’s often use flashbacks to reveal some important truth about a character’s past otherwise the readers might not have known. It is used not just to

provide the background of the story but to also tie together a theme. Also, flashbacks are used in films and televisions. For example:

- This excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is the very opening line of the novel.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

Much of the first chapter occurs in flashback as the narrator Nick Carraway thinks about what has brought him to the East Coast and how out-of-place he feels there. His father's quote stays with him, and it's an interesting example of flashback that also carries some element of foreshadowing in that Nick will spend much of the book considering privilege and how it changes people in different ways.

- **Symbolism:** It is usually an object that represents an idea that is significantly deeper, although it is sometimes a word, event or deed. For example:

- Here is an excerpt from William Blake's "Ah Sunflower." In it, Blake refers to life cycle and uses sunflowers to represent humankind and that they desire everlasting life.

"Ah Sunflower, weary of time, Who countest the steps of the sun; Seeking after that sweet golden clime Where the traveler's journey is done;"

- Black is used to represent death or evil.
- White stands for life and purity.
- Red can symbolize blood, passion, danger, or immoral character.
- A chain can symbolize the coming together of two things.
- Roses stand for romance.

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