

CONTENTS

Author's Preface	7
Introduction. Major Literary Genres	8

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Unit 1. The Anglo-Saxon Period

Introduction to the unit: The Anglo-Saxon Heritage	14
Beowulf	16
The Seafarer	19

Unit 2. The Medieval Period

Introduction to the unit: Medieval England	21
Geoffrey Chaucer	26

Unit 3. The Renaissance

Introduction to the unit: Renaissance England	32
Thomas More	33
Elizabethan Literature	35

Elizabethan Poetry

Thomas Wyatt	36
Henry Howard Surrey	36
Edmund Spenser	37
Philip Sidney	39

Elizabethan Dram

Christopher Marlowe	40
Ben Jonson	42
William Shakespeare	42

Unit 4. Literature of the Period of Restoration

John Milton	50
-------------------	----

Unit 5. The Enlightenment

Introduction to the unit: The Age of Reason	54
Daniel Defoe	57
Jonathan Swift	60
Alexander Pope	65
Henry Fielding	67
Laurence Sterne	69

Oliver Goldsmith	71
Richard Sheridan	73
Robert Burns	75

Unit 6. The Romanticism

Introduction to the unit: The Romantic Tradition	82
William Blake.....	85
William Wordsworth	87
Samuel Taylor Coleridge	90
Robert Southey	93
George Gordon Byron	94
Percy Bysshe Shelley	101
John Keats	105
Walter Scott	107
Jane Austen	113

Unit 7. Literature of the Victorian Period

Introduction to the unit: The Age of Victorians	117
---	-----

Victorian Poetry

Alfred Tennyson	121
Robert Browning	124
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	127

Victorian Prose

William Makepeace Thackeray	128
Charles Dickens	131
The Bronte Sisters	136
Charlotte Bronte	137
Emily Bronte	139
Elizabeth Gaskell	141
George Eliot	143
Thomas Hardy	145
Robert Louis Stevenson	148
Oscar Wilde	151
Joseph Conrad	154
Arthur Conan Doyle	155
Rudyard Kipling	156

Unit 8. The Early Twentieth Century Literature

Introduction to the unit: New Directions. Modernism	159
Virginia Woolf	162
James Joyce	164
David Herbert Lawrence	167

Unit 9. The Twentieth Century Literature. New Period

Prose and Drama

John Galsworthy	172
-----------------------	-----

George Bernard Shaw	179
Herbert George Wells	185
William Somerset Maugham	188
Richard Aldington	193
John Boynton Priestley	195
Archibald Joseph Cronin	196
Graham Greene	201
Jack Lindsay	204
Evelyn Waugh	206
Charles Percy Snow	208
Catherine Cookson	211
William Golding	214
Muriel Spark	216
Iris Murdoch	219
Philip Larkin	222
John Fowles	223
Maeve Binchy	227

Unit 10. Angry Young Men Writers

Introduction to the unit: The Generation of General Discontent	231
John Osborne	233
Kingsley Amis	237
John Wain	238
John Braine	240

Unit 11. A Few More Glimpses of Post-War Literature 243

AMERICAN LITERATURE

Unit 1. National Beginnings

Benjamin Franklin	258
Thomas Paine	263
Thomas Jefferson	265

Unit 2. Romanticism in American Literature

Washington Irving	267
James Fenimore Cooper	270
Ralph Waldo Emerson	274
Nathaniel Hawthorne	277
John Greenleaf Whittier	282
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	284
Edgar Allan Poe	288
Harriet Beecher Stowe	294
Henry David Thoreau	297
Herman Melville	300
Walt Whitman	304

James Russell Lowell	308
Emily Dickinson	309

Unit 3. Realism. Early Period

Mark Twain	314
Bret Harte	319
O. Henry	320
Edwin Arlington Robinson	323
Stephen Crane	324
Jack London	326

Unit 4. American Literature of the First Half and the Middle of the Twentieth Century

New waves

Theodore Dreiser	334
Willa Cather	337
Robert Frost	340
Sherwood Anderson	343
John Dos Passos	346
Carl Sandburg	346
Wallace Stevens	348
William Carlos Williams	350
Sinclair Lewis	352
Ezra Pound	355
T.S.Eliot	357
E.E.Cummings	359
Francis Scott Fitzgerald	361
William Faulkner	365
Thornton Wilder	371
Ernest Hemingway	371
Thomas Wolfe	375
Robert Penn Warren	376

Unit 5. American Literature of the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

Introduction to the unit: Mixture of Realism and Fantasy	379
Katherine Anne Porter	380
John Steinbeck	381
Langston Hughes	384
James Albert Michener	385
Theodore Roethke	386
Eudora Welty	388
Irwin Shaw	389
Bernard Malamud	392
Robert Lowell	395

Sidney Sheldon	398
James Jones	399
Kurt Vonnegut	402
Truman Capote	404
Flannery O'Connor	407
Gore Vidal.....	409
Mary Higgins Clark	410
John Updike	411
Jane Carol Oates	415
Anne Tyler	416
Michael Crichton	418
Julie Garwood	422
Tim O'Brien	424
Danielle Steele	425
Nancy Richards-Akers	426
John Grisham	428
 Unit 6. The History American Drama	 433
Literature	441
Index of Authors	443

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

It may interest the many teachers and others who have found this book of use to know why it was added to the existing text-books on the subject. The idea of this book arose from the author's own need during many years' experience as a lecturer in English and American literature to supply the book which could serve as a basis for effective literature lessons at which the students might be expected to understand, learn and appreciate the beauties of great English and American writers, the makers of song and story of their age.

The book presents a survey of the most significant aspects of the literary process in Great Britain and the United States of America, its historical, social and economic background.

Considerable stress has been laid on the life of the various authors and the relationship of themselves and their work to the times in which they lived to stimulate class discussions and involve students in effective work on the literary matters.

The present volume is intended as a text-book for English and American literature studies at the universities and is designed to be used in a wide range of literary courses to develop a high level of language and literature competence of the learners. It is likewise meant for readers who are interested in English and American literature and want to gain an insight into its making and learn the language and style, and the creative genius of the writers.

The author of this volume realizes that it is hard to satisfy all the tastes and all the needs of millions of admirers of culture and arts and this book is but a glimpse of the glorious world from Anglo-Saxon period and Shakespeare to the newer voices of the end of the XXth and the beginning of the XXI century of Great Britain and the USA.

INTRODUCTION

Major literary genres

Fiction comes directly from oral traditions found in numerous cultures of the world. Sometimes there were storytellings or story-singing contests, as in the classical age of Greek letters. These early stories were about figures or events familiar to particular groups. New characters with new characteristics appeared. A work of fiction usually possesses characters, plot, setting, point of view, theme, and, sometimes, symbols. Fiction is a shared experience. The writer introduces the readers into his or her created world. William Faulkner, the American writer and a Nobel Laureate, said that “the primary job of any writer is to tell you a story, a story out of human experience – I mean by that, universal, mutual experience, the anguishes and troubles and griefs of the human heart, which is universal, without regard to race or time or condition. He wants to tell you something which has seemed to him so true, so moving, either comic or tragic, that it’s worth repeating.” The most held opinion is that fiction is created from a mixture of fact and fancy. Telling a good story is considered to be a primary function of fiction, but telling a truthful story is equally important.

Literature is commonly divided into three major genres: poetry, prose, and drama. Each major genre can in turn be divided into lyric, concrete, dramatic, narrative, and epic.

Prose

Prose can be divided into fiction (novels, novellas and short stories) and nonfiction (biography, autobiography, letters, essays, and reports).

Novel is a long fictional story written in prose. It is one of the most popular forms of literature.

The subject matter of novels covers the whole range of human experience and imagination. Some novels portray true-to-life characters and events. Writers of such realistic novels try to represent life as it is. In contrast to realistic novels, romantic novels portray

idealized versions of life. Some novels explore purely imaginary worlds. For example, science-fiction novels may describe events that take place in the future or on other planets. Other popular kinds of novels include detective novels and mysteries, whose suspenseful plots fascinate readers.

Some novels point out evils that exist in society and challenge the reader to seek social or political reforms. Novels may also provide knowledge about unfamiliar subjects or give new insights into familiar ones.

The novel has four basic features that together distinguish it from other kinds of literature. First, a novel is a narrative - that is, a story presented by a teller. It thus differs from a drama, which presents a story through the speech and actions of characters on a stage.

Second, novels are longer than short stories, fairy tales, and most other types of narratives. Novels vary greatly in length, but most exceed 60,000 words. Because of their length, novels can cover a longer period and include more characters than can most other kinds of narratives.

Third, a novel is written in prose rather than verse. This feature distinguishes novels from narrative poems.

Fourth, novels are works of fiction. They differ from histories, biographies, and other long prose narratives that tell about real events and people. Novelists sometimes base their stories on actual events or the lives of real people. But these authors also make up incidents and characters. Therefore, all novels are partly, if not entirely, imaginary.

The basic features of the novel make it a uniquely flexible form of literature. Novelists can arrange incidents, describe places, and represent characters in an almost limitless variety of ways. They also may narrate their stories from different points of view. In some novels, for example, one of the characters may tell the story. In others, the events may be described from the viewpoint of a person outside of the story. Some novelists change the point of view from one section of a story to another. Novelists also vary their treatment of time. They may devote hundreds of pages to the description of the events of a single day, or they may cover many years within a few paragraphs.

Poetry

Perhaps the oldest kind of literature known to humanity, poetry in its earliest stages was told or sung, but during its long and continuing evolution it has become part of the written tradition and has been used for several purposes. Foremost among the many uses of poetry has been its ability as lyric, narrative, and epic to pay homage to the gods and to recount the history of specific groups of people.

Both European and American poets have been most influenced by Greek culture, in which the writers were known as poets, a title that carried both responsibility and praise. Greek literature consisted in large measure of plays that were written in poetry, a convention of the time. Roman poets adopted most of the rules of the Greeks, later revived during the Renaissance. Beginning with Geoffrey Chaucer, poetry in England flowered and spread throughout the English-speaking world and far beyond. Poetic forms are: verse, poem, song, ode, sonnet, ballad, elegy, parody, epigram, etc.

But what is poetry? According to William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge, the major role of poetry was to stand in opposition to science. Coleridge wrote: "poetry is not the proper antithesis to prose, but to science. Poetry is opposed to science." A great and influential man of writing of the Romantic period wrote that "Poetry begins where matter of fact or science ceases..." The American poetess of the 19th century Emily Dickinson alludes nearly to the same thing:

To clothe the fiery thought
In simple words succeeds,
For still the craft of genius is
To mask a king in weeds.

Poetry is often full of ideas, too, and sometimes poems can be powerful experiences of the mind, but most poems are primarily about how people feel rather than how people think. Poetry can be the voice of our feelings.

Though prose and poetry have much in common and a number of poets also write prose fiction, nevertheless, commonly accepted differences between the two genres are that poetry is generally written in meter, thus creating rhythm, and prose is not; rhyme is a characteristic feature of poetry (though not required) which prose doesn't have. Poetry distills, compresses and refines knowledge through selective use of language, while prose is considered "ordinary" language. Poets are binding themselves in the chains of traditional

poetic forms and then creating interaction between different elements of poetic technique. But nothing about poetry is as important as the way it makes us feel with the help of imagination, symbols, and invention.

Sometimes poetry is freed from the old rules, evolves from the confinement of rigid structure and sometimes content. This is what we now know as free verse – the kind of poetry which was fired by a new kind of poet, epitomized by the great American poet Walt Whitman, poetry which relies heavily on imagery.

Poets employ various strategies and elements of poetic technique to frame their vision of human experience in verse: theme, diction, tone, imagery, symbolism, simile and metaphor, personification and apostrophe, meter, rhythm and rhyme, sound, structure, and form.

Drama

Drama can be divided into serious drama, tragedy, comic drama, melodrama, and farce.

Drama differs from other forms of literature in that it demands a stage and performances. It can be enjoyed by both spectators and readers. But the fact is that most plays are written to be produced, and must be performed. The word “drama” comes from the Greek meaning “a thing done”. The playwright supplies dialogues for the characters to speak and stage directions that give information about costumes, lighting, scenery, properties, the setting, music, sound effects, and the characters’ movements and ways of speaking. From its beginnings, drama, like other forms of literature, was meant to tell the story of humankind in conflict with the world. A play is human action or human experience dramatized for stage production. Poetic elements of technique and strategies in a play must be made visible. Through plot, a playwright “imitates” movements of existence, adjusting the rhythm to fit the mode of presentation, whether that mode is comedy or farce, tragedy or melodrama, tragic-comedy or pantomime.