

Lesson 9
I. TOPIC: Anglo-American Literature

- II. OBJECTIVES: At the end of this lesson, you are expected to:
- a. review the history of Anglo-American Literature;
 - b. list the features and themes of American literature in the 21st century; and
 - c. analyze through an Essay the personal and social issues Filipino-American face.

III.CONTENT

Review

History of English Literature

The history of English literature is closely intertwined with the history of the English people. It began with the formation of the English nation and evolved alongside the nation's social development. Throughout this history, England experienced significant religious, political, and scientific changes, each of which had a profound impact on literature. These changes gave rise to different phases, referred to as Ages or Periods, which were named after monarchs, writers, or the prevailing spirit of the time. The names and durations of these ages may vary among historians, but a reliable list based on M. H. Abrams includes these distinct periods:

1. 450-1066: **The Old English Period** or **The Anglo-Saxon Period**
2. 1066-1500: **The Middle English Period**
 - a) **The Anglo-Norman Period** (1066-1340)
 - b) **The Age of Chaucer** (1340-1400)
3. 1500-1660: **The Renaissance Period**
 - a) **Elizabethan Age** (1558-1603)
 - b) **Jacobean Age** (1603-1625)
 - c) **Caroline Age** (1625-1649)
 - d) **Commonwealth Period** (1649-1660)
4. 1660-1785: **The Neoclassical Period**
 - a) **The Restoration Period** (1660-1700)
 - b) **The Augustan Age** or **The Age of Pope** (1700-1745)
 - c) **The Age of Sensibility** or **The Age of Johnson** (1745-1785)
5. 1798-1832: **The Romantic Period**
6. 1832-1901: **The Victorian Period**
 - i) **The Pre-Raphaelites** (1848-1860)
 - ii) **Aestheticism** and **Decadence** (1880-1901)
7. 1901-1939: **The Modern Period**
 - i) **The Edwardian Period** (1901-1910)
 - ii) **The Georgian Period** (1910-1936)
8. 1939: **The Post-modern Period**

1. **The Old English Period** or **The Anglo-Saxon Period** (450-1066)
This age started in the fifth century when the Jutes, Angles and Saxons came to England from Germany, defeated the English tribes and started their reign. It ended in 1066 with the Norman Conquest.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:
(1) Christianization of the pagan tribes began in England
(2) In the 7th century Christian authorities established monasteries where written literature began, whatever had existed as literature before that time was oral.
(3) Alfred the Great who reigned over England from 871 to 901 encouraged education and supervised the compilation of The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Major Literary Works of the Period:
Beowulf, the earliest epic in English, was written in this period. "*The Wanderer*", "*The Seafarer*", "*The Husband's Message*" and "*The Wife's Lament*" are among the remarkable literary works of the age. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle written in this age is the earliest prose of English literature.

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“If you tell the truth,
you don’t have to
remember anything.”
– Mark Twain

Reference:
Sanchez (2016), et. al., 21st
Century Literature from the
Philippines and the world, Vibal
Group, Inc.

Luebering, J. (2023, May 31).
Periods of American Literature.
Encyclopedia Britannica.
<https://www.britannica.com/list/periods-of-american-literature>

Main Literary Features of the Age:

1. Most of the literary works are anonymous.
2. Paganism dominates the literary spirit of the time though Christianity is also traceable.
3. Strong belief in Fate is reflected.
4. Evil is symbolized by monsters,
5. Romantic love is absent.
6. Attitude to women is respectful.
7. Sea adventures, savagery and heroic activities are honored.
8. Use of more metaphors and less similes is the practice of the time.
9. Alliteration is used as the chief ornamental device and all alliterative syllables are stressed.
10. Kennings (compound words instead of single words) are widely used. Here are some examples: "whale-road" for sea, "loaf-giver" for king "life-house" for body, "soul-destroyer" for monster, etc.
11. Verse lines do not have equal number of syllables. Syllables in one line vary from six to fourteen.
12. End-rhyme is ignored.

2. The Middle English Period (1066-1500)

This period started with the Norman Conquest in 1066 and ended at the close of the fifteenth century. There are two shorter ages within this period. The time from 1066 to 1340 is called Anglo-Norman Period because the literature of that period was written mainly in Anglo-Norman, the French dialect, spoken by the new ruling class of England. The period from 1340 to 1400 is called the Age of Chaucer because Chaucer, the great poet, dominated this period. The time from 1066 to 1500 is called The Middle Ages. The early part of the Middle Ages is called the **Dark Ages** because what actually happened during that time can hardly be known.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. The English parliament was established in 1295.
2. Crusade, the religious battle between Muslims and Christians, took place in between 11th and 13th century.
3. Magna Carta, the great charter which limited the power of the monarchs was passed on 15th June, 1215.
4. In 1362 English was declared to be the language of law and courts.
5. The Feudal System, which had been very strong earlier, collapsed after the Black Death, a plague in 1348-49.
6. In the fourteenth century Reformation of English Church began under the leadership of John Wycliffe.
7. William Caxton established printing press in 1476.
8. Renaissance began with the fall of the then Constantinople in 1453. Mohammad II, the Sultan of the Ottoman Turks and a crusader, defeated the Christians in 1453 and occupied Constantinople, the then capital of the Byzantine Empire and the center of classical learning. After the defeat the Christian scholars fled to different parts of Europe where they spread their knowledge. Thus, ancient learning started reviving. This revival of the classical knowledge is called renaissance. Its features are: curiosity about the unknown, patriotism, desire for unlimited wealth and power, love of adventures, admiration for beauty, care for humanism and fondness for the past.
9. Columbus discovered America in 1492 and Vasco da Gama reached India in 1498.
10. During this period Copernicus (1473-1543) proved that the sun is the centre of all planets.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

John Wycliffe (1324-84):

* He is called the father of English prose.

The Bible (translated into English from Latin)

John Gower (1325-1408):

Confessio Amantis

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400):

Troilus and Criseyde (1387)

Canterbury Tales (1385-1400)

William Langland (1332-1386):

"Piers Plowman" (1362)

Sir Thomas Malory:

Morte d' Arthur (1485), the first romance in prose

Main Literary Features of the Age:

1. Poetry serves as the main genre.
2. Prose in English gets a strong foundation.
3. The English language reaches a considerable standard though old spelling continues.
4. Drama began in the form of "Mystery Play," "Morality Play" and "Interlude".
5. The writers of the age are influenced by Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.
6. Love, chivalry and religion are the three main literary subjects of this period.
7. The spirit of romance dominates the age.
8. Use of pentameter (ten syllables in each line) begins.
- 9) End-rhyme is introduced.
9. 10) Stressed alliteration is discarded and humor, irony and satire are brought into practice.

3. The Renaissance Period (1500-1660)

Though renaissance began in 1453, its effect on English life and literature was felt after 1500. For this reason, it is generally accepted that the Renaissance Period began with the beginning of the 16th century and continued till the Restoration in 1660. This period is called the Renaissance Period because renaissance spirit was the main driving force that characterized the literature of this time. This period of 160 years is subdivided into four shorter ages after the names of the political rulers:

- (a) Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)
- (b) Jacobean Age (1603-1625)
- (c) Caroline Age (1625-1649)
- (d) Commonwealth Period (1649-1660)

(a) Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)

This age is named after Queen Elizabeth I who reigned over England from 1558 to 1603. This is called the *Golden Age of English literature*.

The Important Facts Which Influenced the Literature of This Period:

1. With the accession of Queen Elizabeth I, dynastic problems and political troubles came to an end. Religious and social stability brought about national prosperity.
2. The religious Reformation inspired religious tolerance and secularism.
3. Elizabeth I introduced Anglicanism to settle religious problems. It has a long history. In the 16th century Martin Luther of Germany and Zwingli and Calvin of Switzerland protested against the autocracy of the then Pope. Those who supported them were called Protestants and those who still supported the Pope were called the papists or Catholics. Henry VIII who was the King of England during those years supported Protestantism for his personal advantage. He wanted to divorce his first wife, Catherine, and marry Anne Boleyn, his fiancée, but the Pope did not approve it. So, he denied Pope's authority, married Anne Boleyn and introduced Protestantism to England. Some of the people accepted King's religious authority but the rest followed the Pope's rule. This caused a bloody civil war which continued till 1558, the year Queen Elizabeth I came to power. She understood the problem and introduced Anglicanism, England's own church. This religious settlement brought stability and prosperity to England in the second half of the 16th Century.
4. Geographical and astronomical discoveries of the previous decades brought unlimited fortune during this period.
5. Renaissance that had started earlier was now very strongly felt in England. It brought ancient Greek and Roman wisdom to England. Erasmus reached England, and with John Colet, taught humanism and other ideals of renaissance.
6. The social life of England was marked with a strong national spirit, humanism, liberal religious views, scientific curiosity, social content, intellectual progress and unlimited enthusiasm.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Thomas More (1478-1535):

Utopia (or Kingdom of Nowhere). The book was originally written in Latin in 1516

Norton (1532-84) and Sackville (1536-1608):

Gorboduc (1562), the first English tragedy

Edmund Spenser (1552-99):

*He is called the poet of the poets because many later English poets followed his art of poetry.

The Faerie Queene (1590)

The Shepherd's Calendar (1579)

Nicholas Udall:

Ralph Roister Doister (1553), the first English Comedy

Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86):

"An Apology for Poetry" (1595), a critical treatise. *Arcadia* (1590), a book that bears the embryo of English novel

John Lyly (1554-1606):

*He is called a university wit.

Campaspe (1584)

Sappho and Phao (1584)

Midas (1589)

Euphues (1579), a book that bears the embryo of English novel

Thomas Kyd (1557-1595):

*He is another university wit.

The Spanish Tragedy (1585)

Robert Greene (1558-92):

*He is another university wit.

Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (1589)

James- IV (1591)

George Peele (1558-98):

*He is another university wit.

David and Bethsabe (1599)

Arraignement of Paris (1584)

University wits are a group of young dramatists who wrote and performed in London towards the end of the 16th century. They are called university wits because they were the witty students of Cambridge or Oxford. Marlowe, Kyd, Nashe, Greene, Lyly, Lodge and Peele were the members of this group. They upheld the classical ideals, and ridiculed the crudeness of the new English plays.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626):

*He is called natural philosopher.

Essays (1597)

Christopher Marlowe (1564-93):

*He is another university wit.

Tamburlaine the Great Part 1 & 11 (1587-88)

The Jew of Malta (1589)

Edward 11 (1591)

Doctor Faustus (1592)

William Shakespeare (1564-1616):

*The greatest English dramatist, famous for the objective presentation of his deep knowledge about human psychology. He is often called the bard of Avon. He wrote 37 plays and 154 sonnets. Of the total 37 plays he wrote the following 25 before the death of Queen Elizabeth I,

Henry VI (1st. Part 1591-92)

*Henry VI (2nd. Part 1591-92)

Henry VI (3rd. Part 1591-92)
Richard III (1593)
The Comedy of Errors (1593)
Titus Andronicus (1594)
The Taming of the Shrew (1594)
Love's Labour's Lost (1594)
Romeo and Juliet (1594)
A Midsummer Night's Dream (1595)
The Two Gentlemen of Verona (1595)
King John (1595)
Richard III (1596)
The Merchant of Venice (1596)
Henry IV (1st. Part. 1597)
Henry IV (2nd. Part. 1598)
Much Ado about Nothing (1598)
Henry V (1599)
Julius Caesar (1599)
The Merry Wives of Windsor (1600)
As You Like It (1600)
Hamlet (1601)
Twelfth Night (1601)
Troilus and Cressida (1602)
All's well That Ends well (1602)

Thomas Nashe (1567-1601):

*He is also called a university Wit.
The Unfortunate Traveler (1594)

Ben Jonson (1573-1637):

*A neo-classicist though he wrote in the time when romantic mode of literature was prevalent. He is called a neo-classicist because he followed the classical rules of drama:
Every Man out of His Humour (1600)
Every Man in His Humour (1601)
Beaumont (1584-1616) and *Fletcher* (1579-1625):
Philaster (1611)
A King and No King (1611)
The Maid's Tragedy (1610)

Main Literary Features of the Age;

- 1) Elizabethan literature reflects a great variety of creative genius.
- 2) It demonstrates experimentation and innovation in dramatic and poetic forms and techniques.
- 3) It is deeply influenced by the Renaissance spirit, especially by the Renaissance literature of Italy, France, and Spain.
- 4) In style it exhibits romantic exuberance.
- 5) Its writers are all men (not women) from all classes of the society.
- 6) It is an age of exquisite poetry, unparalleled drama and splendid prose.
- 7) It marks a shift from man's Fate to his free will.
- 8) It develops English language to a level of stable standard.
- 9) Its spirit ranges from the Platonic idealism or the delightful romance to the level of gross realism.
- 10) The literature of this age shows a quest for "*the remote, the wonderful and the beautiful*".
- 11) It reflects original romanticism that revived during the beginning of Romantic Age in 1798. 12) It initiates literary criticism.

(b) Jacobean Age (1603-1625)

The age is named after James I who reigned over England from 1603 to 1625. The word "Jacobean" is derived from "Jacobus", the Latin version of James. Some historians like to call the last five years of this age as a part of another age which they call the Puritan Age (1620-1660). They call it so because between 1620 and 1660 Puritanism became the driving force in the life and literature of England.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. (1) Colonial territories were expanded.
2. Religious conflict that subsided in the Elizabethan Age, revived in this period. Protestants were divided into three sects: (1) *Anglicans*, (2) *Presbyterians* and (3) *Puritans*.
3. Renaissance's influence continued.
4. Scotland was brought under the rule of the King of England.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Shakespeare who had started writing in the Elizabethan Period wrote twelve serious plays in this period. Those plays are:

1. *Measure for Measure* (1604)
2. *Othello* (1604)
3. *Macbeth* (1605)
4. *King Lear* (1605)
5. *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606)
6. *Coriolanus* (1606)
7. *Timon of Athens* (unfinished-1608)
8. *Pericles* (in part-1608)
9. *Cymbeline* (1609)

10. *The Winter's Tale* (1610)
11. *The Tempest* (1611)
12. *Henry VIII* (in part-1613)

Though Shakespeare wrote these serious plays in the Jacobean Age, he is called an Elizabethan dramatist and never the Jacobean. The period (1590-1616) in which he wrote his plays, is also called Shakespearean Age.

Ben Jonson who had started writing in the Elizabethan Period wrote his famous plays in this period:

- Volpone* (1605)
- The Silent Woman* (1609)
- The Alchemist* (1610)

Francis Bacon continued writing in this period:

- Advancement of Learning* (1605)
- Novum Orgum* (1620)

Some new essays were added to the new edition of his Essays (1625)

* King James I, known as the Wisest Fool, instituted the translation of the Bible into English in 1611. The Authorized King James Bible appears in 1611 and its language became the benchmark of English language.

John Webster (1580-1625):

- The White Devil* (1612)
- The Duchess of Malfi* (1614)
- Cyril Tourneur* (1575-1626):
- The Revenger 's Tragedy* (1600)
- The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611)

John Donne (1572-1631) and George Herbert (1593-1633), the metaphysical poets, started writing in this period,

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) The elegance and felicity of Elizabethan verse disappear..
- 2) The Platonic idealism which had been the main spirit of the Elizabethan era almost dies out.
- 3) Renaissance's spirit still remains the main influence.
- 4) Drama continues to dominate the literary scene.
- 5) Classical rules of drama are maintained by Ben Jonson.
- 6) Poetry takes a new and startling turn.
- 7) Decadence of art begins.
- 8) English language develops further.
- 9) Masque is innovated. 10) Satiric art begins.

(c) Caroline Age (1625-1649)

This age is named after Charles I who reigned over England from 1625 to 1649. "Caroline" is derived from "Carolus", the Latin version of "Charles". This age is also a part of the Puritan Age (1620-1660).

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

There was a civil war between "Cavaliers" and "Roundheads". Those who supported the King were called "Cavaliers". Most of them were lords and their dependants. "Roundheads" were those who supported parliament. Most of them were puritans.

A group of lyric poets associated with the "Cavaliers" are called "Cavalier poets". Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling, Robert Herrick and Thomas Carew were the members of this group. These poets are also called Sons of Ben as they were the admirers and followers of Ben Jonson. Their poems are trivial, gay, witty and often licentious.

- 1) In 1642 English theatre was officially closed. On 14 June 1643 Licensing Order for printing was passed.
- 2) The Cavaliers were defeated; the King was caught and publicly beheaded on 30th January, 1649. His death marked the dissolution of monarchy for the time being.
- 3) English colonies were further expanded.
- 4) Oliver Cromwell emerged as a puritan leader and came to power in 1649.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Donne and Herbert continued writing their metaphysical poetry. Henry Vaughan (1621-95) and Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) also wrote metaphysical poetry.

John Milton (1608-74):

- Contus* (1634)
- Lycidas* (1637)
- "Of Education"* (1644)
- "Areopagitica"* (1644)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) Drama declines significantly.
- 2) Literature reflects revival of moral and intellectual awakening.
- 3) Elizabethan enthusiasm and national spirit disappear.
- 4) Literary scenario is overshadowed by gloom and pessimism.
- 5) Critical and intellectual spirit replaces natural outpouring of a heart.
- 6) Renaissance's influence continues.
- 7) Three types of poetry appear: puritan poetry, metaphysical poetry and cavalier poetry.
- 8) Cavalier poets appear and disappear; their straightforward, erotic short poems with the motto "*carpe diem*" disappear with them.
- 9) Sermons, pamphlets, history and philosophy are written in prose.

(d) Commonwealth Period (1649-1660)

This period, like the previous two periods, belonged to the Puritan Age. Only in this period there was no monarch in England. After the death of Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, the puritan leaders came to power. He died in 1658 when his son Richard Cromwell became the ruler of England. He ruled England till 1660. In this period Puritanism became gradually unpopular. The English people realized that monarchy was essential for them.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

John Milton did not write anything important in this period.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), political philosopher:

Leviathan (1651)

Jeremy Taylor (1613-67):

Holy Living (1650), a sermon in prose

Holy Dying (1651), a sermon in prose

Vaughan (1621-95) and *Marvell* (1621-78) continued writing

The influence of Renaissance and Puritanism died out by the end of this period. The Elizabethan romantic exuberance ended in this period.

4. The Neoclassical Period (1660-1785)

The age is called Neoclassical or Pseudo-classical Age to mean the artificiality of the writers of this age. They imitated the ancient Greek and Roman literary tradition but lacked the originality of the writers of that period.

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) The writers of this age imitated the style of the ancient Greek and Roman writers.
- 2) Much attention is paid to technical perfection rather than innovation or natural genius.
- 3) Human beings are given most importance. The literary ideal of the age is "art for man's sake", not "art for art's sake".
- 4) General rather than the individual qualities of human beings are given more importance.
- 5) Sophistication in thought and style is emphasized.

The Neoclassical Age comprises three shorter ages:

- (a) The Restoration Period (1660-1700)
- (b) The Augustan Age (1702-1745)
- (c) The Age of Sensibility (1745-85)

(a) The Restoration Period (1660-1700)

This period is called the Restoration Period because in this period, with the restoration of monarchy, the English literary tradition was restored. In the Commonwealth Period Charles II, the son of Charles I, escaped to France. After the death of Richard Cromwell, the people of England brought him back and made him King of England on May 29, 1660. He remained in power till his death in 1685 when James II, another son of Charles I, ascended the throne. He was a Catholic and most of the people who were Protestants wanted to dethrone him. In 1688 there was the Glorious Revolution (Bloodless Revolution) against him. He fled to France. William III of France, the husband of Mary, the daughter of James II, came to power. William ruled England till his death in 1702.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

- 1) A general reaction against puritanical restraints became very strong.
- 2) Two political parties - the Whig and the Tory - were formed. The Whigs were against the King and for the Protestants. The Tories supported the King and the Catholics.
- 3) In 1690 there was Jacobite Rising. The Catholics of Ireland, who were led by James II, fought against William's soldiers and were defeated.
- 4) In 1662 the Royal Society was founded to promote scientific research. Sir Isaac Newton was a member of it.
- 5) In 1695 the press was made free. Everyone was given liberty to express his or her views.
- 6) The Bill of Rights was adopted in 1689. It curtailed the monarch's power and increased parliament's power.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

John Milton (1608-74):

He started writing in the previous age, wrote his great epics in this period. He remained almost unaffected by the looseness of the Restoration Period.

Paradise Lost (1667), the great epic in English

Paradise Regained (1671)

Samson Agonistes (1671)

Samuel Butler (1612-80):

Hudibras (1663), a satire in verse

John Bunyan (1628-88):

The Pilgrim's Progress (1678), the famous allegory in prose

John Dryden (1631-1700):

All for Love (1778)

The Indian Emperor (1665)

Aureng-Zebe (1675)

Absalom and Achitophel (1681)

Mac Flecknoe (1682)

"*The Essay of Dramatic Poesy*" (1668)

John Locke (1632-1704):

An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690)

William Wycherley (1640-1715):

The Country Wife (1675)

The Plain Dealer (1676)

Aphra Behn (1640-1689):

The Rover (1677), a Restoration comedy

Oroonoko (1688), a prose fiction

William Congreve (1670-1729):

The Double Dealer (1693)

Love for Love (1695)

The Way of the World (1700)

George Farquhar (1678-1707):

The Recruiting Officer (1706)

The Beaux's Stratagem (1707)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) Imitation of the ancient Greek and Roman writers gives rise to Neo-classicism.
- 2) Puritan controls loosen and a wave of foppery and vulgarity sweeps the creative works.
- 3) Great English epics are written with proper elegance and grandeur.
- 4) Drama returns with the then French licentiousness and gaiety; it loses Elizabethan seriousness and splendor.
- 5) Comedy of manners and heroic tragedy become major dramatic genres.
- 6) Translation of great classical texts starts appearing.
- 7) Satirical verse becomes popular.
- 8) Literature of two extremes co-exists: Great epics, like *Paradise Lost*, and the moral wisdom, like *The Pilgrim's Progress*, are written. At the same time sensual comedies, like *The Country Wife*, are also written.

(b) The Augustan Age (1702-1745)

This age is called Augustan Age because the writers of this period imitated the style and elegance of the writers who wrote in Italy during the reign of the Emperor Augustus (27 B.C, -14 A.D). This span of time is also called the Age of Pope because Alexander Pope was the best-known poet of the time. During these years England was ruled by Queen Anne (1702-14), George I (1714-27) and George II (1727-60).

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. Scotland was annexed to England.
2. Jacobite rising continued.
3. The first cabinet of England was formed.
4. The first English daily newspaper, "The Daily Courant" appeared in London in 1702.
5. The number of coffee houses, pubs and clubs was multiplied and people learned the habit of living together.
6. A number of literary associations started. Of them the most famous was the Scriblerus Club. The members of this club were Alexander Pope, John Gay, John Arbuthnot, Jonathan Swift and Thomas Parnell. The other clubs of this period were Kit-cat Club and the Spectator's Club.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Daniel Defoe (1659-1731):

Robinson Crusoe (1719)

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745):

The Battle of the Books (1704)

A Tale of a Tub (1704)

Gulliver's Travels (1726)

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729):

The Tatler and The Spectator (1709-1712).

* Addison wrote 274 out of total 555 essays published in them and Steele wrote the rest.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744):

The Rape of the Lock (1712)

Dunciad (1728)

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (1735)

An Essay on Criticism (1711)

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761):

Pamela or Virtue Rewarded (1740), the first English novel

Henry Fielding (1707-54):

Joseph Andrews (1742), a novel

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) Neo-classical spirit continues.
- 2) Poetry becomes a visual as well as a verbal art following Horace's theory "as in painting, so in poetry" ("Ut pictura poesis").
- 3) Precise, formal and elegant become the standard style of writing.
- 4) Moderation, realism and rationalism become the main principles of creative works.
- 5) The regular pentameter couplet and blank verse are developed to the best possible perfection.
- 6) Lyric poetry loses dominance.
- 7) Satirical verse continues.
- 8) Satirical prose appears; it blends fact and fiction in new forms, such as, biographies, travelogues, political allegories, and romantic tales.
- 9) Novels and journalism begin.
- 10) Translation of great classical texts continues.
- 11) Wit or inventiveness, and aptness of descriptive images or metaphors become major literary devices.
- 12) Literature mirrors political awareness.
- 13) Urban culture overpowers literature.

(c) The Age of Sensibility ((1745-85)

This age is called the Age of Sensibility because reason, sensible views and "original genius" controlled the literature of the time. It is also called the Age of Johnson after the name of Dr. Samuel Johnson who dominated this period. This age started after Pope's death and ended with the first edition of Lyrical Ballads in 1798.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. James Watt invented steam engine in 1769. In 1733 John Kay invented the flying shuttle. In 1764 Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny. All these contributed to the Industrial Revolution.
2. Industrial towns appeared,
3. There was revolution in agricultural production.
4. The British founded its empire in India in 1757 and lost its American colony in 1776.
5. French Revolution started in 1789 and continued till 1799. Voltaire (1694-1778) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) taught individualism and inspired revolution for more freedom and equality. During the reign of Louis XVI of France (whose wife was Marie Antoinette) there were several social inequalities among the people. The King and the nobility were enjoying all the good things of the country and the common people were deprived of their due shares. The law of the country was not equal for all classes of people. The existing social injustices prompted the great revolution known as the French Revolution in 1789. The slogan of the revolution was "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". The King along with his Queen was overthrown by the common people. This revolution had tremendous effect on the life and literature of the people of England.
6. In 1764 Dr. Johnson founded his famous literary club known as Johnson's Literary Club; its members were Burke, Pitt, Fox, Gibbon, Goldsmith and a few other great persons of the time.
7. The development of industry and commerce, the rise of political parties and democracy created problems and a change in the social infrastructure ensued.
8. A literate middle class grew and the range of reading public widened.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

1. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761):
 - * He had started writing novels in the previous age and wrote the following novels in this age.
Clarissa Harlowe (1748)
Sir Charles Grandison (1754)
2. Henry Fielding (1707-54):
 - * He had started writing novels in the previous age and wrote the following novels in this age.
Tom Jones (1749)
Amelia (1751)
3. Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84):
 - Dictionary* (1755)
The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia (1759)
"Preface to Shakespeare" (1765)
The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets (1779—81)
4. Thomas Gray (1716-71):
 - "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"* (1751)
5. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74):
 - The Citizen of the World* (1759)
The Vicar of the Wakefield (1766)
6. Edmund Burke (1729-97):
 - "On American Taxation"* (1774)
"Speech on Conciliation with America" (1775)
"Speech on Mr. Fox's East India Bill" (1783)
7. Edward Gibbon (1737-94):
 - The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) The Restoration spirit dies away.
- 2) The age marks a gradual change in poetic taste and techniques.
- 3) The heroic couplet and blank verse decline and the ballad and lyric revive.
- 4) Pindaric ode appears.
- 5) Intellectual prose writings flourished.
- 6) The novel takes a definite shape and rises to dominate the literary scene.
- 7) Poetry shifts its focus from intensely social issues to melancholy, isolation, and reflection.
- 8) Features of romanticism that flourishes in the next age come into view.
- 9) Literary criticism finds a solid ground.

5. The Romantic Period (1798-1832)

The age began in 1798 with the first edition of Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads and ended with the first Reformation Act in 1832. However, it is worth noting that the signs of Romantic literature came into view around 1785 when William Blake started writing his Songs of Innocence. This period is also called the Revival of Romanticism because the romantic ideals of the Elizabethan Period revived during these years. Lyrical Ballads brought about a great change in literature, both in subject and style. Instead of urban people and grand style, rural people and common language were preferred.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. After the French Revolution it was accepted that every individual was free and equally important.
2. Small industries disappeared and large industries with huge capital started.
3. Machines were widely introduced in coal and iron mines which multiplied productions.
4. Steam-engines were used in ships and trains. The train was first introduced in 1830.
5. Industrialization created lots of slums, child labor and labor problems.
6. The traditional social pattern started changing.
7. Ireland was united with England in 1801.
8. In 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act was passed and religious equity was ensured.
9. Use of machines in fields and industries made a large number of women jobless; of them many became either readers or writers.
10. In 1840 the Penny Post was introduced.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

William Blake (1757-1827):

Songs of Innocence (1789)

Songs of Experience (1794)

William Wordsworth (1770-1850):

Lyrical Ballads (1798)

The Prelude (1850) and other poems

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834):

Biographia Literaria (1817)

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) and other poems

Jane Austen (1775-1817):

She was an anti-romantic novelist in the Romantic Age. She is called so because of her stern attitude against youthful passion.

Pride and Prejudice (1797)

Sense and Sensibility (1797-98)

Mansfield Park (1814)

Emma (1816)

Charles Lamb (1775-1834):

The Essays of Elia (1823)

The Last Essays of Elia (1833)

William Hazlitt (1778-1830):

He was a famous critic.

The Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth (1820)

The Spirit of the Age (1825)

Lord Byron (1788-1824):

The Vision of Judgement (1822)

Juan (1824)

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-7 822):

Prometheus Unbound (1820)

Adonais (1821) and other poems

John Keats (1795-1821):

Endymion (1818)

Hyperion (1820)

Odes and Other Poems Letters

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) Creative enthusiasm reached almost the level of Elizabethan creative force.
- 2) It shifts its focus from earlier age's faith in reason to faith in senses, intuition, and imagination.
- 3) Subjective poetry replaces the objective poetry of the neoclassical age.
- 4) It values common, "natural" man and rejects artificial urban life as subject of poetry.
- 5) The language of common men, not the artificial "poetic diction" of the previous age, becomes the choice of the time.
- 6) It idealizes country life and "nature" becomes a means of divine revelation.
- 7) Romantic poetry reflects rebellious views against oppression, restraints, and controls. It celebrates human rights and individualism.
- 8) Romantic literature shows interest in the medieval past, the supernatural, the mystical, the "gothic," - and the exotic;
- 9) It emphasizes introspection, psychology, melancholy, and sadness.
- 10) Myth and symbolism get prominence.
- 11) In style, the Romantic poetry prefers spontaneity and free experimentation to strict conventional "rules" of composition, genre, and decorum. It prefers highly suggestive language to the neoclassical ideal of clarity and precision.
- 12) Lyric poetry dominates.
- 13) Women fiction flourishes. Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, Jane Porter, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen are female writers of the time.
- 14) Criticism becomes an inseparable part of literature, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Lamb, De Quincey and Hazlitt contribute to it.

6. The **Victorian Period** (1832-1901)

This age is named after Queen Victoria who reigned over England from 1837 to 1901. It may be noticed that though Queen Victoria came to power in 1837, the Victorian Period began in 1832, five years before the accession of Queen Victoria, because the literary features of the new age became obvious during 1832. The twelve years, from 1848 to 1860, of this age is called the Age of the Pre-Raphaelites because the artists of that time followed the art forms used before the period of Raphael (1483-1520), the Italian artist. D. G. Rossetti, W. H. Hunt and J. Millais formed this group and later on Christina Rossetti, W. Morris and A. Swinburne joined them. Originally it was a movement for the painters but eventually these ideals took the shape of a literary movement. Medievalism, symbolism, sensuousness, truthfulness and simplicity are the main features of the Pre-Raphaelites. The last two decades (1880-1901) of this period is called the Age of Aestheticism. In reaction against the Victorian moral obsession it was held that art should have its end in itself, which lies in its beauty and formal perfection. These decades also called Decadence because there was a fall and decay of the Victorian spirit and standard in these years.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. The First Reformation Act in 1832, the Second Reformation Act in 1867 and the Third Reformation Act in 1884 gave voting rights to every male and brought about significant changes in social life.
2. In 1833 slaves were declared free.
3. Chimney Sweeps Act in 1840 and Factory Act in 1833 prohibited child labour.
4. Mechanism of railways and ships was improved which helped develop overseas commerce and industry, and thus, brought material affluence.
5. There was a significant progress of women during this time.
6. Agriculture based society was disintegrated as the result of the development of industry. This had a strong effect on the rural people.
7. The theory of evolution and the concept of communism changed the traditional view of life and religion.
8. The Fabian Society was founded in 1883 to avoid violence in class-struggle. G.B. Shaw was one of the members of this society.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-59):

History of England (1849-61)

Cardinal Newman (1801-1890):

The Idea of a University

Loss and Gain

John Stuart Mill (1806-73):

On Liberty (1859)

Utilitarianism (1863)

The Subjection of Women (1869)

Charles Robert Darwin (1809-82):

The Origin of Species (1859)

The Descent of Man (1871)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-92):

* He is best known for his melodious language.

Poems (1833)

In Memoriam (1850)

Maud and other Poems (1855)

Edward Fitzgerald (1809-83):

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1859), translated into English from Persian

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865):

* She is popularly known as Mrs. Gaskell.

Mary Barton (1848)

Cranford (1853)

Ruth (1853)

* *North and South* (1855)

Sylvia's Lovers (1863)

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63):

Vanity Fair (1848)

The Virginians (1859)

Charles Dickens (1812-70):

The Pickwick Papers (1836)

Oliver Twist (1837)

David Copperfield (1850)

Bleak House (1852)

A Tale of Two Cities (1859)

Great Expectations (1861)

Robert Browning (1812-89):

* He is famous for his dramatic monologues.

Dramatic Lyrics (1842)

Men and Women (1855)

Dramatis Personae (1864)

Charlotte Bronte (1816-55):

Jane Eyre (1847)

Shirley (1849)

Villette (1853)

The Professor (1857)

Emily Bronte (1818-48):
 * *Wuthering Heights* (1847)

Karl Marx (1818-83):
Das Kapital (1867)

George Eliot (1819-80):
 * Her real name is Mary Ann Evans.
The Mill on the Floss (1860)
Scenes of Clerical Life (1858)
Adam Bede (1859)
Silas Marner (1861)
Romola (1863)
Middlemarch (1871-72)

Herman Melville (1819-1891):
Moby-Dick (1851)
Bartleby, the Scrivener (1853)

Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880):
Madame Bovary (1857)
Sentimental Education (1869)
The Temptation of Saint Anthony (1874)

Matthew Arnold (1822-88):
 *He was a poet and a critic, known for his strong moral voice.
"Essays in Criticism" (1888)
Culture and Anarchy (1867) and some poems

Mark Twain (1835-1910):
 *His real name is Samuel Langhorne Clemens.
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928):
 *He was a regional novelist and a poet.
The Return of the Native (1878)
The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886)
Tess of the D 'Urbervilles (1891)

Henry James (1843-1916):
Daisy Miller (1879)
The American (1877)
The Portrait of a Lady (1881)
The Tragic Muse (1890)
The Spoils of Poyton (1897)

Frederick Nietzsche (1844-1900):
The Birth of Tragedy (1872)
Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1885)
The Antichrist (1895)

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900):
 *He was a poet, novelist and dramatist.
Lady Windermere 's Fan (1892)
A Woman of No Importance (1893)
An Ideal Husband (1895)
The Importance of Being Earnest (1895)

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950):
 *He was a modern dramatist, famous for his 'drama of ideas'.
Arms and the Man (1894)
You Never Can Tell (1998)
Mrs. Warren's Profession (1898)

George Robert Gissing (1857-1903):
The Nether World (1889)
Born in Exile (1892)
Denzil Quarrier (1892)
The Odd Women (1893)
The Paying Guest (1895)
The Whirlpool (1897)

Charles Dickens:
A Critical Study (1898)

Kenneth Grahame (1859-1932):
Pagan Papers (1893)
The Golden Age (1895)
Dream Days (1898)
The Reluctant Dragon (1898)
The Headwoman (1898)

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936):
The Jungle Book (1894)
Departmental Ditties (1886)
Plain Tales from the Hills (1888)
Soldiers Three (1890)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) Victorian literature shifts from the Romantic utopianism to utilitarianism, from the Romantic imagination to reality, from the Romantic common man to middle class.
- 2) Victorian attitude to nature also changes. To the Romantics it was kind and harmonious; to the Victorians it is harsh and cruel.
- 3) Prudery and morality become the controlling principles of creative works.
- 4) It encourages "compromise and construction".
- 5) In the early part of the age literature chooses "art for life's sake" as the principle of art and asserts didactic purposes.
- 6) The mass of writings of this age reflects a highly idealized notion of "proper behaviour".
- 7) A dualism of reason and emotion, materialism and mysticism, religion and science or faith and doubt, freedom and restriction is very common in the literature of this period.
- 8) Poets, novelists and essayists of this age emphasize truth, justice, brotherhood, peace and stability.
- 9) Dramatic monologue and elegy are popular poetic forms of the age. Isolation, loss of faith, despair and emancipation of women are common themes of poems. Classical myths are retold in poems.
- 10) The novel becomes the domineering literary form in the Victorian Period. A typical Victorian novel has a long and complicated plot, an omniscient narrator whose comments on wrong and right serve moral purposes. It has a setting in a known city, a child protagonist, social and humanitarian themes, deeper character analyses, irony in the description and justification of all events in the final chapter. Its common subjects are exploitation of women and children, terrible living conditions, industrial civilization, lost identity, etc. A good number of novels written by women raise the feminist issues.
- 11) Towards the end of this period most of these features of the Victorian Age gradually disappear. A new movement known as the Decadence started. It brings back "art for art's sake". It emphasizes sensationalism, egocentricity, the bizarre, the artificial, etc. in literature. Swinburne, Dowson, Pater, Morris and the Rossettis are the writers of this group.

7. The Modern Period (1901-1939)

The period between 1901 and 1939 is generally accepted as the Modern Age of English literature. Queen Victoria's death in 1901 marks the beginning of this new literary era and the beginning of the Second World War in 1939 indicates its end. Modernism is more than a literary phenomenon; it is inclusive of many art forms that flourished in European countries including England.

The Modern Period comprises two shorter ages:

- (a) The Edwardian Period (1901-1910)
- (b) The Georgian Period (1911-1936)
- (a) Edwardian Period (1901-1910)

(a) The Edwardian Period (1901-1910)

The first decade of the twentieth century (1901-1910) is called Edwardian Age due to the fact that King Edward VII reigned over England during this decade. Some historians, however, think that the literary trends of this age continued until the outbreak of World War I in 1914; there are some others who think that those trends continued until the end of the First World War in 1918. Opinions about the end of this age vary because the literary features of this period did not have sharp closing point in time.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. The Edwardian Age covers a transitional time between Victorian stability and the impending holocaust of the First World War.
2. The first Nobel Prizes were awarded in 1901.
3. In 1902 the Second Boer War in South Africa split Britain into anti- and pro-war factions and the conflict eventually resulted in power reduction of the parliamentarians.
4. "Women's Social and Political Union" founded in Manchester in 1903.
5. "First Congress for Freudian Psychology" was held in Salzburg in 1908.
6. The first transatlantic wireless signals were sent by Guglielmo Marconi.
7. Pablo Picasso started "cubism" between 1907 and 1911.
8. Albert Einstein published his theory of relativity in 1905.
9. Earnest Rutherford published his book on radioactivity.
10. The Wright Brothers invented the airplane engine and flew for the first time in 1908.
11. The Old-Age Pensions Act was passed in 1908. It began as one of the foundations of modern social welfare.
12. The Poor Law that was passed in 1834 had serious effect on gender conditions.
13. Although abortion was illegal, it was nevertheless the most widespread form of birth control in use.
14. Irish National Theatre was founded in Dublin.
15. The working classes were beginning to protest politically for a greater voice in government and the level of industrial unrest on economic issues was high in 1908.
16. First women in the world get to vote in Finland in 1906.
17. British class system remained rigid.
18. Rapid industrialization deeply affected the social norms: interest in socialism increased, better economic opportunities demanded, the plight of the poor drew attention and the status of women and their demand for the right to vote surfaced.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Henry James (1843-1916):

The Wings of the Dove (1902)

The Ambassadors (1903)

The Golden Bowl (1904)

Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851-1935):

He is better known as A. C. Bradley, a famous critic on Shakespeare.

Shakespearean Tragedy (1904)

Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909)

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950):

He started writing in the previous age. He is a modern dramatist, famous for his 'drama of ideas'.

The Devil's Disciple (1901)

Caesar and Cleopatra (1901)

The Philanderer (1902)

Man and Superman (1903)

Major Barbara (1905)

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924):

The Nigger of the Narcissus, published in the previous age in 1898

Lord Jim (1900)

Heart of Darkness (1902)

The End of the Tether (1902)

Typhoon (1903)

Nostromo (1904)

The Mirror of the Sea (1906)

The Secret Agent (1907)

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936):

Kim (1901)

Just so Stories (1902)

Puck of Pook's Hill (1906)

Rewards and Fairies (1910)

John Millington Synge (1871-1909):

* He was an Irish dramatist.

In the Shadow of the Glen (1903)

Riders to the Sea (1904)

The well of the Saints (1905)

The Playboy of the Western World (1907)

The Tinker's Wedding (1907)

Deirdre of the Sorrows

Gilbert Keith Chesterton (1874-1936):

Heretics (1905)

Charles Dickens: A Critical Study (1906)

The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare (1908)

Orthodoxy (1908)

Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970):

Where Angels Fear to Tread (1905)

A Room with a View (1908)

Howards End (1910)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) The changes in economy brought new-found wealth and new demands. Literature of the time reflects indulgence in cuisine, fashion, entertainment and travels,
- 2) Advances in science had profound effect on life and literature. Automobile, electricity, radio, film, etc. opened new possibilities for art and artists.
- 3) The writers' attitude to the voice of the authority is critical unlike the submissive attitude of the Victorian writers.
- 4) The Victorian style still continues.
- 5) Women issues come 'to light in literary works.
- 6) The poor finds a stronger voice in literature.
- 7) Emphasis on moral conduct and prudery declines.
- 8) Greater awareness of human rights influences writings.
- 9) The late Victorian decadents' belief in "art for art's sake" continues. A sense of detachment alienates the serious artists from the general readers because of this belief. This resulted in a wide gap between serious works and popular works.
- 10) A mass reading public emerges as a consequence of the Education Act in 1870 for Compulsory primary education. Consequently, popular fiction was in great demand.
- 11) Many authors turn away from the Victorians' optimism and their self-imposed duty of civilizing the world (the white man's burden). These authors satirize Victorian values.
- 12) The advance of psychoanalysis has a deep impact on the creative works of this period.
- 13) The progress in comparative mythology has introduced the Gligentsia to the study of different belief systems. It has affected writers' faith in Christianity as the only correct faith.

(b) Georgian Period (1911-1936)

The period between 1910 and 1936 is called Georgian Period after the name of George V who reigned over England during these years. It is the second phase of the Modern Age. However, literary features of the Modern Age continued till 1939, the year in which the Second World War broke out. For this reason, it is generally agreed that the Modern Age ended in 1939.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

- 1) The Victorian peace and order were no more, Unrest and violence engulfed life.
- 2) Imperialism became a disturbing factor in the world. For colonial supremacy European nations engaged in rivalry that led to the First World War (1914-18). This war marks the end of Victorian optimism.

- 3) Socialism had great influence on the English life and thought. Class feeling became stronger.
- 4) The Fabian Society which was founded in 1883 now started transition of land and industrial capital from individuals to collective ownership in a peaceful way.
- 5) In 1918 women gained right to vote in Great Britain.
- 6) The First World War and its aftermath changed the traditional way of life.
- 7) The National Guilds League established in 1914 worked out the programs of guild socialism for gradual change from capitalism to socialism without any violence. Bertrand Russell was one of the members of it.
- 8) In the twenties and thirties frustration and discontent paralyzed life.
- 9) The Rhymers' Club was formed. The members of the club concentrated on the beauty of sound and ornamentation of subject. W.B. Yeats was a member of this club for some time.
- 10) Four anthologies entitled Georgian Poetry (1911-1922) were published.
- 11) Press tycoons started mass-audience newspapers.
- 12) "Dadaism", "Surrealism", "Imagism", "Impressionism" and "Expressionism" flourished as art movements.
- 13) The Titanic sank in 1912.
- 14) The October Revolution began in Russia in 1917.
- 15) W. B. Yeats won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923 and G. B. Shaw in 1926.
- 16) Foundation was laid for British Commonwealth of Nations.
- 17) Irish demand for independence became stronger.
- 18) World War II broke out in 1939.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) wrote most of his novels in the earlier period. In this period, he wrote his poems and short stories.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950):

Pygmalion (1913)
Heartbreak House (1921)
Saint Joan (1924)
The Apple Cart (1929)
Too True to Be Good (1932)

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939):

*He was a psychologist known for his theory of psycho-analysis.

Interpretation of Dreams (trans. 1913)
Psychopathology of Everyday Life (trans. 1914)

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924):

Under Western Eyes (1911)
Chance (1915)
Victory (1915)
The Shadow Line (1917)
The Rescue (1920)
The Rover (1923)

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939):

*He was a poet, dramatist and critic, famous for his use of symbolism and mysticism.

The Resurrection (1913)
The Wild Swans at Coole (1919)
The Cat and the Moon (1926)
The Tower (1928)
The Winding Stair and Other Poems (1933)

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), a philosopher:

Mysticism and Logic (1918)
The Analysis of Matter (1927)
History of Western Philosophy (1946), published in the Post-modern age.
Authority and the Individual (1949), published in the Post-modern age.

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965):

*He was a novelist and short story writer.

The Sacred Flame (1928)
Cakes and Ale (1930)
The Razor's Edge (1944), published in the Post-modern age.

John Edward Masefield (1878-1967):

The Midnight Folk (1922)
Collected Poems (1923)
The Bird of Dawning (1933)
Dead Ned (1938)

Edward Morgan Forster (1897-1970):

A Passage to India (1924)
Aspects of Novel (1927), a critical work
The Celestial Omnibus (1911), a collection of short stories
The Eternal Moment and Other Stories (1928)

Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (1881-1975):

*He is better known as P.G. Wodehouse. He is famous for his use of language. He wrote about 96 books.

The Man with Two Left Feet (1917)
Jeeves (1923)
Blandings Castle (1935)
Lord Emsworth and Others (1937)

James Joyce (1882-1941):

*He was a novelist, famous for his narrative technique known as stream of consciousness.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916)

Exiles (1918)

Ulysses (1922)

Finnegans Wake (1939)

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), a feminist:

The Voyage Out (1915)

Mrs. Dalloway (1925)

To the Lighthouse (1927)

The Waves (1931)

Flush (1933)

The Years (1937)

Franz Kafka (1883-1924):

* He was a novelist, short story writer and an existentialist.

The Metamorphosis (1915)

The Trial (1925)

The Castle (1926)

Amerika (1927)

David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930), a novelist:

The White Peacock (1911)

Sons and Lovers (1913)

The Rainbow (1915)

Women in Love (1921)

Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928)

Ezra Pound (1885-1972):

*He is one of the exponents of "Imagism", He wrote a two-line poem as an example of imagist poetry: Here is the poem:

"*In a Station of the Metro*"

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

His major writings are:

Umbra: Collected Poems (1920)

Cantos I-xxv (1925-28)

Literary Essays (1954)

Make It New (1934)

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965):

*He was a poet, dramatist, literary critic, and an editor. His theory of 'objective co-relative' is very famous.

Prufrock and Other Observations (1917)

"*The Waste Land*" (1922)

Poems (1919)

Selected Essays 1917-1932 (1932)

Four Quartets (1942)

Murder in the Cathedral (1935)

The Family Reunion (1939)

The Cocktail Party (1950), published in the Post-modern age.

Henry Miller (1891-1980):

Tropic of Cancer (1934)

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (1896-1940):

The Great Gatsby (1925)

Tender Is the Night (1934)

The Love of the Last Tycoon (1941)

William Cuthbert Faulkner (1897-1962):

The Sound and the Fury (1929)

As I Lay Dying (1930)

Light in August (1932)

Absalom, Absalom! (1936)

Ernest Miller Hemingway (1899-1961):

The Sun Also Rises (1926)

A Farewell to Arms (1929)

The Old Man and the Sea, published in the next age in 1952

Graham Greene (1904-91):

It's a Battlefield (1934)

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973):

Poems (1930)

The Oxford Book of Light Verse (1938)

Dylan Marlais Thomas (1914-53):

Twenty-five Poems (1936)

Main Literary Features of the Age:

- 1) The poets who published their poems in four anthologies entitled Georgian Poetry (1911-1922) are called "Georgian Poets". Georgian poetry is rural in subject matter, delicate in manner and traditional in form and technique. W.W. Gibson, Rupert Brooke, J. Masefield and Ralph Hodgson are among the best-known Georgian poets.
- 2) However, in the 19020s and 1930s poets' search for a new poetic tradition is noteworthy. The late Victorians (Decadents) give way to the Georgians. Then the Imagists replace the Georgians but after a few years they themselves disappear. In the second decade of the 20th century there has been another movement known as

dadaism. In the 1920s surrealism replaces dadaism. There have also been experiments with "impressionism" and "expressionism".

- 3) The disillusionment of the hope for a better world following the First World War finds expression in the poetry of this period. New writers in the 1930s find socialism and communism as the possible solution to overcome the economic depression caused by the First World War. With the change of subject and attitude, the poetic techniques have also been changed. Many Modernist poets imitate techniques of the seventeenth century metaphysical poets. Thus, these poets have wanted to break away from the convention, but at the same time, they are not entirely against tradition. They introduce verse libres or free verse, Symbols, conceits, allusions, and quotations are so frequently used that poetry becomes obscure. A new kind of poetry composed with the fragments of the old appears.
- 4) The Modern literature is dominated by novels. It is more realistic and more concerned with social problems. Influenced by psychology, modern novelists focus on the inner problems of the characters along with their social problems. Instead of simple chronological narrative technique, the use of "stream of consciousness" or the "interior monologue" is accepted as a main narrative technique of novels.
- 5) The drama of the period also becomes realistic. Ibsen, a Norwegian dramatist, deeply influences English dramatic art in mirroring social and family problems. Contemporary problems have been so realistically intellectualized in the drama of this period that these plays, except the plays of Shaw, seem to miss imagination. Poetic drama begins in this period.

8. The Post-modern Period (1939...)

The literary trends of the Modern Age started changing after 1939 when the Second World War devastated the social values. After 1939 the new trends in English literature came to light. The writers of the age continued the experimentation of the modernist writers but at the same time reacted against many of the ideas implicit in modernist literature. Moreover, these writers kept on changing their theories of art. Consequently, it has become very difficult to specify the exact characteristics of Post-modern literature. It is believed that the Post-modern age has not yet ended.

The important facts which influenced the literature of this period are:

1. United Nations was formed.
2. The principles of the Enlightenment disappeared.
3. Westerners' belief in progress and purity of knowledge ended.
4. Michael Graves and Philip Johnson, two postmodern architects, stopped using geometric shapes of Modernist architecture and brought historical styles into buildings.
5. Andy Warhol ended the differences between the high-brow and low-brow in Pop Art.
6. Most of the colonies became independent.
7. Universities became the sources of philosophical and literary theories.
8. Jacques, Derrida Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty established the fact that philosophy should no longer seek truth, rather they should concentrate on discussing the various interpretations of reality.
9. Christian faith has lost its hold on life and society.
10. Belief in man's goodness has decreased.
11. Globalization and Information Technology have grown rapidly.
12. There has been a boom in publishing technologies.
13. Cold war and its end left deep impacts on world politics.
14. Germany was divided and united.
15. Radio and TV have played important roles in shaping life.

Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works:

Henry Miller (1891-1980):

The Rosy Crucifixion (1949-59), a trilogy

John Steinbeck (1902-68):

The Grapes of Wrath (1939)

East of Eden (1952)

George Orwell (1903-50):

* His real name is Eric Arthur Blair.

Animal Farm (1945)

Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949)

Graham Greene (1904-91):

The Heart of the Matter (1948)

The End of the Affair (1951)

Jean-Paul Charles Aymard Sartre (1905-1980):

* He was a French philosopher, playwright, novelist and political activist. He was one of the exponents of the philosophy of existentialism and phenomenology.

Nausea (1938)

Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology (1943)

No Exit (1944)

The Roads to Freedom (1949)

R. K. Narayan (1906-2001):

* His full name is Rasipuram Krishnaswamlyer Narayanaswami.

* *The Dark Room* (1938)

The Financial Expert (1952)

The Guide (1958)

A Tiger for Malgudi (1983)

(The last three are published in the Post-modern age.)

Samuel Beckett (1906-89), a French dramatist:

Waiting for Godot (1952)

Endgame (1955)

Happy Days (1961)

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907-1973):

The Age of Anxiety (1948)

William Gerald Golding (1911-93), a novelist:

Lord of the Flies (1954)

The Scorpion God (1971)

Albert Camus (1913-1960):

The Outsider or The Stranger (1942)

"*The Myth of Sisyphus*" (*Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, 1942)

The Plague (1947)

Dylan Marlais Thomas (1914-53):

The Map of Love (1939)

Deaths and Entrances (1946)

Under Milk Wood (1954)

Review

Periods of American Literature

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

The history of American literature reaches from the oral traditions of Native peoples to the novels, poetry, and drama created in the United States today. This list describes its six major periods.

- Pre-colonization
- The Colonial and Early National Period (17th century–1830)
- The Romantic Period (1830–70)
- Realism and Naturalism (1870–1910)
- The Modernist Period (1910–45)
- The Contemporary Period (1945–present)

• Pre-colonization

Literature has been created in what is today the United States for thousands of years. This history began with the many oral traditions of the Indigenous peoples of North America.

Among the Native peoples of the Plains, the Southwest, and parts of present-day California, Coyote was the central figure of the age before humans were created. Hundreds of tales told by these peoples describe his exploits as a trickster and as a benefactor to humankind.

Raven was Coyote's counterpart for the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest Coast, the Pacific coast stretching from what is today Alaska to northwestern California. The Raven cycle is a collection of tales that describe the chaos that Raven creates and the order that eventually emerges, often at Raven's expense.

The oral traditions of the Pueblo, in the Southwest, include stories about kachinas, the ancestral spirit-beings that exist among humans and actively shape their environment.

Among the Native peoples of the Plains, a wide range of creation myths explain how the world came into existence.

The stories of the Comanche, for example, center on the Great Spirit, which created different groups of humans, while the Sioux describe how the winds came into being and, together with the Sun and the Moon, control the universe.

• The Colonial and Early National Period (17th century–1830)

The first colonists of North America wrote, often in English, about their experiences starting in the 1600s. This literature was practical, straightforward, often derivative of literature in Great Britain, and focused on the future.

John Smith wrote histories of Virginia based on his experiences as an English explorer and as president of the Jamestown Colony. These histories, published in 1608 and 1624, include his controversial accounts of the Powhatan girl Pocahontas.

Nathaniel Ward and John Winthrop wrote books on religion, a topic of central concern in colonial America.

Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650) may be the earliest collection of poetry written in and about America, although it was published in England.

A new era began when the United States declared its independence in 1776, and much new writing addressed the country's future. American poetry and fiction were largely modeled on what was being published overseas in Great Britain, and much of what American readers consumed also came from Great Britain.

The Federalist Papers (1787–88), by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, shaped the political direction of the United States.

Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, which he wrote during the 1770s and '80s, tells a quintessentially American life story.

Phillis Wheatley, an African woman enslaved in Boston, was the first Black poet of note in the United States. Her first book was *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773). Philip Freneau is another notable poet of the era.

The first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* by William Hill Brown, was published in 1789.

Olaudah Equiano's autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative* (1789), is among the earliest slave narratives and stands as a forceful argument for abolition.

By the first decades of the 19th century, a truly American literature began to emerge. Though still derived from British literary tradition, the short stories and novels published from 1800 through the 1820s began to depict American society and explore the American landscape in an unprecedented manner.

Washington Irving published the collection of short stories and essays *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* in 1819–20. It includes “*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*” and “*Rip Van Winkle*,” two of the earliest American short stories. James Fenimore Cooper wrote novels of adventure about the frontiersman Natty Bumppo. These novels, called the Leatherstocking Tales (1823–41), depict his experiences in the American wilderness in both realistic and highly romanticized ways.

- **The Romantic Period (1830–70)**

Romanticism is a way of thinking that values the individual over the group, the subjective over the objective, and a person’s emotional experience over reason. It also values the wildness of nature over human-made order. Romanticism as a worldview took hold in western Europe in the late 18th century, and American writers embraced it in the early 19th century.

Edgar Allan Poe most vividly depicted, and inhabited, the role of the Romantic individual—a genius, often tormented and always struggling against convention—during the 1830s and up to his mysterious death in 1849.

Poe invented the modern detective story with “*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*” (1841).

The poem “*The Raven*” (1845) is a gloomy depiction of lost love. Its eeriness is intensified by its meter and rhyme scheme.

The short stories “*The Fall of the House of Usher*” (1839) and “*The Cask of Amontillado*” (1846) are gripping tales of horror.

In New England, several different groups of writers and thinkers emerged after 1830, each exploring the experiences of individuals in different segments of American society.

James Russell Lowell was among those who used humor and dialect in verse and prose to depict everyday life in the Northeast.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes were the most prominent of the upper-class Brahmins, who filtered their depiction of America through European models and sensibilities.

The Transcendentalists developed an elaborate philosophy that saw in all of creation a unified whole. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote influential essays, while Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden* (1854), an account of his life alone by Walden Pond. Margaret Fuller was editor of *The Dial*, an important Transcendentalist magazine.

Three men—Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman—began publishing novels, short stories, and poetry during the Romantic period that became some of the most-enduring works of American literature.

As a young man, Hawthorne published short stories, most notable among them the allegorical “*Young Goodman Brown*” (1835). In the 1840s he crossed paths with the Transcendentalists before he started writing his two most significant novels—*The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851).

Melville was one of Hawthorne’s friends and neighbors. Hawthorne was also a strong influence on Melville’s *Moby Dick* (1851), which was the culmination of Melville’s early life of traveling and writing.

Whitman wrote poetry that described his home, New York City. He refused the traditional constraints of rhyme and meter in favor of free verse in *Leaves of Grass* (1855), and his frankness in subject matter and tone repelled some critics. But the book, which went through many subsequent editions, became a landmark in American poetry, and it epitomized the ethos of the Romantic period.

During the 1850s, as the United States headed toward civil war, more and more stories by and about enslaved and free Black people were written.

William Wells Brown published what is often considered the first Black American novel, *Clotel*, in 1853. He also wrote the first African American play to be published, *The Escape* (1858).

In 1859 Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and Harriet E. Wilson became the first Black women to publish fiction in the United States.

Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, first published serially in 1851–52, is credited with raising opposition in the North to slavery.

Harriet Jacobs published a searing account of her life as an enslaved woman in 1861, the same year that the Civil War began. It became one of the era’s most influential slave narratives.

Emily Dickinson lived a life quite unlike other writers of the Romantic period: she lived largely in seclusion; only a handful of her poems were published before her death in 1886; and she was a woman working at a time when men dominated the literary scene. Yet her poems express a Romantic vision as clearly as Whitman’s or Poe’s. They are sharp-edged and emotionally intense. Here are five of her notable poems:

“*I’m Nobody! Who are you?*”

“*Because I could not stop for Death –*”

“*My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun*”

“*A Bird, came down the Walk –*”

“*Safe in their Alabaster Chambers*”

- **Realism and Naturalism (1870–1910)**

The human cost of the Civil War in the United States was immense: more than 2,300,000 soldiers fought in the war, and perhaps as many as 851,000 people died in 1861–65. Walt Whitman claimed that “a great literature will...arise out of the era of those four years,” and what emerged in the following decades was a literature that presented a detailed and unembellished vision of the world as it truly was. This was the essence of realism. Naturalism was an

intensified form of realism. After the grim realities of a devastating war, these styles became writers' primary mode of expression.

Samuel Clemens was a typesetter, a journalist, a riverboat captain, and an itinerant laborer before he became, in 1863 at age 27, Mark Twain. He first used that name while reporting on politics in the Nevada Territory. It then appeared on the short story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," published in 1865, which catapulted him to national fame. Twain's story was a humorous tall tale, but its characters were realistic depictions of actual Americans. Twain deployed this combination of humor and realism throughout his writing. The following are some of Twain's notable works:

Major novels: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885)

Travel narratives: *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), *Roughing It* (1872), *Life on the Mississippi* (1883)

Short stories: "Jim Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn" (1880), "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1899)

Naturalism, like realism, was a literary movement that drew inspiration from French authors of the 19th century who sought to document, through fiction, the reality that they saw around them, particularly among the middle and working classes living in cities.

Theodore Dreiser was foremost among American writers who embraced naturalism. His *Sister Carrie* (1900) is the most important American naturalist novel.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1893) and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), by Stephen Crane,

and *McTeague* (1899), *The Octopus* (1901), and *The Pit* (1903), by Frank Norris, are novels that vividly depict the reality of urban life, war, and capitalism.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was an African American writer who wrote poetry in Black dialect—"Possum" and "When de Co'n Pone's Hot"—that were popular with his white audience and gave them what they believed was reality for Black Americans. Dunbar also wrote poems not in dialect—"We Wear the Mask" and "Sympathy"—that exposed the reality of racism in America during Reconstruction and afterward.

Sophia Alice Callahan, who was of Muskogee Creek descent, published in 1891 what is often considered the first novel by a Native woman: *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*. Zitkala-Sa, whose mother was Yankton Sioux, published a collection of Dakota stories, *Old Indian Legends*, in 1901. She used this collection and other early writings to document her experience of forced assimilation, and she spent the rest of her life advocating for Native peoples.

Henry James shared the view of the realists and naturalists that literature ought to present reality, but his writing style and use of literary form sought to also create an aesthetic experience, not simply document truth. He was preoccupied with the clash in values between the United States and Europe. His writing shows features of both 19th-century realism and naturalism and 20th-century modernism.

Some of his notable novels include:

The American (1877)

The Portrait of a Lady (1881)

What Maisie Knew (1897)

The Wings of the Dove (1902)

The Golden Bowl (1904)

• The Modernist Period (1910–45)

Advances in science and technology in Western countries rapidly intensified at the start of the 20th century and brought about a sense of unprecedented progress. The devastation of World War I and the Great Depression also caused widespread suffering in Europe and the United States. These contradictory impulses can be found swirling within modernism, a movement in the arts defined first and foremost as a radical break from the past. But this break was often an act of destruction, and it caused a loss of faith in traditional structures and beliefs. Despite, or perhaps because of, these contradictory impulses, the modernist period proved to be one of the richest and most productive in American literature.

A sense of disillusionment and loss pervades much American modernist fiction. That sense may be centered on specific individuals, or it may be directed toward American society or toward civilization generally. It may generate a nihilistic, destructive impulse, or it may express hope at the prospect of change.

F. Scott Fitzgerald skewered the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Richard Wright *Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LC-USW3-030278-D)*

Richard Wright exposed and attacked American racism in *Native Son* (1940).

Zora Neale Hurston told the story of a Black woman's three marriages in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).

Ernest Hemingway's early novels *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) articulated the disillusionment of the Lost Generation.

Willa Cather told hopeful stories of the American frontier, set mostly on the Great Plains, in *O Pioneers!* (1913) and *My Ántonia* (1918).

William Faulkner used stream-of-consciousness monologues and other formal techniques to break from past literary practice in *The Sound and the Fury* (1929).

John Steinbeck depicted the difficult lives of migrant workers in *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

T.S. Eliot was an American by birth and, as of 1927, a British subject by choice. His fragmentary, multivoiced *The Waste Land* (1922) is the quintessential modernist poem, but his was not the dominant voice among American modernist poets.

Robert Frost and Carl Sandburg evocatively described the regions—New England and the Midwest, respectively—in which they lived.

The Harlem Renaissance produced a rich coterie of poets, among them Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, and Alice Dunbar Nelson.

Harriet Monroe founded *Poetry* magazine in Chicago in 1912 and made it the most important organ for poetry not just in the United States but for the English-speaking world. During the 1920s Edna St. Vincent Millay, Marianne Moore, and E.E. Cummings expressed a spirit of revolution and experimentation in their poetry.

Drama came to prominence for the first time in the United States in the early 20th century. Playwrights drew inspiration from European theater but created plays that were uniquely and enduringly American.

Eugene O'Neill was the foremost American playwright of the period. His *Long Day's Journey into Night* (written 1939–41, performed 1956) was the high point of more than 20 years of creativity that began in 1920 with *Beyond the Horizon* and concluded with *The Iceman Cometh* (written 1939, performed 1946).

During the 1930s Lillian Hellman, Clifford Odets, and Langston Hughes wrote plays that exposed injustice in America.

Thornton Wilder presented a realistic (and enormously influential) vision of small-town America in *Our Town*, first produced in 1938.

• **The Contemporary Period (1945–present)**

The United States, which emerged from World War II confident and economically strong, entered the Cold War in the late 1940s. This conflict with the Soviet Union shaped global politics for more than four decades, and the proxy wars and threat of nuclear annihilation that came to define it were just some of the influences shaping American literature during the second half of the 20th century. The 1950s and '60s brought significant cultural shifts within the United States driven by the civil rights movement and the women's rights movement. By the turn of the 21st century, American literature was recognized as being a complex, inclusive story that is grounded on a wide-ranging body of past writings produced in the United States by people of different backgrounds and is open to the experiences of more and more Americans in the present day.

Literature written by African Americans during the contemporary period was shaped in many ways by Richard Wright, whose autobiography *Black Boy* was published in 1945. He left the United States for France after World War II, repulsed by the injustice and discrimination he faced as a Black man in America; other Black writers working from the 1950s through the '70s also wrestled with the desires to escape an unjust society and to change it.

Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* (1952) tells the story of an unnamed Black man adrift in, and ignored by, America.

James Baldwin wrote essays, novels, and plays on race and sexuality throughout his life, but his first novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), was his most accomplished and influential.

Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about the effects of racism in Chicago, was first performed in 1959.

Gwendolyn Brooks became, in 1950, the first African American poet to win a Pulitzer Prize.

The Black Arts movement was grounded in the tenets of Black nationalism and sought to generate a uniquely Black consciousness. The *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1965), by Malcolm X and Alex Haley, is among its most-lasting literary expressions.

Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), launched a writing career that would put the lives of Black women at its center. She received a Nobel Prize in 1993.

In the 1960s Alice Walker began writing novels, poetry, and short stories that reflected her involvement in the civil rights movement.

The American novel took on a dizzying number of forms after World War II. Realist, metafictional, postmodern, absurdist, autobiographical, short, long, fragmentary, feminist, stream of consciousness—these and dozens more labels can be applied to the vast output of American novelists. Little holds them together beyond their chronological proximity and engagement with contemporary American society. These are representative novels:

Norman Mailer: *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), *The Executioner's Song* (1979)

Vladimir Nabokov: *Lolita* (1955)

Jack Kerouac: *On the Road* (1957)

Thomas Pynchon: *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966)

N. Scott Momaday: *House Made of Dawn* (1968)

Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969)

Eudora Welty: *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972)

Philip Roth: *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), *American Pastoral* (1997)

Ursula K. Le Guin: *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969)

Saul Bellow: *Humboldt's Gift* (1975)

Toni Morrison: *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987)

Alice Walker: *The Color Purple* (1982)

Sandra Cisneros: *The House on Mango Street* (1983)

Jamaica Kincaid: *Annie John* (1984)

Maxine Hong Kingston: *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book* (1989)

David Foster Wallace: *Infinite Jest* (1996)

Don DeLillo: *Underworld* (1997)

Ha Jin: *Waiting* (1999)

Jonathan Franzen: *The Corrections* (2001)

Junot Díaz: *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)

Colson Whitehead: *The Underground Railroad* (2016)

Ocean Vuong: *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019)

The Beat movement was short-lived—starting and ending in the 1950s—but had a lasting influence on American poetry during the contemporary period. Allen Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) pushed aside the formal, largely traditional

poetic conventions that had come to dominate American poetry. Raucous, profane, and deeply moving, *Howl* reset Americans' expectations for poetry during the second half of the 20th century and beyond. Among the important poets of this period are the following:

Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath, John Berryman, Donald Hall, Elizabeth Bishop, James Merrill, Nikki Giovanni, Robert Pinsky, Adrienne Rich, Rita Dove, Yusef Komunyakaa, W.S. Merwin, Tracy K. Smith

In the early decades of the contemporary period, American drama was dominated by three men: Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Edward Albee. Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) questioned the American Dream through the destruction of its main character, while Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) excavated his characters' dreams and frustrations. Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962) rendered what might have been a benign domestic situation into something vicious and cruel. By the 1970s the face of American drama had begun to change, and it continued to diversify into the 21st century. Notable dramatists include: David Mamet, Amiri Baraka, Sam Shepard, August Wilson, Ntozake Shange, Wendy Wasserstein, Tony Kushner, David Henry Hwang, Richard Greenberg, Suzan-Lori Parks, Young Jean Lee, Jeremy O. Harris

Discussion

American Literature

21st Century View

American literature in the 21st century is marked by a wide range of voices, themes, and literary forms. It reflects the ever-evolving nature of American society, cultural diversity, and the impact of technological advances.

The 21st century has seen a significant focus on ***diversity and inclusivity*** in American literature. Authors from various backgrounds, including people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and marginalized communities, have gained prominence. Their works explore a wide range of themes and experiences. American literature has embraced its ***multicultural and multilingual*** nature. Writers often incorporate elements of their heritage, whether it's African, Hispanic, Asian, or Indigenous, into their storytelling. This has led to a rich tapestry of narratives and perspectives.

The impact of *technology*, especially *social media*, is evident in contemporary American literature. Writers explore themes like online identity, the virtual world, and the consequences of technology on human relationships and communication. Literature in the 21st century frequently addresses *environmental issues*, including climate change, sustainability, and the human impact on the planet. Writers use fiction and non-fiction to raise awareness about these critical topics.

The September 11, 2001 attacks had a profound impact on American society and literature. Many works of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry have explored themes related to the *post-9/11* world, including terrorism, surveillance, and the consequences of war. The 21st century has seen a surge in *science fiction and dystopian* literature. Authors like Margaret Atwood and Octavia Butler have gained recognition for their speculative fiction, which often explores issues of power, gender, and social control.

Immigration is a prevalent theme in contemporary American literature. Writers often delve into the experiences of immigrants and the complexities of *identity*, belonging, and cultural adaptation. *Memoirs and personal narratives* have gained popularity, with many authors sharing their own experiences, challenges, and journeys. These works often tackle themes of resilience, self-discovery, and personal growth. Some writers have revisited and *reimagined classic* literature from new perspectives. For example, novels like "*Circe*" by Madeline Miller and "*Wide Sargasso Sea*" by Jean Rhys provide alternative viewpoints on familiar stories.

American authors continue to receive international acclaim and *literary awards*. Works by authors like Colson Whitehead, Jesmyn Ward, and Ta-Nehisi Coates have won prestigious awards like the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award. Contemporary American literature often embraces *experimental and hybrid forms* of storytelling, blurring the lines between fiction, non-fiction, and other genres. This allows for creative and innovative narratives. The *Young Adult* genre has grown in popularity and has been responsible for producing bestsellers and movie adaptations. Authors like John Green and Suzanne Collins have achieved great success in this genre. American literature in the 21st century reflects the diverse, dynamic, and evolving nature of American society and culture. Authors explore a wide range of themes, use innovative storytelling techniques, and engage with pressing issues such as diversity, technology, and the environment. This literature continues to shape and be shaped by the cultural and social landscape of the United States.

Discussion

Fil-Am Writers: The Question of Race

A significant portion of our Philippine literary tradition is made up of poignant works written by Filipinos abroad, most notably those in the United States. Conventionally known as "Filipino-American writing", these literary texts explore the personal, social, cultural, and even political issues that Filipino-American confront as they experience life in the United States. The list of Fil-Am writers is extensive, and in many ways runs parallel to the tradition of Philippine writing in English. NVM Gonzales, Luis Cabalquino, Ninotchka Rosca, Jessica Hagedorn, and Miguel Syjuco are just a few of the many writers that belong to the canon of Filipino-American writing.

It's All in the Dash

Whether one examines works by the pioneering writers or the Flips or the political exiles, one will discover that one of the recurring issues raised by these literary works is one of identity. What does it mean to be a Filipino-American? The dash between the words "Filipino" and "American" is an interesting point for discussion because it talks about

being in between, between being neither here nor there. We call this experience **liminality**. If you are a new student in a particular school, you must have gone through this experience of *liminality* – you are wearing your new school uniform and you are physically present in your new classroom, but your mind is somewhere else. Probably you are still thinking about your old school, the friends you left behind, or even your old house if you come from a different city. This incongruity between mind and body is one instance of liminality because you are not quite sure where you are truly situated and present.

Work by Fil-Am writers features this experience of liminality as this relates to identity. One can see why this is so. If the experience of moving to a new school or even just a new section can be a harrowing experience, how much more the uprooting from your cultural roots and then replanting yourself in a foreign land? A pioneering collection of short stories edited by Cecilia Manguerra Brainard, *Contemporary Fiction by Filipinos in America*, features poignant, philosophical, and occasionally humorous accounts of what it means to be living abroad, to be brown-skinned in the presence of white men and women.

Interestingly enough, a good number of Fil-Am writing deals with this experience of liminality as through the process of homecoming. Imagine moving back and returning to your old school after being away for some time. There are new, younger teachers and school administrators who do not recognize you. There are new classrooms and the canteen has a new concessionaire. Can you consider it a homecoming if so many things have changed? Or is the school that you came from your new home? These are real questions that *balikbayan* face and these are issues that Fil-Am writers deal with.

The essay that you will be reading for this section is a work by a young Fil-Am writer Laurel Fantauzzo as she humorously but also reflectively recounts her process of integrating herself into the homeland of her mother. As you read this rather entertaining piece, pay particular attention to the unique perspective that Fantauzzo brings to the experience of being a *balikbayan* in a country she truly calls home but one that consistently reminds her of being different.

IV. ACTIVITY

ACTIVITY 1:

Direction: Read the essay “*Under My Invisible Umbrella*” by Laurel Fantauzzo (U.S.A.)

Answer the following questions.

- 1. In the essay, the writer observes how she is treated differently because of her whiteness. In the chart below, plot the different experiences mentioned in the essay, how local and/or brown-skinned Filipinos experience them, and how she is treated because she seems foreign to them. The first one has been accomplished for you.

EXPERIENCE OR INCIDENT	HOW LOCALS ACT OR ARE TREATED	HOW THE WRITER WAS TREATED
There is a heavy downpour.	The guards or building staff leave the locals to themselves.	The guard offers the writer his umbrella.

- 2. How does the writer feel about her special treatment? Cite at least three instances from the text which illustrate her attitude towards this treatment.
- 3. Why was it important for the writer to briefly narrate how her family ended up in America in the first place? How does this anecdote help develop the ideas of her piece?
- 4. Why is the writer concerned with the hierarchies and politics associated with her whiteness?