



EUROPEAN LITERATURE

Literature Par Excellence:
Prominent Writings in Europe



Learning Targets:

- To identify representative texts and authors from Europe.
- To situate the texts in the context of the region, the nation, and the world.
- To appreciate the cultural and aesthetic diversity of literature of the world
- To compare and contrast 21st-century literary works with earlier texts by citing their elements, structures, and traditions
- To explain the literary and sociocultural contexts and discuss how they enhance the meaning of the text and enrich the reader's understanding
- To explain the relationship between the text and its context



How the Growth Occured

European Literature



- The dominance of European culture is reflected in its literary tradition.
- Since ancient times, writers from Europe have produced landmark works of literature.
- Today, European classics are studied, appreciated, and emulated worldwide.



- Roman Empire
- Roman in nature (**order and discipline**)
- Chivalry and Christianity (**Christian teachings and heroism and courtly love**)



A watercolor illustration on a light beige background. On the left, a human skull is depicted with yellow and grey tones, resting on a yellowish base. Above the skull are several orange and red brushstrokes, and a dark blue/black brushstroke below it. To the right of the skull is a large, light beige, irregular shape. In the top right corner is a red circular brushstroke. In the bottom right corner, there is a small dark grey circular brushstroke and a yellow and grey brushstroke. The text 'Archaic Times' is centered in a bold, dark blue font.

Archaic Times

Archaic Times

- On the one hand, the **Old Testament of the Bible** was starting to take shape.
- Composed of **39 books** written originally in Hebrew, the Old Testament consisted of several genres, including tales, lyric poetry, and histories
- Between 750 BC, different authors composed the works that would make up the majority of the Old Testament.



Archaic Times

- ***Iliad and Odyssey***
- Traditionally attributed to **Homer**, these Greek works were believed by some scholars to have been composed across centuries by poets using the **oral tradition**.
- While the Old Testament was primarily religious and moralistic, the ***Iliad and Odyssey*** chronicled the test of Greek heroes like **Achilles and Odysseus**, who embodied the war culture.
- The Greek tradition at this time boasted of Hesiod, whose ***Theogony and Works and Days*** were important archaic texts.

The background is a complex watercolor composition. It features a large, textured orange oval in the top left, a dark blue brushstroke in the top right, and a large, textured orange circle in the bottom right. There are also smaller elements like a yellow circle, a red circle, and a grey brushstroke. The overall style is artistic and textured.

Classical Times

Classical Times

- During the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, **Greek drama blossomed**.
- Playwrights of **comedy** (such as Aristophanes) and **tragedy** (such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) flourished during this time.
- **Lyrical poetry** was also strong – writers like Pindar and Sappho.
- Great Philosophers **Plato and Aristotle**.



Classical Times

- The legacy of the Greek culture was later preserved by **the Romans** who modified their empire and civilization after the Greeks.
- When Rome became an empire in 27 BC, the ruler **Augustus Cesar** needed a literary work that would embody rooms greatness.
- Nearly a decade later, where **Virgil** was renowned for **Aeneid**, an epic modeled on Iliad and Odyssey.

Classical Times

- Another prominent name during this time was **Ovid**, who wrote a very long narrative poem entitled ***"The Metamorphoses."***
- Rome also produced literary giants in poetry (Horace), drama (Seneca, Plautus, and Terence), and prose (Cicero and Apuleius).

Medieval Period



Medieval Period

- Marked by the **fall of the Western Roman Empire** around 476 CE and the **fall of the Eastern Roman Empire** around 1453 CE.
- During this Millennium, **Christianity and Islam** rose to become political, social, and cultural institutions.
- Two notable names from the religious aspect were **Saint Augustine, whose “The Confessions” and “City of God”** remains spiritual pillars to this day, and **Dante Alighieri,** whose three-part **Divine Comedy** envisions a Christian soul’s journey in the afterlife.

Medieval Period

- Warrior cultures, which traced their roots to the **Homeric epics**, also endured.
- This was evident in the emergence of epics like **Beowulf** (Old English), **The Song of Roland** (French), **The Song of My Seed** (Spanish), and **The Song of Neverlands** (German).
- The tradition of chivalry emerges in the works related to King Arthur, including **Sir Thomas Malory's le Morte de Arthur**.
- **Geoffrey Chaucer** earn the title father of English literature with his crowning achievement **the Canterbury Tales**.





Three Matters of Romance

Matter of Britain
Matter of France
Matter of Rome

Renaissance

The background is an abstract watercolor composition. It features a mix of colors including black, red, orange, yellow, and grey. There are various textures, such as fine gold glitter in the top-left and bottom-right corners, and soft, blended washes of color. The overall style is artistic and modern.

The background features a light beige, textured surface with several watercolor splashes in shades of orange, red, and black. A large, textured orange-red globe is positioned in the upper right quadrant. In the bottom right, there are more splashes of orange and black, along with a small black brushstroke. The overall aesthetic is artistic and hand-drawn.

Renaissance

- The general interest in the revival of Classical scholarship
- The decline of feudalism
- The growth of commerce
- The naval expeditions to discover and annex more territories



Renaissance

Humanism – an intellectual and cultural movement that empowered individual human dignity, which held that problems were solved not by religion

Renaissance

- Emergence of *England, France, and Spain* as **political powers**
- But **Italy remained a hub of culture** as writers like Petrarch Boccaccio, and Machiavelli produced acclaimed works.
- England, of course, had **Shakespeare**, whose poems and plays had become hallmarks of the world literature.



Renaissance

- England also had **Marlowe, Raleigh, and Spencer.**
 - France brought **Michel de Montaigne** to the literary scene as the pioneer of the essay, while Spain contributed **Miguel de Cervantes of Don Quixote** fame.
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The background is a light cream color with abstract watercolor splatters and textures. In the top left, there's a gold glittery area. In the top right, there's a red and orange splatter. In the bottom left, there's a dark blue and grey splatter. In the bottom right, there's a dark blue splatter. A black circle with a red brushstroke is on the right side. A small red circle is on the left side. A small gold circle is on the right side. A small gold circle is on the left side.

Neoclassical and Romantic Periods





Neoclassical



- Focused on reason, logic, and intellect
- Favored moderation, simplicity, balance, proportion, symmetry, and propriety
- Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason
- Science Revolution



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- In the neoclassical, (mid-17th century to the late 18th century), **reason** was thrust into the foreground as it dominated all aspects of European Society.
 - Philosophies like **rationalism and empiricism**, shone in the limelight.

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- French writers were prolific, with the likes of **Voltaire** and **La Fontaine** excelling in multiple genres.
 - English writers were ably represented by **Pope, Dryden, and Swift.**
 - The **romantic movement** (late 18th century to mid-19th century) came about as a response to neoclassicism.



Romantic Period



- Originated in reaction to French and American revolutions (***The Napoleonic wars and industrial Revolution***)
- Lyrical Ballads
- Man's communion with nature, the use of rustic setting or landscapes in writing and return to the past



- The previous movement prioritized reason, authority, and conventions, romanticism sought to empower the "I" by emphasizing individuality and innovation.
- English poets such as **Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats** found their voices during the Romantic period.

- During this time, **England** also had fictionists such as **Austin and Scott.**
- **Germany** saw the emergence of storytellers go with **Goethe and Grimm** while **France** marveled at the works of **Rousseau and Hugo.**

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, ***the Father of French Romanticism***
- Jacob Ludwig Carl Grim and Wilhelm Carl, ***Grimm's Fairy Tales***
- **Jane Austen and Mary Shelley in England**
- **Germaine De Stael in France**

Realism, Naturalism, and Modernism





- Realism and naturalism rose to prominence in the 19th century. They aimed to present life as it is.
- Famous French practitioners of fiction included ***Dumas, de Maupassant, and Zola.***
- Their peers in England were ***Dickens, Hardy, and Bronte sisters.***






Realism

- Depicts life with fidelity and clarity
- “full and authentic report of human experience”

Naturalism

- “extreme realism”
- “clinical eye” capturing every minute detail



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- Russian fictionists rose in the spotlight as well with ***Chekhov, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.***
 - In drama – ***Ibsen of Norway and Shaw of Ireland.***
 - Poetry with the likes of England's ***Tennyson and Browning.***



Modernism

- Attempt to set aside the past ideals and influences to allow writers a lot of leeway for technique experimentation
- Emergence of four schools of thought (**Imagist, Impressionistic-Symbolistic, Metaphysical, and Formalistic**)



- Modernism is an umbrella term that referred to early 20th-century literary movements like **symbolism, expressionism, and futurism.**

These ways of thinking came simultaneously with a boom in **science and technology.**

This was evident in the revolutionary poems of Yeats and Eliot; the stories of Joyce, Kafka, Faulkner, and Woolf; and the plays of O'Neill and Beckett.



Postmodernism

- Marked by such literary conventions like *fragmentation, paradox, unreliable narrators, unrealistic and impossible plots, parody, paranoia, and unorthodox devices that seemed to destroy the meaning of work.*






New Stylistic Styles of Postmodernism

- ***Pastiche***
 - ***Intertextuality***
 - ***Metafiction***
 - ***Temporal Distortion***
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New Stylistic Styles of Postmodernism

- ***Minimalism***
 - ***Maximalism***
 - ***Magical Realism***
 - ***Faction***
 - ***Reader Involvement***
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The background is a light cream color with various watercolor washes and splatters. There are large, soft-edged washes in shades of orange, red, and dark blue. Scattered throughout are small, circular motifs that resemble planets or celestial bodies in various colors like red, green, blue, and brown. Some of these motifs have thin lines or rings around them, suggesting orbits or rings. The overall style is artistic and ethereal.

Contemporary Times: A Snapshot

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- The period after world war two is referred to as the **postmodern period**.
 - With technology advancing ever so rapidly as each decade progressed, international transportation and communication became more efficient.

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- In literature postmodernism is characterized by the **reinventing or reframing of past works**;
 - And the displaying of sympathy towards minorities, colonized people, and the feminist movement.
 - Notable European writers in the postmodern include Italy's Calvino and England's Fowles.



Thank you!