

BỘ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO
TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC DÂN LẬP HẢI PHÒNG



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ĐỀ TÀI
NGHIÊN CỨU KHOA HỌC

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL: “A BRIEF
INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LITERATURE FROM THE
MIDDLE AGES TO THE 19TH CENTURY” FOR ENGLISH
MAJORS LEARNING ENGLISH LITERATURE AT HPU.**

**(Tài liệu bổ trợ: “Giới thiệu sơ lược về văn học
Anh giai đoạn từ thời kỳ trung đại đến thế kỷ 19”
giúp sinh viên chuyên ngữ trường ĐHDLHP
trong việc học môn văn học Anh)**

Chủ nhiệm đề tài: Nguyễn Thị Thu Huyền, M.A.

HẢI PHÒNG, 2013

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CHUYÊN NGÀNH: TIẾNG ANH

Chủ nhiệm đề tài: Nguyễn Thị Thu Huyền

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ABSTRACT

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

I. RATIONALE

There are aspects of English culture that are encapsulated by English literature. Of course, this is quite obvious when studying the works of Shakespeare or of writers, poets and playwrights of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is, however, also true when studying other works of English literature. Students can learn about allusions and references to different aspects of English culture. They can also learn the context and meanings of famous quotes and phrases. Studying Literature does not confine the students to the traditions of England but includes the possibility of introducing them to traditions which inform English Literature, such as the study of Ancient Greek drama, and to literature in other contexts, such as American literature. It also provides the students with an alternative to the pervasiveness of “television culture” with its immediacy and, often, its shallowness. An enjoyment and appreciation of literature will give students the ability to develop this into an interest in books and reading as they move away from their studies and into their adult lives. They will have the confidence to approach and tackle new forms of books and writing, since they were exposed to a range of literature during their school days.

English Literature is a very complex subject as there are usually lots of texts to be understood and analyzed. When studying literature, students can learn not only language aspects such as vocabulary items but also that language can be used for specific and aesthetic purposes. Familiarity with

the concepts of beat, metre and rhythm can improve their own writing as students are able to appreciate and apply these ideas. Finally, the study of Literature can provide students with a fresh and creative angle with which to approach their studies in particular and their lives in general. So the next time you are reading a newspaper article lamenting the lack of creativity and initiative in the local workforce, remember that in a small way the study of English Literature can help to add a refreshing and further dimension to a person's life.

II. AIMS OF STUDY

This research aims to:

- Investigate the interest of English majors at HaiPhong Private University in learning English Literature and their desires in getting more background knowledge of overview of history of English Literature.
- Provide them the supplementary material of brief history of English literature from the Middle Age to 19th century with the knowledge of English historical periods and literary trends, brief account of outstanding authors' careers and works, their literary ideologies. The extracts from these works are also added. They may be chapters from novels, short stories, poems or acts from plays. Questions for appreciation and analysis are designed to help students to get better understanding and have their own comments on what they read.
- Contribute to raising interest for students in appreciating the beauty of the English literature.

III. SCOPE OF STUDY

- The study especially focuses on the analysis of the interest and desires of English majors from the 5th semester at HPU in studying a subject, English Literature to find out the necessity of a source of material

with the background knowledge of history of English Literature from the Middle Age to 19th century.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The research project is based on both theoretical discussion and data analysis. Data were collected and analyzed for the aim of finding students' ambition in enhancing their motivation and their likes when learning English literature.

The '*Quantitative*' and '*Qualitative*' are the main methods applied to pursue the objectivity in a research.

All the interpretations, comments, and conclusions are drawn from:

- Relevant references
- Survey questionnaires
- Statistics, description and analysis of the collected data
- Personal observations and experience
- Discussion with colleagues, students

V. DESIGN OF STUDY

The study consists of three main parts:

Part 1: Introduction outlines the general background, the rationale, the methodology, the aims, the scope and the design of the study.

Part 2: Development presents the theoretical background and discusses the data analysis and findings. This part includes the following chapters

Chapter 1. Briefly presents learning and teaching English literature

Chapter 2. Data collection, data analysis and discussion

Part 3: Designing a supplementary material of 'Overview of history of English literature from the Middle Age to 19th century.

PART II. DEVELOPMENT

I. Teaching and learning English literature

Literature is a very versatile subject and is generally considered one of the most difficult subjects to teach. There is no right or wrong way to teach a literature class; however, there is a smart way to teach it. The idea in literature is not just to get an answer, it is to get an in-depth, provocative and creative answer. The job of the professor is not to teach the student, it is to lead the student.

Basing on such criteria for teaching English literature for English majors as a subject at university, designing a supplementary material to enhance their background knowledge is of importance. This material, which presents the whole splendid history of English literature from Anglo-Saxon times to the close of the Victorian Era, first hopes to create or to encourage in every student the desire to read, and to know literature itself rather than what has been written about literature. The second is to interpret literature both personally and historically, that is, to show how it generally reflects not only the author's life and thought but also the spirit of the age and the ideals of the nation's history.

II. The survey questionnaire, data collection and analysis

1. The survey questionnaire: the purpose and design

In order to get information of the interest as well as the expectations of English majors at HPU of a systematic knowledge of history of English literature before learning the subject English American literature, 40 survey questionnaires have been collected from the English majors from the 5th semester.

The questionnaire for them is designed with 5 questions. They aim at finding out their interest and their knowledge prepared for learning the subject English American literature at HPU and their expectation for a supplementary material of background knowledge of history of English literature.

2. Preliminary results and analysis

2.1. Student's comments on the learning the subject English American literature at university

2.2. Students' comments on the importance of background knowledge of literature in appreciating a literary work.

2.3. The frequency of absorbing autonomously the literary background knowledge before learning the subject English American literature.

2.4. Students' means of getting knowledge of history of English literature

2.5. Students' expectations in being provided a systematically supplementary material of history of English literature when studying the subject English American literature at HPU

Basing on the available data, it came to us that a very high percentage of students had awareness in an attempt to study a quite difficult but interesting subject English American Literature. Their expectation is to get a systematic background knowledge of history of English Literature so that it can help them understand and arise their true emotions to appreciate the beauty of a literary work. Therefore, a help and guide in providing a supplementary material of overview of history of English literature are of significance.

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Teacher of English literature should guide his/ her students to find out about the various genres of Literature from different time periods and how they evolved through the ages. Students often rely upon study guides and predigested responses to texts they have never experienced as living works of art. Remember to allow plenty of time for regular readings and re-readings of a poem, for example, so that its impact as sound can be enjoyed before it is analyzed simply as a complicated kind of prose. This is equally important with many prose writers such as Dickens or Jane Austen for whom some basic impact is in the rhythmic shape and weight of a paragraph as a key part of its "meaning". They may set a slow versus a staccato tempo, to indicate boredom or excitement for instance.

It is wise not to borrow questions for appreciation from the Internet. Make sure the questions you set have not been discussed in detail in class. Of course the questions have to be similar but ensure that they are not the same. You are grading the students on their literary analysis not on their note-taking skills. Ask "why" for any piece of work, the most important question in literature is 'Why?'. Make sure every student knows the

importance of this question from the first class. You have to train the class to be opinionated and try to interpret every line according to the reason and the intention behind it. The heart of all Literature is its intention.

Teaching literature successfully is like adding fuel to the fire. There is no room for a unanimous agreement in Literature. Every line is subject to interpretation, levels of importance and hidden meaning. Make sure that your students are not exposed to one view. The best way to do this is to play devil's advocate. When they express a view, disagree. If they agree with you, change your view. This will make for interesting debate and force the students to defend their viewpoint and explain why they are right. Try to be as unreasonable with your stand as you can, this will get the students more 'heated' and force them to think in the abstract manner necessary to write a literature paper. Adding history to the material also plays an important role. As your students become familiar with the material, allow them to become familiar with the face behind the material: the writer. Tell them a little bit about their past and the way they lived their lives and some of the documented inspiration behind their works. A lot of very famous writers lived rather interesting (and somewhat tragic and scandalous) lives, it's always interesting to hear about, and it might provide more meaning to their words.

You need to be aware that literature is not like most other subjects where the content is what is essential. It is the creativity and thought behind the content that makes a Literature essay stand out. You are also grading the content, obviously. But in literature, you should highly appreciate to the student with a controversial and creative interpretation and a few less to the student with the 'textbook' interpretation. For example, the student who can convince the reader that Frankenstein's monster was actually his alter ego,

with support from lines in the book, is a better student than one who treats the monster as just a creature who had the misfortune to be created by man. No matter how creative the thought, it has to be backed up by quotes from the material. A student might have a particularly brilliant idea but if it is disproved by the material, the idea is worthless. Stress on the fact that every claim has to be supported by lines, verses and dialogue in the text.

Basing on such criteria for teaching English literature for English majors as a subject at university, designing a supplementary material to enhance their background knowledge is of importance. This material, which presents the whole splendid history of English literature from Anglo-Saxon times to the close of the Victorian Era, first hopes to create or to encourage in every student the desire to read, and to know literature itself rather than what has been written about literature. The second is to interpret literature both personally and historically, that is, to show how it generally reflects not only the author's life and thought but also the spirit of the age and the ideals of the nation's history.

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supplementary material of background knowledge of history of English literature.

2. Preliminary results and analysis

I have collected the data of the survey questionnaire and would like to point out the findings basing on the given statistics.

2.1. Student's comments on the learning the subject English American literature at university

The students' attitudes towards the necessity of learning this subject is quite clear. Of 40 students surveyed, 36 have said that the subject is necessary and should be compulsory, whereares only 4 thought that it could be optional for them. It could be defined that most English majors see the subject importance and 90% of them has desire to study compulsorily.

<i>Students' attitudes to the subject English American literature</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Necessary and compulsory	36
Necessary and optional	4
Unnecessary	0

Table 1: Surveyed students' attitudes to the subject English American literature

2.2. Students' comments on the importance of background knowledge of literature in appreciating a literary work.

In regard to the ability in appreciating a literary work, whether Vietnamese literary works or foreign ones, all of them agreed that background knowledge of literature such as historical period, writer's style or ideology, literature trends played an important role. None of them refused its significance. The result, which is shown in the following table, to some

certain extents, affirmed the awareness of students when studying this subject.

<i>Students' attitudes towards the importance of the literature background knowledge</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Necessary	40
Unnecessary	0

Table 2: Surveyed students' attitudes towards the importance of the literature background knowledge

2.3. The frequency of absorbing autonomously the literary background knowledge before learning the subject English American literature.

The students from the survey showed that only a few of them (3 students/ approximately 8%) have got a certain amount of background knowledge of English literature. Several of them were aware of searching such knowledge, approximately 15%, meanwhile, most of the others, which accounted for roughly 72% (31 students) had no idea of such knowledge.

<i>The frequency of absorbing autonomously the background knowledge of English literature</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Yes	3 (app. 8%)
Seldom	6 (app. 15%)
No	31 (app. 72%)

Table 3: The frequency of absorbing autonomously the background knowledge of English literature

2.4. Students' means of getting knowledge of history of English literature

Of 9 surveyed students (continued by Question 3) who have equipped themselves autonomously the background knowledge of English literature , the ways they used were various. None of them got such information from borrowing books form our university library or from buying relevant books themselves. 6 students chose the way of searching Internet. Interestingly, 3 students noted their other ways that they recalled the knowledge they have learnt from the textbook of literature subject in Vietnamese at high school, in the part of Literature of Foreign Countries. However, they noted that such amount of knowledge was very limited or unclear in their minds. It is undoubted that students have a poor and unsystematic background

knowledge to study effectively the subject English American literature in English at university.

<i>Students' means of getting knowledge of history of English literature</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Borrowing books form university library	0
Buying books	0
Searching the Internet	6
Other ways:	3

Table 4: Students' means of getting knowledge of history of English literature

2.5. Students' expectations in being provided a systematically supplementary material of history of English literature when studying the subject English American literature at HPU

In regard to their expectations, most of them desire to have a supplementary material and the guide in studying the background knowledge of history of English literature. 33 of 36 students who first considered the subject English American Literature compulsory students agreed that such material should be compulsory part in class, while the rest (3/36 students) suggested it be as a self-study. The other 4 students who first considered the subject optional asserted that the material should be as a self study. Overall, roughly 18% of students (7/40) suggested the material as a self-study one, meanwhile approximately 82% expected to study it compulsorily.

<i>Students' expectations in being provided a systematically supplementary material of history of English literature</i>	<i>Number of students</i>
Yes& Compulsory	33
Yes& Self-study	7
No	0

Table 5: Students' expectations in being provided a systematically supplementary material of history of English literature

Basing on the available data, it came to us that a very high percentage of students had awareness in an attempt to study a quite difficult but interesting subject English American Literature. Their expectation is to get a systematic background knowledge of history of English Literature so that it can help them understand and arise their true emotions to appreciate the beauty of a literary work. Therefore, a help and guide in providing a supplementary material of overview of history of English literature are of significance.

CHAPTER I. LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

I. ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD (5th – 10th centuries)

During the first five centuries of our era and long before that Britain was inhabited by a people called Kelts, who lived in tribes. Britain's history is considered to begin in the 5th century, when it was invaded from the Continent by the fighting tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes. At the very end of the 5th century they settled in Britain and began to call themselves English(after the principal tribe of settlers, called Englisc).

The Old English language, also called Anglo-Saxon, was the earliest form of English. It is difficult to give exact dates for the rise and development of a language, because it does not change suddenly; but perhaps it is true to say that Old English was spoken from about A.D 600 to about 1100. Although we know very little of this period from literature, some poems have nevertheless reached us. In those early days songs called epics were created in many countries. The epics tell about the most remarkable events of a people's history and the deeds of one or more heroic personages.

THE SONG OF BEOWULF

The first masterpiece of English literature, the epic poem *The Song of Beowulf*, describes the historical past of the land from which the Angles, Saxons and Jutes came. It was not composed in England, but on the continent of Europe. The new settlers brought it over along with their wives, goods and chattels. They brought the subject over from the Continent when they invaded Britain, and it was not written down till the end of the ninth century. It is a stirring, warlike, violent poem of over three thousand lines,

and it is perhaps difficult to think of it as being set down by a monk, a man of peace, in the quiet a monastery. These Anglo-Saxon monks, however, had the blood of warriors in them, they were the sons and grandsons of Vikings. *Beowulf* is essentially a warrior's story.

The story of Beowulf tells of the time when king Hrothgar ruled the Danes Hrothgar built a great house for himself and his men. It had a large hall with flat stones in the centre. All the men slept in this hall. There was a great feast when the hall was built. During the feast the songs from the hall were heard by a monster that lived at the bottom of a lonely lake. The gay songs irritated him. When all Hrothgar's men were asleep, Grendel, the foul monster, half-devil, half-man appeared. He seized thirty of the sleeping men, carried them away and ate them. Night after night the men disappeared one after another, until Hrothgar had lost nearly all of them. One day the men that guarded the coast saw a ship approaching the shores of Denmark from Norway. A young Viking was on board, tall and strong as a young oak tree. It was Beowulf, who had heard of Grendel and his doings. He had come to help Hrothgar to kill the monster. He was received with great joy by Hrothgar, who gave a feast in his honour. When the men lay down to sleep after the feast, Grendel appeared in the dark hall. He seized Beowulf and a great struggle began in this struggle the monster lost his arm, but ran away. Again there was singing and joy in the hall the next night. But late at night a still more horrific monster, a Water Withch, appeared. She was Grendel's mother who had come to kill Beowulf but she did not find him and disappeared, carrying away one of the best of Hrothgar's men. The next day Beowulf went after her and found her at the bottom of the lake, where she lived with her son. He saw the dead body of Grendel. With an old sword of the giants that he found there Beowulf killed the Water Withch and cut off

Grendel's head. Carrying the head he came back to the men who were waiting for him. Later, he returned to his own people with rich presents from Hrothgar.

The second part of the poem tells us of Beowulf's deeds when he was king of Norway. A fiery dragon was destroying his country, Beowulf found the dragon's cave and a lot of treasures in it. Beowulf saved his country, he killed the dragon but the monster wounded him with his fiery breath. Beowulf died and his people buried him on a high cliff by the sea shore. Over his grave his men raised a mound and rode around it, singing a song of mourning.

Thus, the epic *The Song of Beowulf*, has its own value. It gives us an interesting picture of life in those old days, tells of some events from a people's history, sings the heroic deeds of a man, his courage and his desire of justice, his love for his people and self-sacrifice for the sake of his country. The fights of Beowulf with Grendel and Grendel's mother are the subject of the poem, a poem whose grim music is the snapping of fangs, the crunching of bones, and whose colour is the grey of the northern winter, shot by the red of blood. It is strong meat, no work for the squeamish but it is no way a crude and primitive composition. It shows great skill in its construction, its imagery and language are sophisticated.

The poem is a classic example of Anglo-Saxon poetry. It has no rhyme, each half-line is joined to the other by alliteration, which is a repetition, at close intervals, of the same consonant in words or syllables. (*middes/ maerne; haeleth/ hiofende/ hlaford; beorge/bael/ swear/ swiothole/ swogende*). Another interesting feature of the poem is the use of picture names, that show the subject in a new light. Things are described indirectly and in combinations of words. A ship is not only a ship: it is sea-

goer, a sea-boat, a sea-wood, or a wave-floater. A sailor is a sea-traveler, a seaman, or sea-soldier. The unknown poet calls the sea a “sail-road”, ocean-way or “salt streams”, the musical instruments “joy wood”, “glee-wood”... These descriptive words, together with the subject, are called double metaphors.

II. ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD (11th-13th centuries)

In the year 1066, in the Battle of Hastings, the Anglo-Saxon king’s army was defeated by William, Duke of Normandy, who became King of England. ‘NORMAN’ means ‘North-man’. The Normans were, in fact, of the same blood as the Danes, but they had thoroughly absorbed the culture of the late Roman Empire, had been long Christianized, and spoke that offshoot of Latin we call Norman French. Thus their kingdom in France had a very different set of traditions from those of the country they conquered. You may sum it up by saying that the Norman way of life looked south-towards the Mediterranean, towards the sun, towards wine and laughter, while the Anglo-Saxon way of life looked towards the grey northern seas-grim, heavy, melancholy, humorless.

A strong feudal monarchy was established in the country. The ruling classes consisted of the Norman nobility and the clergy. The power of the Catholic Church had become very great. Most of the English people became serfs. The Normans came from the north-west of France. They brought with them the culture of their country and the French language. Thus three languages were spoken in England. The language of the nobility was French, the churchmen used Latin and the common people spoke Anglo-Saxon.

The three social classes of the country had their own literature. The Normans brought the romance to England. The romance told of love and

adventure and expressed the ideals of knighthood in feudal society. Among the best known romances are the legends of *King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table*.

The literature of the Church was scholastic, moralizing, and it supported the feudal system. The books written in Latin by monks, taught the common people that they should be poor and obey their masters. Their sufferings on earth, the Church said, would bring them happiness in heaven. The Anglo-Saxons composed their own popular poetry. The main genres were the fabliaux- funny stories about townspeople, and the bestiaries- stories in which the characters were animals.

III. PRE-RENAISSANCE (14th-15th centuries)

The 14th century was a difficult time for England, the country was waging the Hundred Years' War with France. The war brought great hardships to the common people and a revolt and a revolt took place in 1381- the Peasants' Revolt. At the same time, England suffered from three epidemics of the plague. This was a real tragedy for the country, because half of its population died from the 'black death'. Though the power of the feudal nobles and the Church was still very strong, there already appeared signs of the birth of a new class. The townspeople, that is the craftsmen and the tradesmen, were becoming an important social force. These townspeople later formed the class of bourgeoisie.

During this stormy century the English nation was being formed; English became the spoken language of the country; English literature was born.

The scholastic Latin Church literature still ranked high, but a new spirit was already noticeable in the cultural life of the country. The new spirit was marked by an optimism unknown to the Middle Ages. It was best reflected in the works by Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest poet of the time and the first poet who paved the way for English realistic literature, free of the influence of the Church. He is often called the father of English poetry, although as we know, there were many English poets before him, as we should expect, the language had changed a great deal in the seven hundred years since the time of *Beowulf* and it is much easier to read Chaucer than to read anything written in Old English.



GEOFFREY CHAUCER
(1340-1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer was the greatest writer of the 14th century. Geoffrey Chaucer lived in an eventful age. He was born, so we believed, in 1340 or thereabouts, when the Hundred Years' War with France had already begun. Three times in his life the plague known as the Black Death smote the country. When he was in his twenties the English language was established, for the first time, as the language of the law-courts. When he was in his late thirties the young and unfortunate Richard II ascended the throne, to be deposed and murdered a year before Chaucer's death by Boling broke, the rebel who became Henry IV. In 1381 there came the Peasants' Revolt, and with it a recognition that the laborers and diggers had human rights quite as much as the middle class and the nobility. Chaucer died in 1400, about forty years before a really important event in our literary history- the invention of printing.

Chaucer belonged to that growing class from which, in the centuries to follow, so many great writers sprang. He was not a peasant, not a priest, not an aristocrat, but the son of a man engaged in trade: his father was a wine merchant. But young Geoffrey was to learn a lot about the aristocracy through becoming a page to the Countess of Ulster. Promotion and foreign

service as a young soldier (he was taken prisoner in France but ransomed by the King of England himself), marriage into the family of the great John of Gaunt the opportunity to observe polite manners, to study the sciences and the arts, the literatures of France and Italy-all these had their part to play in making Chaucer one of the best-equipped of the English poets. Granted also intelligence, a strong sense of humor, a fine musical ear, and the ability to tell a story-how can this young poet fail? In Italy he got acquainted with the works of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio. What they wrote full of new, optimistic ideas and love of life and had a great influence on his future works, the most important of which was the *Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer's achievements are many. First, despite his knowledge of the 'politer' languages of the Continent, he patriotically confined himself to using the East midland dialect of English that was spoken in London. He found this dialect not at all rich in words, and completely lacking in an important literature from which he could learn. In a sense, he had to *create* the English language we know today and to establish its literary traditions. To do this he had to turn, chiefly, to the literature of France and bring something of its elegance to East Midland English; he had to ransack the tales and histories of Europe to find subject-matter.

Canterbury Tales

Canterbury Tales is a collection of stories in verse told by people of different social standing. Chaucer had planned 120 stories but wrote only 24, because death broke off his work. The stories are preceded by a Prologue, in which the characters that will tell the stories are described. Short prologues to each story connect them into one work.

The Prologue tells about a group of pilgrims, who were on their way to pray at the Cathedral of Canterbury. Pilgrims were as much a part of Christian life in Chaucer's time as they are to-day of Muslim and Hindu life.



CANTERBURY PILGRIMS *From Royal MS., 18 D.ii, in the British Museum*

When spring came, when the snow and frost and, later, the floods had left the roads of England and made them safe for traffic again, then people from all classes of society would make trips to holy places. One of the holy places of England was Canterbury, where Thomas à Becket, the 'blissful holy martyr' murdered in the reign of Henry II, had his resting place. It was convenient for these pilgrims to travel in companies, having usually met

each other at some such starting points as the Tabard Inn at Southwark, London. On the occasion of the immortal pilgrimage of *The Canterbury Tales*, Harry Bailey, the landlord of the Tabard, making the pilgrimage himself, offers a free supper to whichever of the pilgrims shall tell the best story on the long road to Canterbury.

The Canterbury Tales was the first great work in verse in English literature. Chaucer painted a vivid picture of English society, as it was in his day, each of his characters was given as an individual, typical of his country and his time. Among the pilgrims there was a doctor, a merchant, a student from Oxford, a carpenter, a miller, a lawyer, a sailor, a cook. There were also some women, some monks and a pardoner among the company. The pilgrims tell their stories according to their rank or standing. Thus, the knight tells a romance, the miller- a fabliau, the pardoner- a moralizing tale.

Here are the opening lines of *The Canterbury Tales*:

Whan that Aprille with his shoures swote
The drogte of Marche hath perced to the rote
*When April with his sweet showers has struck to the roots
the dryness of March...*

Here are the contents of the pardoner's tale "*Three Young Men, Death and a Bag of Gold*":

Three young men were making merry over a bottle of wine at an inn, when they saw a funeral pass under the windows.

"Who is dead?", they asked, and were told it was a dear friend of theirs, a young man like themselves. At first they could not believe it, but the innkeeper told them:

“Yes, it is quite true. The traitor- Death takes both young and old. There is a village not a mile from here where Death has killed this year all the men, women and children. One might think that Death really lived not far from the inn where they were drinking wine. And so they cried:

“Since Death is such a wicked traitor and has killed our friend, let us go and kill Death. But before we go, let us join hands and promise we shall help each other and be as brothers until we find and kill Death.

So they joined hands and promised to be true to each other, and set out. Very soon they met an old man on the road and asked him: “Do you know where we can find Death?”

“why, yes”, said the old man, “I just saw him in that little wood over there. Do you see that big oak tree? You will find him just under it”.

When the three young men heard that, they ran till they reached the tree, and under it they found a large bag of gold. Then they forgot all about Death- they were so glad to have found so much gold. They sat down by the bag and the youngest of them said:

“We shall now lead a jolly life and spend all this gold. But first we must carry it home, and that we must do it by night, when no one can see us. If people see us they may try to rob us, or they will not believe us think we have stolen it. So till night we must wait here and guard the gold. It is still long night and we shall soon be hungry. Let one of us go back to town and fetch some wine and food. The other two will stay here and guard the gold ”

They agreed to do so and the youngest was sent for the wine and food. When he had gone, one of the two who were left to guard the gold, said:

“Why should we divide this gold between three, when we might divide it between two?”

“How’s that?” asked the second man.

“Well”, said the first, “two are stronger than one. When he comes with the wine and sits down, you will pull him down and struggle with him as if you were playing, and then I shall stick my knife deep into his side”.

And so these two decided to kill the third.

Meanwhile this third was thinking on his way to town:

“How I should like to have all the gold for myself”

And then he thought he would buy poison and kill both his friends.

He bought three bottles of wine, put poison in two- the third he kept pure for himself- and went back to the oak tree.

The two other men killed him just as they had decided, and

Then said the first of them when this was done:

“Now for a drink. Sit down and let’s be merry,

For later on there’ll be the corpse to bury”

And as it happened, reaching for a sup

He took a bottle full of poison up

And drank, and his companion, nothing loth,

Drank from it also, and they perished both.

Thus these two murderers received their due,

So did the treacherous young poisoner too.

The great poet contributed to the formation of the English literary language. His works were written in the London dialect which, at the time, was becoming the spoken language of the majority of the people.

Chaucer also worked out a new form of versification, which replaced alliteration. This was called metrical form. It was based on rhythmical arrangement of the accents, of the length of the verse, of stanzas.

Chaucer was a well-educated man who read Latin, and studied French and Italian poetry, but he was not only interested in books. He traveled and

made good use of his eyes; and the people whom he describes are just like living people. Geoffrey Chaucer showed life as it was, as a great artist and humanist he gave an equally masterly description of Good and Evil. The great writer believed in Man and was optimistically full of hope for the future.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What new tendencies were noticeable in the cultural life of England of the 14th century, and where did they come from?
2. What can you say about the composition of the *Canterbury Tales*?
3. What are the characters of the *Canterbury Tales*?
4. What kind of tales were told by the pilgrims? What was the pardoner's tale about?
5. What was Chaucer's contribution to English literature?

The 15th century is known in English literature as the century of folklore. Many songs, called ballads, were composed then by the common people of the country. The ballads were songs in verses of four lines, called quatrains; the second and fourth lines of the verse rhymed. Among them there were historical and legendary ballads. Some were humorous and others were lyrical.

A favorite legendary hero of the English people is Robin Hood. Many ballads have been composed about him and his friends. Some historians say that there really was such a person as Robin Hood, but that is not certain.

There is a legend how Robin Hood became an outlaw.

In the 12th century only the King of England could hunt in certain forests in England. If anybody killed a deer there, he was punished by death. The men who guarded those forests were the King's Foresters and the Head Forester was a very important person. He was as important as the sheriff in his town, or the bishop in his church.

The beautiful Sherwood Forest was near the town of Nottingham. The Head Forester there had a little son, Robert; the boy was born in the town of Locksley and was often called Rob of Locksley, or Robin. He learned to draw the bow and shoot an arrow when he was quite small. Later, Robin became the best archer among his young friends.

His father had several enemies, among them- the Sheriff of Nottingham. When Robin was 19 his father was unjustly thrown into prison by the Sheriff. His mother died of grief and his father died soon after her.

Robin loved the life of the forest and he wanted to become one of the King's Foresters. But he had a quarrel with the Head Forester, who had got his father's place. During the quarrel Robin killed the Head Forester. He

had to hide, because the Sheriff of Nottingham was looking for him and had offered a large sum of money for his head. Robin hid in Sherwood Forest, which he knew well. At that time it was called the Greenwood. There were many yeomen already there. They were hiding from the Norman nobles, the rich tradesmen, the monks and the bishops. They were outlaws. They all wore green clothes, to hide better in the Greenwood. Some of them know Robin well. The outlaws had no chief and said to Robin: "In Nottingham there is a contest of archers. The archer who wins will get the golden arrow and will crown the prettiest girl in the country as queen of the day. If you win the arrow, you will be our chief".

Robin disguised himself as an old beggar and covered his head and most of his face with a hood, so as not to be recognized. He won the golden arrow, the Sheriff gave it to him and asked him, who he was. "I am Rob the Stroller, my lord Sheriff", he answered. He then took the arrow and went straight to the place where Maid Marian was sitting. They had known each other since childhood and Rob loved her very much. He gave her the golden arrow and made her queen of the day. Maid Marian smiled at him and said: "My thanks to you, Rob in the Hood", for she had recognized him. When Rob came back to the Greenwood the outlaws already knew about his victory; from that day they called him Robin Hood and made him their chief. He had many friends there. There was even a fat monk, Friar Tuck by name, among his merry men. He had run away from his bishop and was now an outlaw, too. Late on a fine young fellow, Allan-A-Dale by name, met Robin Hood in the forest and also joined the outlaws.

Robin helped Allan to find his bride. A very old and very rich Norman knight had taken her away from young Allan, because he wanted to marry her himself. That very day Robin Hood went to the church, introduced

himself a musician, and said that he would play when the bride and bridegroom came.

Robin Hood's men came into the Church and seized the old knight's archers and the bride's angry brother. Robin asked the bride whom she wanted to marry. She smiled at Allan-A-Dale and gave him her hand. But the bishop was very angry and refused to marry them. So Robin Hood called Friar Tuck, who was with the outlaws, and told him to marry the young people, and so he did.

Popular ballads show Robin Hood as a tireless enemy of the Norman oppressors, of the Church and the tradesmen. They sing about his courage, his readiness to help the poor and the needy. They tell about the love of the poor people for their legendary hero, and their deep gratitude to him. These melodious ballads were sung from generation to generation. In the 18th century they were collected and printed for the first time. Thus they became part to the wealth of English literature.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What is a ballad? What subjects were the popular ballads written on?
2. How did Robin become an outlaw? How did Rob of Locksley get the name of Robin Hood?
3. What people were among the merry men of the Greenwood? How did Robin Hood help Allan-A-Dale?

CHAPTER II . LITERATURE OF THE RENAISSANCE

(End of the 15th - beginning of the 17th century)

In the 15th-16th centuries capitalist relations began to develop in Europe. The former townspeople became the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie fought against feudalism because it held back the development of capitalism. The decay of feudalism and the development of capitalist relations was followed by a great rise in the cultural life of Europe. There was an attempt at creating a new culture which would be free from the limitations of the feudal ideology of the Middle Ages. The epoch was characterized by a thirst for knowledge and discoveries, by a powerful development of individuality.

It was then that great geographical discoveries of Columbus, Magellan and other travelers as well as astronomical discoveries of Copernicus, Bruno, Galilee were made. The invention of the printing press contributed to the development of culture in all European countries. Universities stopped being citadels of religious learning and turned into centers of humanist study.

There was a revival of interest in the ancient culture of Greece and Rome (“Renaissance” is French for “rebirth”). The study of the works of ancient philosophers, writers, and artists helped the people to widen their outlook, to know the world and man’s nature. On the basis of both the ancient culture and the most progressive elements of the culture of the Middle Ages the fine arts, literature and science of the Renaissance began to develop. The culture of the Renaissance was, in fact, the first stage of bourgeois culture.

The progressive ideology of the Renaissance was Humanism. Human life, the happiness of people and the belief in man’s abilities became the main subjects on fine arts and literature. The works of humanists proclaimed

equality of people regardless of their social origin, race and religion. Humanism did away with the dark scholastic teaching of the Middle Ages. The development of a new social order presented great possibilities for man's creative power. That is why the humanist outlook was marked with bright optimism, with belief in man's great abilities and his high mission. It was contrary to the medieval ideology and especially to that of the Catholic Church. The power of the Church over men's minds was defeated. The bearers of the progressive outlook greatly contributed to the development of every branch of the world's art, culture and science. The Renaissance gave mankind such great men as Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, Petrarch and Durer, Cervantes and Shakespeare.

In the 16th century, capitalism began to develop in England as well as in other European countries. However, it had some peculiarities. Wool production became the leading manufacture in England. Landowners drove thousands of peasants off their lands, turning these lands into pastures, or "enclosures" for sheep. There was no work for the peasants and many of them became homeless beggars. Lust for riches was typical of the new class of the bourgeoisie. The most progressive people of the country could not help seeing the growing power of money, and the injustice caused by it. English humanists dreamed of social changes that would do away with the vices of society and establish the equality of people. English humanism was both anti-feudal and anti-bourgeois. It was directed against the ignorance and oppression of feudal, against the grabbing and self-interested character of the bourgeoisie. It was the ideology of the most progressive people of the epoch.

These ideas were best expressed by the first English humanist Thomas More (1478-1535) in his book *Utopia*. *Utopia*, which is the Greek for

“nowhere”, is a story about an imaginary island where all people are equal and free. Private property here has been replaced by public ownership. Physical labor is combined with intellectual occupation. There is no money on the island, because all the people work and get equal pay for their labor. *Utopia* had a great influence on the development of humanistic ideas in England as well as in the whole of Europe.

More's *Utopia* marked the first period of English humanist literature. The second period lasted from the middle of the 16th century up to the beginning of the 17th century. Queen Elizabeth ruled from 1558 to 1603, but the great Elizabethan literary age is not considered as beginning until 1579. The chief literary glory of the great Elizabethan age was its drama. This period saw the flourishing of the English drama, but in general the comedies are better than the tragedies. The theatre became a favorite amusement of people, especially in towns. Theatres appeared one after another. At the end of the century there were about 10 theatres in London the theatres performed the plays written by the English dramatists of the time. Among the playwrights of the period were John Lyly, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson and others. The most outstanding dramatist of the period, as well as of all times, was William Shakespeare.

Lyly's prose comedy *Campaspe* and his allegorical play *Endimion* are an improvement, they were performed in front of Queen Elizabeth, probably by boy actors. These boys, known as 'Children of Paul's', no doubt caused a lot of fun when they played the parts of great men such as Alexander the Great, or the philosopher, Diogenes. The play *Campaspe* contains the charming (and now famous) song:

Cupid and my Campaspe played

At cards for kisses; Cupid paid

Cupid loses one thing after another to Campase, and at last he offers his eyes:

At last he set her both his eyes;

She won, and Cupid blind did rise

O Love, has she done this to thee?

What shall, alas!, become of me?

The first great dramatist of the time was **Christopher Marlowe**. His first tragedy, *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587 or earlier), is in two parts. It is written in the splendid blank verse that Marlowe brought to the stage.

The first part deals with the rise to power of Tamburlaine, a shepherd and a robber. His terrible ambition drives him ever onwards to more power and more cruelty. His armies conquer Bajazet, ruler of Turkey, whom Tamburlaine takes from place to place in a cage, like a wild animal. In the second part, Tamburlaine is pulled to Babylon in a carriage. It is drawn by two kings, whom he whips and curses when they do not go fast enough. He shouts angrily:

What! Can ye draw but twenty miles a day?

When they get tired, they are taken away to be hanged, and then two spare kings have to pull the carriage. Tamburlaine drives on to Babylon, and on arrival gives orders for all the people there to be drowned. His life is

violent in other ways. He cuts an arm to show his son that a wound is unimportant. He shouts for a map. 'Give me a map', he cries, 'let me see how much is left for me to conquer all the world'.

The play was well received, but the violence of the language and of the action, and the terrible cruelty, are serious faults. Yet Marlowe's 'mighty line' fills the heart and satisfies the sense of beauty. It is usually powerful and effective, and it is not used only to describe violence. Marlowe discovered the splendid power of the sound of the proper names:

*Is it not brave to be a king, TEHELLES,
USUMCASANE and THERIDAMAS?
Is it not passing brave to be a king,
AND RIDE IN TRIUMPH THROUGH PERSEPOLIS?*

The *Few of Malta* (1589?) is again often violent. In it the governor of Malta taxes the Jews there, but Barabas, a rich Jew, refuses to pay. His money and houses are therefore taken from him and in revenge he begins a life of violence. He poisons his own daughter, Abigail, and causes her lover to die too. He helps the Turks when they attack Malta, and so they make him governor; but he decides to kill all the Turkish officers. He arranges that the floor of a big room can be made to fall suddenly, and then invites them to meal in it. He hopes thus to destroy them while they are eating but an enemy makes his secret known, and he himself is thrown down below the floor into a vessel of boiling water. His last words are:

Die, life! Fly, soul! Tongue, curse thy fill and die!

The language of *The Few of Malta* is not always so fierce; some times the beauty of sound and rhythm (and again of proper names) is very fine:

*I hope my ships
I sent for Egypt and the bordering isles
Are gotten up by Nilus wandering banks;
Mine argosies from Alexandria
Loaden with spice and silks, now under sail,
Are smoothly gliding down the Candy shore
To Malta through our Mediterranean Sea*

The softness of the last line suggests very well the quiet movement of a sailing ship in the old days.

Certainly Marlowe's writing set an example for other dramatists in the great Elizabethan age in two important ways: the use of powerful blank verse lines to strengthen the drama, and the development of character to heighten the sense of tragedy. When Shakespeare added to these his own mastery of plot and his human sympathy, the drama reached its greatest heights.

Marlowe was killed in a quarrel at a Thames-side inn before he was thirty years of age. If he had lived longer, he would probably have written other splendid plays. Shakespeare certainly thought so.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What was the progressive ideology of the Renaissance?

2. Who was the representative of the first period of English humanist literature? What did he write?
3. When did drama begin to flourish in England? What were the names of the outstanding English playwrights of the Renaissance? Say about the style of one of the playwrights of this time.



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
(1546-1616)

The great English playwright and poet William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in the small town of Stratford-upon-Avon, about seventy-five miles from London. He was the son of a tradesman. When a boy he went to Stratford Grammar School, where Latin and Greek were almost the only subjects. Life itself, contact with people and his acquaintance with the rich English folklore gave him more than the scholastic methods used at school. In those days, Stratford-upon-Avon was often visited by traveling groups of actors. It is quite possible that Shakespeare saw some plays performed by such actors and was impressed by them.

Shakespeare lived in Stratford-upon-Avon until he was twenty one. By that time he was married and had three children. At twenty one, he left Stratford-upon-Avon for London where he joined a theatrical company and worked as an actor and a playwright. In the late 90s, a new theatre called *The Globe* was built on the bank of the Thames. Shakespeare became one of its owners. The people of London liked it better than any other theatre. It was in *The Globe* that most of Shakespeare's plays were staged at that time.

In 1613 Shakespeare left London and returned to his native town of Stratford-upon-Avon. Three years later, on April 23, 1616, he died and buried there.

Shakespeare is the author of 2 poems, 37 plays and 154 sonnets. His creative work is usually divided into three periods.

The first period that lasted from 1590 to 1600 was marked by the optimism so characteristic of all humanist literature. It is best reflected in his nine brilliant comedies: *The Comedy of Errors*(1592), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593), *The two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594), *Love's Labor's Lost* (1594), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1599), *As You Like It* (1599), *Twelfth Night; Or, What You Will* (1600).

The comedies describe the adventures of young men and women, their friendship and love, their search for happiness. The scene is usually laid in some southern country. But one cannot help feeling that the comedies show the “merry England” of Shakespeare’s time.

The comedies are usually based on some misunderstanding that creates comic situations. They are full of fun. But the laughter is not a mockery directed against the people and their vices. Shakespeare never moralizes in his comedies. He laughs with people, but not at them. His comedies are filled with humanist love for people and the belief in the nobleness and kindness of human nature.

The first of the comedies was probably *A Comedy of Errors*(1592-3?); its plot depends on the likeness of twins and the likeness of their twin servants, with the resulting confusion. The real step forward comes with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595), which shows Shakespeare’s growing

power in comedy. The different stories of this light-hearted play are mixed together with great skill. The feelings of the lovers are never allowed to tire the audience; something really funny always interrupts them in time. But there is true sympathy in the treatment of character, and a great deal of beauty in many descriptive lines.

In the next play, *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Antonio, a merchant, borrows money from Shylock to help his friend Bassanio, who wants to marry the rich and beautiful Portia. Shylock hates Antonio and only agrees to lend the money on condition that, if it is not repaid at the right time, Antonio shall pay a pound of his flesh. When Antonio's ships are wrecked, and to everyone's surprise he cannot pay the money, Shylock demands him a pound of flesh. The case is taken to court, and Antonio has no hope. Then suddenly, Portia, dressed as a lawyer, appears in court. At first she tries to persuade Shylock to have mercy, but she did not succeed, even with the famous speech about mercy:

It [mercy] droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes

It is mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes

The throned monarch better than his crown.

Then Portia herself becomes hard: Shylock may have his flesh- but no one drop of blood; there is nothing about blood in the agreement. As Shylock cannot take the flesh without spilling some blood, Antonio is saved.

The story is nonsense- no one believes that living flesh can form part of an agreement law- but the play is great. It is called a comedy, though Shylock is, in fact, badly treated. He has been called the first great Shakespearian character, the first great tragic figure.

As You Like It (1599?), another important comedy, is the story of a good duke living in the forest of Arden because his evil brother has driven him out of his country. Love affairs play an important part, and the interest is increased when the girl Rosalind dresses herself as a man. (No actresses appeared on the Elizabethan stage. The parts of girls were taken by men, and so 'Rosalind' was more accustomed to a man's clothes than a woman's.). Minor characters in the play include the sad and thoughtful Jacques and the wise fool Touchstone. The pastoral setting gives us some beautiful descriptions, but there is a reality about the characters that was not to be seen in earlier pastoral poetry and plays. It is true that nature at its most cruel is seen as kinder than men in courts and towns:

*Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art ^A not so unkind
As man's ingratitude
(^A you are)*

Much Ado About Nothing (1598), a well-balanced comedy with good speeches, is also built on love affairs; yet there is a dark side of the play which is there but almost hidden. The appearance of a selfish young man who brings sorrow to others is repeated in the even darker comedy, *All's Well that Ends Well*, the date of which is uncertain.

Twelfth Night (1600), has been called the perfection of English comedy. The whole play is alive with humor and action. The skill in the

changes from bright to dark, from gentle to severe, is matched by the skill in the arrangement of the verse and prose. The Duke Orsino believes that he is in love with the Lady Olivia, but he is more in love with love. 'If music be the food of love,' he says at the beginning of the play, 'play on'. There are twins again, and they cause confusion when the girl dresses like her brother. Two knights, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, provide amusement with their foolish plans and their drinking. The play contains several songs. Here is one:

*O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.*

*What is love? 'T' is not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.*

The historical chronicles form and another group of plays written by Shakespeare in the first period. They are *King Henry VI (part II)*(1590),

King

Henry VI (part III) (1590), *King Henry VI (part I)* (1591), *The Tragedy of*

King

Richard II (1592), The Tragedy of King Richard II (1595), The Life and Death of King John (1596), King Henry IV (part I) (1597), King Henry IV (part II) (1597), The Life of King Henry V (1598).

Historical chronicles are plays written on subjects from national history. Shakespeare's chronicles cover a period of more than three hundred years of English history (from the rule of King John in the 12th century up to the 16th century). However, the main subjects of the chronicles are not the lives and fates of kings but history itself and the development of the country. Like all humanists of his time, Shakespeare believed a centralized monarchy to be an ideal form of state power. He thought it would put an end to the struggle of feudals and would create conditions for the progress of the country. One of the great achievement of Shakespeare was that in his chronicles he showed not only the kings, feudals, and churchmen, but the lower classes too.

The drama *The Merchant of Venice* and the two early tragedies *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, also written in the 90s, show a change in the playwright's understanding of life, whose approach to reality becomes more pessimistic.

Romeo and Juliet (1594-5) is the first of Shakespeare's great tragedies. The plot of this story of pure and tragic love is known in all parts of the civilized world. The deaths of Romeo and Juliet are necessary; their families are enemies, and death is the only way out of their hopeless situation. The tragedy is deeply sad and moving, but without the shock of the terrible tragedies that followed later.

It is convenient now to consider the three Roman tragedies, and then the four great tragedies. *Julius Caesar* (1599) is probably the best Shakespearian play to read first. In the earliest plays there is not enough thought to fill the language; the later plays are difficult because so much thought is pressed into the language that it is not clear. In *Julius Caesar* the thought and the language are about balanced. Its structure is also clear: the rise from the introduction to the crisis (the killing of Caesar) in Act III; and the gradual fall to the tragic end of the play (the deaths of the conspirators). The hero is Brutus, who joins Cassius and the other conspirators in the plan to kill Caesar. They believe that he wants to make himself king. Much of the play is now famous. Before a large crowd of Roman citizens, Antony makes his great speech over the body of Caesar. It begins:

*Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.
So let it be with Caesar...*

Yet this speech is not a great deal finer than many others. On seeing the dead body of Brutus at the end of the play, his enemy Antony says:

*This was the noblest Roman of them all
All the conspirators, save only he,
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar
He only, in a general honest thought,
And common good to all, made one of them
His life was gentle; and the elements
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'*

The main works written by Shakespeare during **the second period** (1601-1608) are his four great tragedies: *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1601), *Othello, the Moor of Venice* (1604), *King Lear* (1605), *Macbeth* (1605).

The tragedies reflect the deep, unsolvable contradictions of life, the falsehood, injustice and tyranny existing in society. They show people who perish in the struggle against Evil.

The tragedies, like the chronicles, are also based on real events but there is a considerable difference between the two genres the playwright raised great problems of Good and Evil in both. But in the chronicles they are mostly linked with political themes.-the questions of the state and public life of the period described. In the tragedies which are centered round the life of one man Shakespeare touched on the moral problems of universal significance- honesty, cruelty, kindness, love, vanity and others. That is why his tragedies are of great interest to every new generation.

In *Hamlet* (1601), the prince of that name suspects that his dead father, King of Denmark, has been murdered by his uncle, Claudius. Claudius has become king and has married Hamlet's mother. The ghost of Hamlet's dead father appears to him in the castle of Elsinore and tells him about the murder. Hamlet decides on revenge; but then he begins to think too much, and to hesitate. Was the ghost telling the truth? Hamlet must try to find proof of the murder. In the crisis in Act III, Hamlet has his proof. But still he hesitates. The play still holds our attention, and Hamlet keeps our sympathy, but the end is certain and unavoidable. Hamlet's tragic weakness is

hesitation, inability to act when action is needed. He is too much of a thinker.

In *King Lear* (1606) we see an old king thrown out of his home by two wicked daughters, and treated so badly that he goes mad and dies. It is perhaps Shakespeare's greatest work, reaching into the deepest places of the human spirit; but as a play on the stage it is very difficult, if not possible, to act. Lear's weakness is his openness to flattery. He gives his kingdom to the two evil daughters who flatter him, and nothing to the youngest girl, who tells the truth but loves him best.

Othello (1604-5) is the story of a brave Moorish commander in Cyprus who has a beautiful wife, Desdemona. Iago, an evil old soldier, has seen Cassio raised in rank above him and tries to make Othello believe that Cassio and Desdemona are lovers. Othello too easily believes this, and kills Desdemona. Some critics have said that Othello has no fatal weakness; but such unquestioning jealousy is great weakness, even if it comes from a mind too noble to doubt evil suggestions.

The plays of **the third period (1609-1612)** differ from everything written by Shakespeare before. The playwright still touches upon important social and moral problems. But now he suggests utopian solutions to them. He introduces romantic and fantastic elements, which have a decisive role in his plays. Due to these peculiarities the main last works of this period- *Cybeline* (1609), *The Winter's Tale* (1610), and *The Tempest* (1612) are called romantic dramas. All these works are colored with the idea of forgiveness. There is still wickedness in these words, but it is not the final word of the plays. Gone is the violence of the great tragedies. Instead we have happier things- beautiful islands and beautiful girls: Imogen in *Cybeline*, Perdita in *The Winter's Tale*, and Miranda in *The Tempest*. A

speech in the last of these plays seems to show that Shakespeare had decided to write no more. This is part of it:

*Our revels now are ended. These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air...
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.*

The immense power and variety of Shakespeare's work have led to the idea that one man cannot have written it all; yet it must be true that one man did. There is usually more in the language of the later plays than at first meets the eye. They must be read again and again if we want to reach down to the bottom of the sense.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What are the characteristic features of Shakespeare's comedies?
2. On what subjects were Shakespeare's historical chronicles written?
3. What are Shakespeare's great tragedies and what do they reflect?
4. What is the main difference between chronicle and the tragedy?
5. Why are the plays of the third period called romantic dramas?

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL

Twelfth Night, written in 1600, was the last comedy created by Shakespeare during the first period of his literary work. They say that the playwright was asked by the Queen to write a play to be staged on the last, twelfth night of merry Christmas holidays. This is where the name of the comedy comes from.

Twelfth Night has all the features characteristic of Shakespeare's other comedies. The scene of the comedy is laid in the beautiful imaginary country of Illyria where people are care-free and happy. The action of the play is based on a misunderstanding caused by the complete likeness of twins- sister and brother- Viola and Sebastian. During their sea voyage they are shipwrecked and separated. Viola finds herself in Illyria. Dressed in boy's clothes she goes into the service of the noble Duke Orsino as a page and soon becomes his favorite. The Duke is in love with Olivia, a beautiful rich heiress. After the death of her father and brother, Olivia lives in seclusion with her few servants and her uncle, Sir Toby Belch, an elderly impoverished gentleman, a hearty eater and drinker, a gay and witty person fond of playing jokes on people.

The Duke sends his page with a message to Olivia hoping the page will win Olivia's love for him. The mission is not very pleasant for Viola because she has long been secretly in love with the Duke. Nevertheless, she does her best to convince Olivia of the Duke's love. But Olivia ignores the Duke's love. Instead, she takes a liking to the young handsome looking page.

One day on her way back from Olivia's castle where the Duke sends his page again and again, Viola is challenged to a duel by Sir Andrew Aguecheek, another of Olivia's unsuccessful admirers. Sir Aguecheek thinks

that the page is the cause of his failure to win Olivia's love. Viola, unable to fight, manages to escape. At that time, Viola's lost brother, appears and Aguecheek, mistaking him for the page. starts a light with him. The duel is stopped by Olivia who takes Sebastian to her castle and also mistaking him for the Duke's page confesses that she loves him.

The comedy ends with two happy marriages: one between Olivia and Sebastian who has fallen in love with the beautiful Olivia at first sight; the other — between Viola and Orsino, for she has long been in love with him and as he has always been really fond of her as his pageboy, he now understands, that he really loves her.

In the character of Viola Shakespeare embodied the new humanist ideal of a woman, which was very different from that of feudal times. The women described in the literature of the Middle Ages, especially in the romances, were usually shown as passive objects of love, obedient to the men who loved them.

Shakespeare asserts the right of women to equality and independence. Viola defends her right to happiness and love.

Among these merry people there is a personage that somehow stands apart, whose attitude to life is opposed to the general atmosphere of happiness. It is Malvolio, Olivia's steward, a still, severe and vain person who disapproves of other people having fun and mocks at their natural wishes for love and happiness. The character of Malvolio has some traits of a puritan. The puritanic ideas were contrary to the optimistic spirit of humanism. Puritanism was a new religious ideology which taught people to be pious, hard-working and thrifty and which denied such pleasures as the theatre or music. Even the name, Malvolio, shows the evil spirit that characterizes the man. It is composed of two Italian words: Mal — ill and

Volio — will, i. e. *ill will*. However, his ill will does not affect other people. They play jokes on him and his gloomy figure looks ridiculous.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What general peculiarities of Shakespeare's comedies can be found in Twelfth Night?
2. What ideas did Shakespeare embody in the character of Viola?
3. How is Shakespeare's attitude to puritanism reflected in the comedy?

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

The tragedy *Hamlet* is one of the greatest of Shakespeare's masterpieces. It is the most profound expression of his humanism and his criticism of the epoch. The tragedy tells of the struggle between Hamlet, the bearer of the ideals of the Renaissance, on the one hand, and the evil, false world of kings and courtiers, on the other.

The characters of the play are: Hamlet, young Prince of Denmark; Claudius, King of Denmark, Hamlet's uncle; Gertrude, Queen of Denmark. Hamlet's mother; Horatio, a friend of Hamlet; Polonius, a courtier; Laertes, his son; Ophelia, his daughter; Guikienstern, Rosencrantz and other courtiers and soldiers.

Hamlet, a student at the University of Wittenberg*, hears of the sudden death of his father. He comes to the Castle of Elsinore and learns that his mother, Queen Gertrude, in less than two months after her husband's death, married his brother Claudius. Hamlet is very much grieved by the death of his beloved father who, in his opinion, was a great man.

*He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.*

(Act I, Sc. 2)

And he is still more shocked by the hasty marriage of his mother.

*— Frailty, thy name is woman'
A little month: or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor lather's body.
Like Niobe, all tears...*

(Act I. sc. 2)

Hamlet is told that his lather died because a serpent stung him while he was asleep in the garden. Deep in his heart Hamlet does not believe this

strange story and suspects another cause of his death. One night the Ghost of Hamlet's father appears and tells Hamlet the true story of his death. Hamlet learns that his father was poisoned by Claudius in his sleep. The Ghost calls on Hamlet to take revenge on Claudius for the King's death; he asks Hamlet not to harm his mother in any way but to leave her to her remorse.

From now on Hamlet thinks only of revenge. But he understands that Claudius is not the only source of evil, that the whole world is corrupt and evil should be fought everywhere:

*The time is out of joint: — O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!*

(Act I, sc. 5)

Hamlet is well aware that the task of "setting the world right" is difficult and dangerous. Evil is strong, it is everywhere. And he has to fight it alone. If he perishes in the struggle, there will be nobody to carry out the task. This thought makes him melancholic and irresolute. Hamlet's meditations are best reflected in the central soliloquy of the tragedy "To be, or not to be":

*To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep:
No more: and, by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die; to sleep;*

(Act III, Sc- I)

But Hamlet is unable to put up with Evil, only he does not know how to fight it.

To gain time and to lull the king's suspicion Hamlet pretends to be mad. His "madness" gives him a chance to tell the truth to people's faces, to express his opinion freely.

Hamlet. What's the news?

Rosencrantz. None, my lord, but that the world's grown honest.

Hamlet. Then is doomsday near; but your news is not true. Let me question more in particular: what have you, my good Friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guildestern. Prison, my lord? Hamlet. Denmark's a prison.

Rosencrantz. Then is the world one.

Hamlet. A goodly one; in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons, Denmark being one o' the worst.

(Act. II. sc. 2)

The king and Polonius conclude that the strangeness of Hamlet's behavior and speech are due to his love for Ophelia.

It is true that Hamlet loved Ophelia dearly. But now he neglects her. Ophelia is sorry for Hamlet, believing that he has really lost his mind.

Ophelia. O! what a noble mind is here o'erthrown:

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword;

The expectancy and rose of the fair state,

The glass of fashion and the mould of form,

The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!

(Act III, sc. I)

While Hamlet is still irresolute about the way of revenge, a company of actors whose performances Hamlet used to enjoy comes to the castle.

Hamlet decides that they should stage the murder of his father before Claudius to “catch the conscience of the king”.

During the performance of the scene which Hamlet calls “The Mousetrap” he and Horatio watch the reaction of the king hoping he will give himself away. The king cannot bear the scene and leaves the hall. Now for Hamlet there is no doubt that Claudius is the murderer of his father.

And Claudius too comes to understand that Hamlet has some suspicions about him. He begins fearing Hamlet and thinks of a plan to get rid of him.

The queen asks Hamlet to come to her room. She wants to tell Hamlet that his behavior displeases the king. She also tries to learn something of Hamlet’s real thoughts. Claudius orders Polonius to hide himself behind the curtains in the queen’s room to overhear their talk. Hamlet reproaches the queen for her marriage. When the queen, frightened by his words, utters a cry, Polonius cries out: “Help, help, help!”.

Hamlet hearing the cry and thinking that it is the king himself, draws his sword and kills the person hidden behind the curtains.

The death of Polonius gives the king grounds for sending Hamlet out of the kingdom. On board a ship Hamlet goes to England under the care of two courtiers Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. They are given letters to the English court which read that Hamlet should be put to death as soon as he lands in England. Hamlet, suspecting some treachery, secretly gets the letters, and changes his name for the names of the courtiers. Soon after that their ship is attacked by pirates and Hamlet is taken prisoner but then he is set free. When Hamlet gets home the first thing he sees is the funeral of Ophelia. She lost her mind after her father’s death and drowned herself.

On learning of Hamlet's return the king thinks of a plan to do away with Hamlet. He persuades Laertes to challenge Hamlet to a fencing duel and advises Laertes to prepare a poisoned weapon. In the duel Laertes inflicts Hamlet a mortal wound. And then Hamlet and Laertes exchange swords and Hamlet wounds Laertes with the latter's poisoned sword. At that moment the queen, who is also present at the duel, cries out that she is poisoned. She has drunk out of a glass with poisoned wine which the king prepared for Hamlet. The queen dies. Laertes, feeling his life go, confesses his baseness. Hamlet turns upon his uncle who is the cause of all the misfortunes and kills him. Hamlet's last words are addressed to his friend Horatio whom he asks to tell his story to the world.

The tragedy *Hamlet* is an outstanding play because unlike other "bloody tragedies" written before and in Shakespeare's time it is "a tragedy of thought" and Hamlet is the first thinker that has ever appeared on the stage. The tragedy of Hamlet is caused not so much by the discord between Hamlet and the evil outer world, as by the discord within his own soul. Seeing the evil he does not want to put up with it. He meditates upon the cause of evil and the ways of lighting it. And being unable to find these ways, he suffers, reproaches himself with being passive, irresolute, weak-willed. He hesitates and delays his actions. But he is not weak-willed by nature. The weakness of his will is due to the break-up of the former harmony in his soul, of all his former ideas of life.

He is not passive either. His mind is at work all the time. Hamlet is trying to understand the world, the nature of its good and dark sides. And he fights with words, cries out bitter truths, exposes evil.

The tragedy of Hamlet has always excited the minds of people. It stirs people's conscience, makes them fight against Evil for the triumph of Justice and Good.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What makes Hamlet one of the greatest of Shakespeare's masterpieces?
2. What accounts For Hamlet's melancholy and irresolution?
3. In what way does the tragedy of Hamlet differ from other tragedies of that time?
4. What other characters of world literature bear traits similar to Hamlets?

SONNETS

The sonnet is a poem consisting of 14 lines divided into two quatrains and two tercets (Italian sonnet) or into three quatrains and a final couplet (English sonnet). The so-called Shakespearean sonnet has the following rhyme scheme: ahab. cdcd, clef, gg. The sonnet was brought to England at the beginning of the 16th century. The English poets-humanists Thomas Wyatt, Philip Sydney, Edmund Spenser made it very popular with the British public. Thousands of sonnets were written and published during the 1590s. In those years the poets considered Love to be the only suitable theme for the sonnets.

Shakespeare wrote a cycle of 154 sonnets. He introduced new contents into the traditional form of 14 lines. His sonnets are real dramas in miniature because they are no less deep in thought and feeling than his plays are. They are all built on contrast which reflects the struggle of conflicting emotions in the poet's soul. All his sonnets are full of feeling, of philosophical meditations on life. Sonnet 66 has very much in common with Hamlet's soliloquy "To be, or not to be". In it the poet exposes the vices of the society, the injustice and inequality reigning in the world.

*Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry
As to behold desert a beggar horn.
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity.
And purest faith unhappily forsworn.
And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd.
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted.
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced.
And strength by limping sway disabled.
And art made tongue-tied by authority,*

*And folly — doctor-like — controlling skill.
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity.
And captive good attending captain ill:
Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone.
Save that, to die. I leave my love alone.*

The sonnet shows the poet's dramatic approach to reality. It reflects the struggle between Good and Evil. Evil seems stronger than Good. In despair, the poet calls for death. Shakespeare's works are built on love and light, without which man cannot exist. They help him to breathe freely even under oppression. The end of the sonnet confirms this. Love and friendship help the poet in his struggle against Evil. Love appears in Shakespeare's sonnets as a noble though complicated feeling which brings man great joy as well as deep sorrow. Unlike other poets who used to draw idealized portraits of women Shakespeare speaks of his beloved — the Dark Lady — as of a real, common, "earthly" woman who is nevertheless dear to him and worthy of his love. Most characteristic of this approach is sonnet 130.

*My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.*

*I have seen roses damask'd, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.*

*I love to hear her speak. yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;*

*I grant I never saw a goddess go;
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.*

*And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.*

In many of the sonnets the poet meditates on Life and Death. He believes that Beauty and Life are able to conquer Death, because they continue to live in new generations (sonnet 11) and in the works of Art (sonnet 65). Shakespeare considers the Poet and his Poetry to play an important role in making people understand life (sonnet 76).

Shakespeare's sonnets are valued because of their wealth of thought, variety of themes and beauty of the language. The style of the sonnets is rich in metaphors, similes and other devices.

The images he uses are taken from different spheres of life, which makes the sonnets very picturesque and expressive. Shakespeare makes use of everyday words, thus bringing the sonnet close to the readers.

Shakespeare's greatness lies in the depth of his humanism. For about four centuries Shakespeare has remained one of the best known and best loved playwrights and poets in world literature. Every new generation of people finds in his works some problems of particular interest. That is why Shakespeare "*belongs not to the century-but to all times*" as Ben Jonson, his contemporary, once said.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What is a sonnet?
2. Why did Shakespeare's sonnets differ from those of other poets?
3. How did Shakespeare portray his beloved in his sonnets?

CHAPTER III. LITERATURE OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT

(18th CENTURY)

The 17th century was one of the most stormy periods of English history. The growing contradictions between the new class, the bourgeoisie, and the old forces of feudalism brought about the English Bourgeois Revolution in the 1640s. As a result of the revolution the king was dethroned and beheaded and England was proclaimed a republic. Though very soon monarchy was restored, the position of the bourgeoisie had changed.

The 18th century saw Great Britain rapidly growing into a capitalist country. It was an age of intensive industrial development. New mills and manufactures appeared one after another. Small towns grew into large cities. The industrial revolution began: new machinery was invented that turned Britain into the first capitalist power of the world. While in France the bourgeoisie was just beginning its struggle against feudalism, the English bourgeoisie had already become one of the ruling classes.

The 18th century was also remarkable for the development of science and culture. Isaac Newton's discoveries in the field of physics, Adam Smith's economic theories, the philosophical ideas of Hobbes, Locke and others enriched the materialistic thought and implanted in people's minds belief in great powers of man's intellect. It was in this period that English painting began to develop too: portraiture reached its peak in the works of William Hogarth, Joshua Reynolds as well as Thomas Gainsborough, who was equally good at landscape and portrait painting.

In spite of the progress of industry and culture in England, the majority of the English people were still very ignorant. That is why one of the most important problems that faced the country was the problem of education.

The 17th and 18th centuries are known in the history of European culture as the period of Enlightenment. The Enlighteners defended the interests of the common people — craftsmen, tradesmen, peasants. Their criticism was directed against social inequality, religious hypocrisy as well as the immorality of the aristocracy. The central problem of the Enlightenment ideology was that of man and his nature. The Enlighteners believed in reason as well as in man's inborn goodness. They rejected the religious idea of the sinful nature of man. Vice in people, they thought, was due to the miserable life conditions which could be changed by force of reason. They considered it their duty to enlighten people, to help them see the roots of evil and the ways of social reformation. The Enlighteners also believed in the powerful educational value of art.

In England the period of Enlightenment followed the bourgeois revolution, while in other countries it came before the revolution (the French Bourgeois Revolution took place at the end of the 18th century); therefore, the aims of the English Enlighteners were not so revolutionary as those of French Enlightenment.

The English Enlighteners were not unanimous in their views. Some of them spoke in defence of the existing order, considering that a few reforms were enough to improve it. They were the moderates, represented in literature by Daniel Defoe, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, and Samuel Richardson. Others, the radicals, wanted more democracy in the ruling of the country. They defended the interests of the exploited masses. The most outstanding representatives of the radicals were Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Oliver Goldsmith, Richard B. Sheridan.

In the epoch of Enlightenment the poetic forms of the Renaissance were replaced by prose. The moralizing novel was born and became the leading genre of the period. Ordinary people, mostly representatives of the middle-class, became the main characters of these novels. These characters, either virtuous or vicious, were accordingly, either rewarded or punished at the end of the novel. By these means the Enlighteners idealistically hoped to improve the morals of the people and of society in general.



DANIEL DEFOE
(1660 - 1731)

Daniel Defoe is rightly considered the father of the English and the European novel, for it was due to him that the genre became once and for ever established in European literature.

Daniel Defoe's life was complicated and adventurous. He was the son of a London butcher whose name was Foe, to which Daniel later added the prefix Do. He sometimes used it separately giving his name a French sound. His father, being a puritan, wanted his son to become a priest. Daniel was educated at a theological school. However, he never became a priest, for he looked for other business to apply his abilities to. He became a merchant, first in wine, then in hosiery. He traveled in Spain, Germany, France and Italy on business. Though his travels were few they, however, gave him, a man of rich imagination, material for his future novels. Defoe's business was not very successful and he went bankrupt more than once.

He took an active part in the political life of Britain. In 1685 he participated in the Duke of Monmouth's revolt against James II. The rebellion was defeated by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie and resulted in

a compromise of these two classes. After this defeat Defoe had to hide himself for some time. When the Dutchman William of Orange came to the throne of England in 1688, Defoe was among his most active supporters. After years of political ups and downs, including imprisonment for his attacks against the Church, he died at the age of 71 having written numerous works.

In the early 90s Defoe turned to literature. His first literary works were satirical poems dealing with the urgent problems of the time. In 1697 he published *An Essay on Projects*, a typical enlightener's work in which he suggested all kinds of reform in different spheres of social life. He paid much attention to public education. Defoe stressed the necessity of establishing a number of educational institutions to train specialists for various branches of life.

In 1702 Defoe published a satirical pamphlet written in support of the protestants, or dissenters, persecuted by the government and the Church. In the pamphlet called *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* the author ironically suggested that the best way to fight against the dissenters was to execute them all. At first the Church thought that the pamphlet was written by a churchman. When it realized the true character of the pamphlet, Defoe was arrested and sentenced to imprisonment.

In order to disgrace Defoe the Government had him thrice pilloried - on the 29, 30, 31 of July 1703. Before being pilloried he wrote his *Hymn to the Pillory* which at once became known all over London. While he was pilloried, with his head and wrists in the stocks, people came, threw flowers to him and sang the Hymn.

His first and most popular novel *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* was written in 1719 when Defoe was about

60. It was followed by Captain Singleton, Molt Flanders, Roxana and some other novels of adventure.

***THE LIFE AND STRANGE SURPRISING ADVENTURES
OF ROBINSON CRUSOE***

The rapid industrial development of Britain in the 18th century went hand in hand with the process of colonization of other countries and with an intensive growth of colonial trade. British merchant ships could be seen in different parts of the world. The British bourgeoisie, seized by the spirit of enterprise and lust for riches, reached distant lands, sometimes staying away from home for many years, sometimes settling down in the countries of America, South Africa or on the islands in the Pacific Ocean. There appeared numerous stories about voyages and all kinds of adventures that became very popular. One of them, published by Richard Steele in his magazine *The Englishman*, told about the adventures of a Scottish sailor, Alexander Selkirk, who spent four years and four months on an uninhabited island.

The story was used by Daniel Defoe for the plot of his novel *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

The novel opens with a narration of Crusoe's youth in England, his escape from home. Then comes an account of his numerous sea voyages and adventures, including a period of slavery among the corsairs and his four-year stay as a planter in Brazil. After this he goes on a slave-trading expedition to Africa.

After a shipwreck Robinson Crusoe finds himself on an uninhabited island and spends 28 years there. With a few tools rescued from the ship he builds a hut, makes a boat. He tames and breeds animals, cultivates plots of land, hunts and fishes. He is never idle. He is a man of labour, untiring,

industrious, optimistic. Though he sometimes has to spend a lot of time on making simplest things, he never loses heart. He thinks it vain to sit and wish for what is not to be had. His lust for life and his inventiveness help him overcome the hardships while his powers of deduction and observation lead him to important discoveries. He is a truly heroic character, a man dominating nature. But his emotional life is poor. He is unable to admire the beauty of nature, he never feels any love or sorrow for those whom he left in England. The diary which he keeps on the island carries a detailed account of his deeds, but never of his thoughts.

The popularity of the novel was due to the fact that Robinson Crusoe was a typical figure of the period. Crusoe's adventurous and enterprising nature and his common sense were the features most characteristic of the English bourgeoisie. He was the first character of a bourgeois ever created in world literature. Through him Defoe asserted the superiority of the new class over the idle aristocracy.

He was typical in his manner of thought, in his thriftiness. He saved the money he found in the wrecked ship, although he understood that it could hardly be of any use to him on the island.

Crusoe was religious and any work he started, he began with a prayer just as any puritan would.

When Friday appeared on the island. Crusoe made him his slave. The first word he taught Friday was "master". The relations established between Crusoe and Friday were a reflection of the bourgeois relations.

The extract below describes the first days of Friday's stay with Robinson Crusoe.

He was a comely, handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight, strong limbs, not too large, tall, and well shaped; and, as I reckon, about twenty-

six years of age. He had a very good countenance, not a fierce and surly aspect, but seemed to have something very manly in his face; and yet he had all the sweetness and softness of a European in his countenance, too, especially when he smiled. His hair was long and black, not curled like wool; his forehead very high and large; and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The color of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the Negroes'. a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and as white as ivory...

... In little time I began to speak to him, and teach him to speak to me; and, first, I let him know his name should be "FRIDAY", which was the day I saved his life. I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know that was to be my name; I likewise taught him to say "yes" and "no", and to know the meaning of them. This was the pleasantest year of all the life I led in this place. Friday began to talk pretty well, and understand the names of almost everything I had occasion to call for, and of every place I had to send him to, and talk a great deal to me; so that, in short, I began now to have some use for my tongue again, which, indeed, I had very little occasion for before; that is to say, about speech. Besides the pleasure of talking to him, I had a singular satisfaction in the fellow himself: his simple, unfeigned honesty appealed to me more and more every day, and I began really to love the creature; and on his side. I believe he loved me more than it was possible for him ever to love anything before...

Defoe wrote his novels in the form of memoirs, which made them look like stories about real people. The detailed descriptions of Crusoe's labor — making a boat, cultivating the land and others — were just as interesting for the reader, as those of his adventures.

Defoe's books were written in the living tongue of the epoch. He addressed the wide public and tried to make himself understood by the readers of all the layers of society.

As a true Enlightener he set himself the task of improving people's morals; that was why he provided his books with a moralizing comment. The novel *Robinson Crusoe* praised the creative labor of man, his victory over nature.

The influence of his work on the literary process as well as on the minds of the readers can hardly be overestimated. An English critic once said that without him we should all be different from what we are.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. Why was Defoe pilloried?
2. What was Defoe's contribution to English literature?
3. Why did the novel *Robinson Crusoe* become very popular?
4. What were the relations between *Robinson Crusoe* and *Friday*?



JONATHAN SWIFT
(1667 - 1745)

The greatest satirist in the history of English literature Jonathan Swift was the contemporary of Steele, Addison. Defoe and other English enlighteners of the early period. However, he stood apart from them, for while they supported the bourgeois order. Swift, by criticizing different aspects of the bourgeois life came to the negation of the bourgeois society. Swift is called one of the first critics of bourgeois system and capitalist reality.

Jonathan Swift was born on November 30, 1667 in Dublin in an English family. His father died seven months before Jonathan's birth leaving his family in poverty. Jonathan was brought up by his prosperous uncle Godwin Swift who sent him to school and then to Trinity College in Dublin. There he studied theology and later became a clergyman. His favorite subjects, however, were not theology but literature, history and languages. At 21 Swift went to live in England and became private secretary of a distant relative, Sir William Temple, a writer and a well-known diplomat of the time. At Moor Park, Sir William's estate, Swift made friends with Hester Johnson, the daughter of one of Temple's servants, fourteen years his junior. Hester,

or Stella as Swift poetically called her, remained his faithful friend through all his life. His letters to her, written in 1710-1713, were later published in the form of a book under the title of *Journal to Stella*.

During the two years at Moor Park Swift read and studied much and in 1692 he took his Master of Arts Degree at Oxford University. With the help of Sir William, Swift got the place of vicar in a small church in Kilroot (Ireland) where he stayed for a year and a half. Then he came back to Moor Park and lived there till Sir William's death in 1698.

In 1701 Swift went to the small town of Laracor (Ireland) as a clergyman. When the Tories came to power in 1709 Swift returned to England and edited their paper *The Examiner*. He became one of the leading political figures in England, although he occupied no official post in the Government.

Swift's enemies, as well as his friends, were afraid of him, for they knew his honesty and his critical attitude to all the party intrigues. They decided to send him as far away from London as possible and in 1713 made him Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Living in Dublin Swift became actively involved in the struggle of the Irish people for their rights and interests, against English oppression and poverty. In fact he became the ideological leader of the Irish people. At the age of 78 he died and was buried in the Cathedral, the Dean of which he had been most of his life.

Among his early works was the allegory *Tale of a Tub*, a biting satire on religion. In the introduction to the *Tale of a Tub* the author tells of a curious custom of seamen. When a ship is attacked by a whale the seamen throw an empty tub into the sea to distract the whale's attention. The meaning of the allegory was quite clear to the readers of that time. The tub

was religion which the state (for a ship has always been the emblem of a state) threw to its people to distract them from any struggle.

The satire is written in the form of a story about three brothers symbolizing the three main religions in England: Peter (the Catholic Church), Martin (the Anglican Church) and Jack (Puritanism). It carries such ruthless attacks on religions that even now it remains one of the books, forbidden by the Pope of Rome.

Swift's literary work was always closely connected with his political activity. In the numerous political pamphlets Swift ridiculed different spheres of life of bourgeois society: law, wars, politics, etc. His strongest pamphlets were written in Ireland. One of the most outstanding pamphlets and the most biting of all his satires was *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People of Ireland from Being a Burden to their Parents* (1729). The author wrote about the horrible poverty and starvation of the Irish people. This pamphlet, like his other pamphlets, had a great influence on the readers. It attracted the wide public's attention to the terrible position of the Irish people. It also inspired the Irishmen to struggle against oppression for freedom and a better life.

It was his novel *Gulliver's Travels*, however, that brought him fame and immortality.

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

Gulliver's Travels is the summit of Swift's creative work and one of the best works in world literature. It is one of the books most loved by children because it tells of the entertaining adventures of Lemuel Gulliver in four strange countries. However, the author did not mean to write a book to amuse children. *Gulliver's Travels* was conceived as a synthesis of everything that Swift had said and written before in his satires, essays and

pamphlets. It was an exposure of all the evils and vices of the bourgeois society, of its corruption and degradation.

The book consists of four independent parts that tell about the adventures of Gulliver, a ship surgeon. The first part is the story of Lemuel's voyage to the land of Lilliput. The second is an account of Gulliver's adventures in Brobdingnag, a country inhabited by giants. The third tells of Gulliver's voyage to Laputa, a flying island, and to some other islands. In the fourth part Gulliver finds himself in the country of Houyhnhnms inhabited by intelligent horses and ugly-looking human beings called Yahoos.

The land of Lilliput where the shipwrecked Gulliver lives among tiny people some 6 inches high is a satirical symbol of the England of Swift's time. The author laughs at the shallow interests of the Lilliputians who are as small in intellect as in size. He mocks at the Emperor who is only "a nail's breadth higher" than his people, yet thinks himself the head of the universe. Swift ridicules the English court with its intrigues, flattery, hypocrisy and struggle for higher positions. The posts in the court of Lilliput are distributed not according to the mental virtues of the candidates, but according to their abilities to please the king by dancing on a rope and crawling under a stick.

The extract given below tells of the court diversions in the land of Lilliput.

This diversion is only practiced by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favor at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a

dance on the rope; and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their facility. Flimnap, the treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper' on the straight rope at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together, upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common pack-thread in England. My friend, Reldresal, principal secretary for private affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great number are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far that there is hardly one of them who has not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broken his neck, if one of the king's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long; one is purple, the other yellow, and the third white. These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor has a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favor. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great Chamber of State, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other county of the Old or the New Worlds. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon. while the candidates, advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick. sometimes creep under it. backwards and forwards, several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed⁷. Sometimes the Emperor

holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other. sometimes the minister has it entirely himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping.. is rewarded with the purple-coloured silk; the yellow is given to the next, and the white to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle, and you see few great persons about this court who are not adorned with one of these gird less...

The Lilliputians have two political parties, Tramecksan and Slamecksan, who are in constant struggle because they wear heels of different size. It is a direct hint to the parties of Britain, the Tories and the Whigs. who are constantly at war, though the difference in their policy is very insignificant.

A war breaks out between Lilliput and the neighboring country of Blefuscu because they cannot agree on the question how eggs should be broken while eating them: whether at the smaller or at the larger end. The war, in which thousands of Lilliputians were killed, reminds the reader very much of the numerous wars waged by Britain against France and Spain.

In Brobdingnag, a country of giants, Gulliver himself is no more than a lilliput. The king of Brobdingnag listens to Gulliver's stories about England. With surprise and indignation the king draws the conclusion that the social life in England is nothing but intrigues, crimes, hypocrisy, flattery, vanity and the Englishmen are the most disgusting insects that crawl upon the surface of the earth. Most of all the king is struck by Gulliver's account of the wars waged by Britain. The king condemns wars as destructive and useless.

Brobdingnag is, to some extent, Swift's ideal of what a state should be. The laws of the country are just, they guarantee freedom and welfare to all the citizens. The king of Brobdingnag is modest, wise and kind. He wants

his people to be happy. He hates wars and political intrigues and thinks that a man who can grow two ears of corn in the place where there was only one will bring more good to his Motherland than all the politicians taken together.

The third part of *Gulliver's Travels* is again a very bitter satire on the English society. Laputa, a flying island, inhabited entirely by the representatives of the upper classes, shuts away the sun and rain from the countries and towns situated under it and suppresses mutinies in them by landing on the mutinous country or town. It is a symbol of the English ruling circles, that are hostile to the common people, that oppress Ireland and other countries.

Swift's satire reaches its climax in the chapters dealing with science. It should be borne in mind that Swift was, by no means, against science on the whole. It was only the false, the so-called pseudoscience, that he ridiculed in the third part of his Travels. The citizens of Laputa are very fond of astronomy and mathematics. Everywhere Gulliver can see decorations in the form of astronomical objects and geometrical figures. Even bread, meat and cheese are cut in the form of cones, cylinders, parallelograms, etc. The king and other inhabitants of Laputa are so busy with solving mathematical problems that they have to be struck by special servants called flappers before they can see or hear anything going on. However, the Laputans cannot apply their knowledge of mathematics to practical use. The walls of their houses never stand erect and are about to fall down: there is not a single right angle in all their buildings.

In the city of Lagado Gulliver visits the academy of projectors with about 500 rooms; in each of them there is a scientist shut away from the

world and busy with some project. There is a man who for eight 'ears has been trying to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers.

An architect is busy inventing a method of building houses from the roof down. Other scientists are employed in softening marble for pillows and pin-cushions, converting ice into gun-powder, simplifying the language by leaving out verbs and participles, teaching pupils geometry by making them eat theorems with proofs written on a very thin piece of bread. The academy of Lagado is Swift's parody on scholastics and projectors whose "science" has nothing to do with real life.

In the fourth voyage Gulliver finds himself in a land ruled by Houyhnhnms, intelligent and virtuous horses who are completely ignorant of such vices as stealing, lying, love of money, etc. The rest of the population is made up of Yahoos, ugly creatures that look like human beings in appearance and possess all the human vices. They are greedy, envious, deceitful and malicious. Gulliver admires the simple modest way of life of the Houyhnhnms and is disgusted with the Yahoos who remind him so much of his countrymen that he hates the thought of ever returning to his native country. "When I thought of my family, my friends, my countrymen, of the human race in general, I considered them as they really were, Yahoos in shape and disposition, perhaps a little more civilized and qualified with the gift of speech", says Gulliver. When he returns to England he does his best to avoid society and even his family, preferring the company of his horses, the distant relatives of the Houyhnhnms. As a matter of fact, the word "yahoo" has become a commonly used one in world literature and political journalism, as a notion representing the meanest of the human race such as reactionaries of all kinds, fascists, colonizers and the like.

Swift's realism was different from Defoe's. Defoe presented extremely precise pictures of bourgeois life. Swift used his favorite weapon — laughter — to mock at bourgeois reality. He criticized it and his criticism was hidden away in a whole lot of allegorical pictures. At the same time he gave very realistic descriptions, exact mathematical proportions of the tiny Lilliputs and the giants from Brobdingnag.

Sometimes his laughter was simply good natured humor, as for instance, when he wrote of the intelligent horses. However, it became dangerous, biting satire when he spoke of the horrible Yahoos.

Swift's language was more elaborate and literary than Defoe's. This does not mean that he did not make use of the language of the common people. He resorted to it when his criticism became most severe.

Swift's art had a great effect on the further development of English and European literature. The main features of his artistic method, such as hyperbole, grotesque, generalization, irony, were widely used by the English novelists Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, the poet Byron, the dramatists Sheridan and Shaw, by the French writer Voltaire, and others.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. How many parts does the novel Gulliver's Travels consist of?
2. What did Swift mock at in the part dedicated to Lilliputs?
3. What did Swift ridicule in Gulliver's third travel?
4. What is the difference between Swift's realism and the realism of Defoe?



ROBERT BURNS

(1759 - 1796)

At the close of the 18th century a young Scotsman became the national poet of both Scotland and England. His name was Robert Burns, and he is considered one of the greatest poets in English literature; his songs and poems are known and loved far beyond the limits of his country. January 25th. his birthday, is celebrated annually by the lovers of poetry in many countries of the world. The years of Burns' creative work belong to the period known in English literature as Pre- Romanticism, that is, a period of transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism. Burns' poetry has features of both of them. His hatred for the landlords, his defense of the interests of the poor bring him close to the democratic Enlighteners. And his love of nature, his singing of liberty, his rebellious spirit have much in common with such revolutionary romanticists as George Byron and Percy Shelley. Allan Cunningham, one of Burns' first biographers, wrote the following lines as a preface to his work about Burns: *"His genius was universal. In satire, in humour, in pathos, in description, in sentiment, he was equally great... I am inclined to regard him as one of the few geniuses..."*

and to place him by the side of the greatest names, this country has produced”.

Robert Burns was born on January 25, 1759, in a claybuilt cottage near the river Doon in Alloway, Ayrshire (Scotland). His father William Burns was a gardener on a small estate. The life of the family was full of privations. Here is what Robert’s brother Gilbert said later about the early years of the poet: “We lived sparingly. For several years meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength and beyond it in the labours of the farm. My brother (Robert) at the age of twelve, threshed the corn crop, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm...”

When Robert was seven, their father decided to give his children the best education he could afford and engaged a teacher to educate them. John Murdoch, an eighteen-year-old scholar, was a very enthusiastic teacher. He taught Robert, who was his favourite, many subjects, French and literature among them. However, Robert could not afford much time for his studies. His father wanted to try his hand at farming and Robert had to help him on the farm. At the age of thirteen he had to take over most of the work as his father was growing old.

Robert’s mother, Agnes Brown, was fond of old popular songs and ballads. She knew many and often sang them. From her Robert inherited the love for folklore. Later he remembered and used in his works the songs and stories he had heard at home.

Burns wrote his first verses when he was fifteen. Very soon his poems, verses and, especially, his witty epigrams became popular among his friends and acquaintances. In 1785 he met a girl, who became the great love of all his life and the inspirer of his numerous lyrical verses. Jean had a

wonderful voice and knew a lot of old melodies to which Burns composed his songs.

In 1786 he published his first book under the title of *Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* which contained his early lyrical, humorous and satirical verses. The book was a great success and soon another edition appeared. One of Burns' contemporaries recalled how servants and plough-boys gave all their hard-earned money for the book of Burns' poems. Burns' fame spread far and wide. He was invited to Edinburgh the capital of Scotland. He conquered the Edinburgh society by his wit and manners as much as by his poetry. In Edinburgh he was often advised to write in standard English on noble themes. but he refused. Burns wanted to write poetry about the people and for the people.

While in Edinburgh Burns got acquainted with some enthusiasts of Scottish songs and ballads and became engaged in collecting the treasures of the Scottish folklore. He traveled about Scotland collecting popular songs. He discovered long forgotten songs, patched some, wrote verses to the existing tunes. He considered this work his patriotic duty and refused to take money though he always needed it as he had to maintain his family and, after his father's death, to help his mother, brothers and sisters. Being already a poet, he did not, however, give up farming and worked hard to earn his living. In 1791 Burns obtained the post of excise officer and moved to Dumfries. The last years of his life were very hard. An enthusiastic supporter of the French Bourgeois Revolution he had to conceal his thoughts because of the reactionary campaign launched by the British government against those who raised their voice in support of the Revolution. But his poetry of the period reflects the influence of the ideas of the Revolution, the slogan of which was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity".

The hard daily work on the farm, the constant starvation and privations finally undermined Burns' health. On July 21, 1796, at the age of 37, Burns died. His body rests in a Mausoleum in Dumfries. The house in Alloway, where he was born, has now been restored. Every year thousands of people from all over the world come there to pay homage to the great poet.

Robert Burns' poetry was inspired by his deep love for his motherland, for its history and folklore. His beautiful poem *My Heart's in the Highlands* full of vivid colorful descriptions, is a hymn to the beauty of Scotland's nature and to its glorious past.

My heart's in the Highlands, Thy heart is not here:

My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer:

Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe;

My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

.....

Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,

The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth:

Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,

The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

.....

Burns' poetry is closely connected with the national struggle of the Scottish people for their liberation from English oppression, the struggle that had been going on in Scotland for many centuries. His favorite heroes were William Wallace, the leader of the uprising against the English oppressors, and Robert Bruce, who defeated the English army in the battle at Bannockburn and later became the King of Scotland. The poem Bruce's

Address to his Army at Banaockburn is the poet's call to his people to keep up the freedom-loving spirit of their fathers.

*Scots, who have with Wallace bled,
Scots, whom Bruce has often led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory?*

.....
By opperession's woes and pains!

By your Sons in servile chains?

We will drain our dearest veins,

But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!

Tyrants fall in every foe!

Liberty's in every blow! —

Let us do, or diet

Burns expressed the most sacred thoughts and hopes of the Scottish people, who, even in their poverty, are full of proud love of freedom, hatred for all oppressors, contempt for the rich, human dignity and an optimistic belief in their beautiful future. This is reflected, for instance, in the poem *Is There for Honest Poverty*, which is rightly called the Scottish "Marseillaise".

Is there, for honest Poverty,

That hangs his head, and all that:

The Coward slave, we pass hini by,

We dare be poor for all that!

For all that, and all that.

Our toil's obscure and all that;

The rank is but the guinea-stamp.

The Man's the gold for all that.

*Then let us pray that come it may -
(As come it will for all that) -
That Sense and Worth over all the Earth,
Shall bear the gree, and all that.
For all that, and all that.
It's corning yet, for all that,
That man to man, the world over,
Shall brothers be for all that!*

Burns' lyrical poems are known for their beauty, truthfulness, freshness, depth of feelings and their lovely melody. Among his best lyrics is ***Oh, My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose.***

*O my Love's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Love's like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.*

*As lair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear.
Till all the seas go dry.*

*Till all the seas go dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt with the sun;
O I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands of life shall run.*

*And fare thee well, my only Love!
And fare thee well a while!
And I will come again, my Love,*

Though it were ten thousand mile!

Many of Burns' lyrical poems have been put to music and are sung by all English-speaking people. One of them is Auld Lang Syne, a beautiful song of brotherhood and friendship known as a parting song.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

And never brought to mind?

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,

*And days of lang syne!*²

Chorus

For auld lang syne. my dear,

For auld lang syne,

We'll take a cup of kindness yet

For auld lang syne!

And there's a hand, my trusty friend!

And give us a hand of thine!

And we'll take a right good willy waught,

For auld lang syne.

Burns' wit, humor, contempt for falsehood and hypocrisy are best revealed in his epigrams — short four line satirical verses in which he attacks lords, churchmen, persons of rank and others.

Burns' style is characterized by vivid colorful images. His metaphors, similes, personifications are taken from nature and everyday life. Love is likened to "a rose", that's "newly sprung in June", to "the melody that's sweetly played in tune". A brilliant example of personification is the poem John Barleycorn. Barleycorn personifies the undying spirit of the common people who can never be crushed by any enemies.

The name of Burns is very dear to all English-speaking nations because the source of his poetry was the folklore and the songs of his people whose true son he was. His own poems and songs have become part of the folklore. In our country Robert Burns is widely known, loved and sung. One of the best translators of Burns' poetry was Samuel Marshak who conveyed in his remarkable translations the deep humanism, the beauty and the realism of the original poems.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What forms the basis of Burns' poetry?
2. What are the main themes of Burns' poetry?
3. What is the idea of the poem John Barleycorn?
4. In which of his poems does Burns develop the revolutionary theme?

CHAPTER IV. LITERATURE OF THE BEGINNING OF THE 19th CENTURY

ROMANTICISM

The period of Romanticism covers approximately 30 years, beginning from the last decade of the 18th century and continuing up to the 1830s. In his letter to Friedrich Engels, of March 25, 1868, Karl Marx stated that Romanticism in literature was a reaction of different strata of society to the French Bourgeois Revolution and to the Enlightenment connected with it. The people were disappointed with the outcome of the Revolution. The common people did not obtain the liberty, fraternity and equality which they had hoped for; the bourgeoisie found that the reality was not what the Enlighteners had promised it to be, although the Revolution had paved the way for capitalist development.

Quite naturally, the reactionary feudal class was discontented, because the Revolution had made it much weaker.

The progressive minds of Europe expressed this general discontent. because the influence of the French Bourgeois Revolution was felt all over the world. The new trend in literature (Romanticism) reflected it. The Revolution brought new problems for the progressive-minded writers, who were faced with the necessity of finding an answer to such questions as their attitude to the feudal state, to the revolution, to the national liberation movements to the relations between the individual and society, to the common people, to historical development.

The period of Romanticism in England had its peculiarities. During the second half of the 18th century economic and social changes took place in the country. England went through the so- called Industrial revolution that gave birth to a new class, that of the proletariat. The Industrial revolution began with the invention of a weaving-machine which could do the work of

17 people. The weavers that were left without work thought that the machines were to blame for their misery. They began to destroy these machines, or frames as they were called. The further introduction of machinery instead of hand-labour in different branches of manufacture left far more people jobless.

It was during those years that the “Correspondence Societies”* were founded in England. They were organized in different localities, they united tradesmen of different professions and interests. As a rule, the societies were headed by well-known progressive men, who struggled for revolutionary changes and improvement in the social order.

The Industrial revolution in England, as well as the French Bourgeois Revolution, had a great influence on the cultural life of the country. In addition to the problems that their European contemporaries were facing, the English writers of the period had to find answers to those that arose in their own country, such as: the growth of industry, the rising working class movement, and the final disappearance of the class of peasantry.

Some of these writers were definitely revolutionary: they denied the existing order, called upon the people to struggle for a better future, shared the people’s desire for liberty and objected to colonial oppression. Furthermore, they supported the national liberation wars on the continent against feudal reaction. Such writers were George Gordon Byron (1788-1824) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822).

Others, though they had welcomed the French Revolution and its slogan of liberty, fraternity and equality, later abandoned revolutionary ideas. They turned their attention to nature and to the simple problems of life. They tried to avoid the contradictions that were becoming so great in all the spheres of social life with the development of capitalism. They looked

back to patriarchal England and refused to accept the progress of industry; they even called to the Government to forbid the building of new factories which, they considered, were the cause of the workers' sufferings. Among these writers were the poets William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel T. Coleridge (1772-1834) and Robert Southey (1774- 1843), who formed the "Lake School", called so because they all lived for a time in the beautiful Lake District in the north-west of England. They dedicated much of what they wrote to Nature, especially Wordsworth. They disclosed the life of the common people of the English country side that was overlooked by their younger revolutionary contemporaries. The "Lake" poets resorted to the popular forms of verse, that were known and could be understood by all.

One of the first works, published by W. Wordsworth and S. Coleridge in 1798, was a collection of poems under the title of Lyrical Ballads. In the foreword W. Wordsworth wrote that these ballads were written for everybody, in a language that everybody could understand. The creations of the English poet were full of deep feelings. These feelings were expressed in the language of the honest common man.

The romanticists paid a good deal of attention to the spiritual life of man. This was reflected in an abundance of lyrical verse. The so-called exotic theme came into being and great attention was dedicated to Nature and its elements. The description became very rich in form and many-sided in contents. The writers used such means as symbolics, fantasy, grotesque, etc.; legends, tales, songs and ballads also became part of their creative method.

The romanticists were talented poets and their contribution to English literature was very important.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What were the characteristic features of Romanticism?
2. What were the differences between the revolutionary romanticists of England and the poets of the ‘Lake School’?
3. What themes did the “Lake” poets choose for their verses?



**GEORGE GORDON
BYRON
(1788—1824)**

One of the great poets of England was the revolutionary romanticist George Gordon Byron. He was born on January 22, 1788 in London, in an old aristocratic, but poor family. The boy spent his childhood in Scotland, with his mother. At the age of ten Byron returned to England, as heir to the title of Lord and the family castle of Newstead Abbey. It was situated near Nottingham, close to the famous Sherwood Forest. He went to school to Harrow, then to Cambridge University. When he was 21 he became a member of the House of Lords. In 1809 he travelled abroad, visiting Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece and Turkey. He returned home in 1811.

In 1812 Byron delivered his speeches in the House of Lords. His first speech was in defence of the Luddites. Later he spoke in favour of the oppressed Irish people. In his speeches Byron showed himself a defender of the people's cause, and that made the reactionary circles hate him. When, after an unhappy marriage in 1815, he and his wife parted, his enemies in the governing circles seized this opportunity and began to persecute him. The great poet was accused of immorality and had to leave his native country.

In May 1816 Byron went to Switzerland where he made friends with the poet Percy B. Shelley, his great contemporary. Their friendship was

based on the similarity of their political convictions. Both of them hated oppression and stood for the liberty of nations.

At the end of 1816 Byron continued his voyage and went to Italy, where he lived till 1823. There he became actively engaged in the Carbonari movement against Austrian rule, for the liberation of Italy. The defeat of the Carbonari uprising (1821) was a heavy blow to the great fighter for liberty. In the summer of 1823 he went off to Greece to fight for its liberation from Turkish oppression. There, on April 19, 1824, Byron died of a fever. The Greeks, who considered him their national hero, buried his heart in their country and declared national mourning for him. His body was brought to England where it was buried near Newstead Abbey. In 1969 the authorities finally allowed his remains to be buried in the “Poets’ Corner” in Westminster Abbey.

His death was deeply mourned by all progressive mankind. Byron’s creative work is usually divided into four periods.

The London Period (1812—1816). At the beginning of this period the first two cantos (songs) of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* were published. During the years of the London period Byron wrote his famous lyrics Hebrew Melodies, his “oriental” poems (The Corsair, The Bride of Abydos, Lara, and others). He also began to write his political satires, the most outstanding of which is the *Ode to the Framers of the Frame Bill*.

The Swiss Period (1816 May October). During these months Byron writes his third canto of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, his philosophic drama *Manfred*.

The Italian Period (1816—1823) is the most important and mature in his creative work. He writes the last, fourth canto, of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, *Cain*, *Beppo*. Besides many other works he writes *Don Juan*.

This is considered to be his most important creation. It is a novel in verse, that was to contain 24 cantos, but death stopped his work and only 16 and a half cantos were written. In them he gave a great satirical panorama of the European social life of his time.

He came very close to a realistic approach there, and enriched the language of poetry with the everyday language, spoken by the people.

The Greek Period (1823—1824). During the short months in Greece Byron wrote little; some lyrical poems, among which *On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year*, and his *Cephalonian Journal* in prose.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What periods is Byron's creative work usually divided into?
2. What are the titles of some of the outstanding works of each period?
3. In which of his works does Byron come close to a realistic approach in describing life?

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

This is a poem composed of four cantos. It is written in the Spenserian stanza — a nine-line stanza with the last line a lengthened one, or an Alexandrine. The first two cantos were published in 1812, the third — in 1817 and the fourth in 1818. It is one of the first lyrico-epic poems in European literature. The lyrico-epic poem combines narrative with lyrics. The narrative and the descriptions of nature, of people, of historical facts, are

presented lyrically, expressing the poet's feelings and personal views on what he describes.

The character of Childe Harold has much in common with the author. That is logical, because Harold was the product of the same epoch and of its contradictions, as Byron was.

At the beginning of the poem Childe Harold is in the centre of the reader's attention; later, the author begins to address the reader directly. In the middle of the third canto Childe Harold appears for the last time and the author is left alone with the reader.

From the first stanzas we learn some facts about Childe Harold's life. He came from an old aristocratic family. His ancestors were men of great courage and heroism. Harold's life was very different from theirs, it was full of pleasure and entertainment. But now he only felt a great weariness and discontent. He lost faith in friendship and was disappointed in the world of lies in which he found himself. Hoping to find Good in other countries he left England. He did not know very well what he expected to find, but he fled from Evil. Similar characters will echo Childe Harold's feelings in many European literatures of the time. They will bear Childe Harold's traits. They will be proud men, sincere in their judgment of Evil and their praise of Good. But they will, like Harold, be passive observers, egoistic aristocrats, slightly scornful of the commoners.

Thus Childe Harold leaves his country for Portugal and Spain; when the ship is far from the shores of England, he sings *Good Night to his Motherland*. These stanzas have a structure different from the whole poem: they are written in the form of a ballad, a lyrical form, that gives them a nostalgic quality:

GOOD NIGHT (Canto I)

*“Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o’er the waters blue;
The Night-winds sigh, the breakers roar
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon Sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee.
My native Land - - Good Night!*

9

*“And now I’m in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea:
But why should I for others groan.
When none will sigh (or me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain.
Till led by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He’d tear me where he stands.*

*“With thee, my bark. Ill swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear’st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark-blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My native Land - Good Night!”*



WALTER SCOTT
(1771—1832)

The name of Walter Scott is closely connected with the genre of the historical novel which he introduced into English literature.

Walter Scott was the son of a well-to-do Edinburgh lawyer who wanted him to study law. However, his great interest in history and passionate love for his country changed the course of his life. The wealth of Scottish folklore attracted his attention. He collected the legends and popular ballads of Scotland and published them under the title of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

Up to 1814 he wrote poems on legendary and historical subjects and became quite famous as a poet. In 1814 he published his first historical novel *Waverley*; it was a success and from then on Walter Scott dedicated himself entirely to prose, mostly to writing historical novels; he wrote twenty-nine novels in all. The historical events that attracted his attention were those connected with the relations between Scotland and England. For many centuries England, that was socially and economically more developed

than Scotland. had oppressed the freedom-loving people of its northern neighbour. The English were often helped by the Scotch bourgeoisie.

Of the twenty-nine novels written by Scott nineteen are on Scotch subjects. The periods chosen by the author are the 17th and 18th centuries. Among these books are *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*. Walter Scott understood the important role the common people played in the historical development of a country. In many of his novels he chose the common men of Scotland for his heroes. Those brave, strong men fought for their country, for its freedom, against England's oppression.

Scott wrote six historical novels about England; the periods he chose, were the end of the 12th century, or the Norman Conquest, the end of the 16th century, or the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and the middle of the 17th century. Here he wrote about the English Bourgeois Revolution and about the Restoration period that followed it. Among these novels are *Ivanhoe*, *The Abbot* and others. The subjects are at times connected with Scotland, for the two countries are very close in their historical development. Thus, in *The Abbot* Walter Scott describes one of the episodes of the tragic life of Mary, Queen of Scots.

Four of Scott's twenty-nine novels are written on different subjects. Among them is *Quentin Durward* in which the writer gives an interesting portrait of king Luis XI of France. This king was one of the most cunning politicians of his time.

IVANHOE

Among the outstanding historical novels of Walter Scott is one of the best. In it he describes the events of the end of the 12th century. The Normans, who had come from France and had conquered England in 1066, were now fighting for absolute power in the country.

The Anglo-Saxon people hated their Norman conquerors and many common folk ran away to the Forest of Sherwood, to join the outlaws who lived there. Their leader was a brave man, a fine archer. He hated the rich and helped the poor. His name was Locksley. (Locksley was one of the names of the legendary Robin Hood).

There were great conflicts at that time between the Anglo-Saxon feudals and the Normans that had conquered them. Richard Plantagenet, known as Richard the Lion Heart was then king of England. He had gone away to take part in the crusades in Palestine. In the meantime his brother, Prince John, tried to seize the power in the country with the help of the Norman nobles.

Against this historical background of the 12th century Walter Scott gives the story of a young Anglo-Saxon knight, Ivanhoe, who had quarreled with his lather, Cedric the Saxon, and was sent away by him. He fought with Richard the Lion Heart in the crusades. He had come back to England secretly to his beloved — the beautiful lady Rowena.

This is the first chapter of Ivanhoe (adapted and abridged) in which Walter Scott shows the attitude of the common people, the Anglo-Saxon serfs of Cedric the Saxon, towards the hated Normans.

...The sun was setting upon one of the rich, grassy glades of the forest we spoke of in the beginning of the chapter. There were two human figures in the glade, whose appearance was in keeping with the scene. The elder of these men had a stern wild aspect. His dress was very simple — a long jacket with sleeves made of the skin of some animal, and a broad leathern belt with a horn and a long broad knife at the waist. He had sandals on his feet, but his head was bare His thick hair was a dark-red colour, forming a contrast with his long yellow beard. The man had a brass ring, like a dog's collar, round his neck with the inscription: "Gurth, the son of Beowulph, is the born serf of Cedric of Rotherwood".

Beside Gurth, the swineherd, sat a person about ten years younger in appearance whose dress was of better materials and more Fantastic. His jacket was bright purple: his short, crimson cloak was lined with yellow. He had silver bracelets upon his arms, and on his neck a collar of the same metal with the inscription: "Wamba, the son of Witless, is the serf of Cedric of Rotherwood". He had a cap with bells on it, which jingled as he turned his head to one side or the other. It was the dress of a domestic clown or jester.

"The curse of St. Withold upon these swine and upon me!" said the swineherd. "Here, Fangs! Fangs!" he cried to his dog, which ran about helping his master to collect the scattered herd. "Wamba. up and help me! Go round the back of the hill and drive them before you".

Truly", said Wamba, without moving, "I have consulted my legs and they are against it. I cannot run about the wet forest in this royal dress. I advise you. Gurth, to leave the herd to their fate which cannot be other than to be turned into Normans before morning".

"The swine turned into Normans!" repeated Gurth. "I don't understand you, Wamba".

Why, what do you call these animals running about on their four legs?" asked Wamba.

"Swine, fool swine", answered the swineherd; "every fool knows that".

"And swine is good Saxon". said Wamba; "but what do you call a swine when it is prepared for food?"

"Pork", answered the swineherd.

"I am very glad every fool knows that too", said Wamba; "and pork, I think, is good Norman-French, So, when the animal lives, and is in the charge of a Saxon serf, it is called by a Saxon name, but it becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when it is carried to the castle for the table of the nobles. What do you think of this, friend Gurth, ha?"

“It is true, friend Wamba, sad hut true. All the heavy tasks remain on our Saxon shoulders, but the enjoyment is for the Normans. And so it is in everything”...

Mastery of description of customs and habits was a peculiarity of Scott’s talent, His narrative is also full of life and extremely colourful. His ability to include popular legends, songs and tales into the plot is well known, In *Ivanhoe*, for example, an important part is played by Locksley, the legendary Robin Hood, and his merry outlaws.

Scott’s knowledge of history and his gift of describing historical events were extraordinary. His contemporary George G, Byron, a friend and a great admirer of his talent, said of this wonderful master of the novel: “He is a library in himself”.

Walter Scott’s style and language are very interesting. He was a master of dialogue, which helped him better portray his characters. His heroes spoke using expressions peculiar to their professions (the priests, the archers, the tradesmen, the doctors). He also introduced Scotch dialects into these dialogues.

He was fond of humour and his novels abound in comic situations which make them still more interesting for the reader.

Walter Scott has always been loved and much read in our country. Scott had created the historical novel, for up to his time history had never been approached from the point of view of the people as the makers of it.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What were the historical events that most attracted Walter Scott's attention in Scotland and in England?

2. What period of English history does Walter Scott describe in *Ivanhoe* and how does he characterize the common people of England of that time?

3. What made Walter Scott's language interesting?

CHAPTER V. LITERATURE FROM THE 1830s TO THE 1850s

The industrial power of Great Britain continued to grow. The number of factories increased, as well as the number of people who worked at them. The profits of the manufacturers became larger from year to year, while the conditions of the working people became worse and worse. At the same time Britain was becoming a great commercial power in the world arena. Big fortunes were made by business-men trading with other countries. The wealth and power of Great Britain as a country was opposed to the terrible poverty and misery of its working people.

Great historical changes occurred in the class structure of Britain in the 1830s. The bourgeoisie, as has always been the case, made use of the working class in its fight for more power in the Government, against the landed aristocracy. However, in 1832, as soon as the Parliamentary reform they fought for was carried out, the bourgeoisie betrayed the interests of the people and looked for a compromise with the higher nobility. According to the Parliamentary reform only people who had property could vote. About 20 per cent of the population acquired a number of political rights. The main conflict of the century was born: the contradiction between labour and capital, between the proletariat and the capitalists.

The social and political developments in the life of the country were reflected in the literature of those years. It was then that some writers became known as the founders of the critical realistic novel of the 19th century. Their art was born with the social contradictions of their time. Their main representatives were Ch. Dickens and W. M. Thackeray.

CRITICAL REALISM

The greatest achievement and merit of English critical realism is that in its best works it raised the problems put forward by the main conflict of the epoch — the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie between labour and capital.

The essence of the bourgeoisie was most vividly characterized and reflected in the works of Dickens and Thackeray: in the denunciation of the terrible conditions of the poor by Dickens, in the biting criticism of the ruling circles by Thackeray. However, they were unable to show a way out of the social contradictions they described and this was the weak point of the realism of the period. The strong point was their true reflection of life and their sharp criticism of the existing injustice. They continued the traditions of the 18th century realists, taking the small man for their hero and reflecting everyday life. Their heroes, however, were too good to be true to life. Their humorous characters were presented more convincingly. The negative characters embodied all the negative traits of society which was a slave to gold and profit.

The greatest of those writers, the creator and main representative of critical realism was Charles Dickens. His works are of world significance.



CHARLES DICKENS
(1812-1870)

Charles Dickens was born in Landsport, a small town near the sea, in a middle-class family. His father was a clerk in a navy office; he earned a small salary there and usually spent more than he earned. As a result of such living he was thrown into the debtors' prison when Charles was only ten. At that age the boy went to work at a factory, that was like a dark, damp cellar. There he stuck labels on bottles of shoeblacking all day long, for a few pennies.

Later the boy went to school for three years and after that, from the age of 15, he went to work in a lawyer's office. He continued to educate himself, mainly by reading books. At the age of 18 he became a reporter in Parliament. Here he got acquainted with the politics of his country and never had a very high opinion of them afterwards.

In 1833 he began to write his first short stories about London life. In 1836 those stories were published as a book, under the title of *Sketches by Boz*; Boz was the pen-name with which he signed his first work.

In 1837, Dickens became well-known to the English readers. His first big work appeared, written in installments for a magazine at first, and later published in book form. It was *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick*

Club. From then on Dickens was one of the best known and loved writers of his day.

In 1842 Charles Dickens made his first trip to America. He said that he wanted to see for himself what “real” democracy was like. He was rather disappointed with it. He wrote about his trip and his impressions in his *American Notes*.

Dickens travelled a lot. He visited France and Italy and later went again to America. At the same time he continued to write. In 1858 Dickens began to tour England, reading passages from his works to the public. These readings were a great success, for Dickens was a wonderful actor, but the hard work and traveling was bad for his health. Death came when he was writing his novel. *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, which was left unfinished.

Dickens’ literary heritage is of world importance. He developed the English social novel, writing about the most burning social problems of his time. He created a wide gallery of pictures of the bourgeois society and its representative types which still exist in England: he wrote of the workhouses of England and the tragedy of the children who lived there (*Oliver Twist*); he wrote about the problem of education and showed how it crippled children (*Nicholas Nickleby*). *Nicholas Nickleby* is the tale of a boy who is left poor on his father’s death. He is sent to work in a school. Dotheboys [=Do-The-Boys], where the master, Squeers, treats forty miserable pupils cruelly, and teaches them nothing. Nicholas gives the readers a good deal of pleasure when he gives the criminal Squeers a good beating, and then escapes.

After his trip to America Dickens wrote *Martin Chuzzlewit*. A part of this work had an American setting. He criticized American customs and democracy very severely. Dickens wrote about money and its terrible, destructive force over men’s souls (*Dombey and Son*). *David Copperfield*,

one of the most lyrical works of the great novelist, was to some extent autobiographical: it reflected a young man's life in bourgeois society. Dickens criticized the negative sides of that society, children's labour, the system of education. Such problems as marriage and love in 'the bourgeois world were also taken up in this novel.

Dickens' later novels were *Bleak House* and *Little Dorrit*. In *Bleak House* he took up the problem of law and justice; in *Little Dorrit* the reader got acquainted with the debtors' prison of London. Those novels showed more clearly than before the great social contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the common people. In *Hard Times* he wrote of the class struggle between the capitalists and the proletariat. *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend* reflected an entirely new feeling of the writer: that of the loss of illusions. That tragic feeling became stronger than Dickens' usual optimism.

Among his works there are two historical novels. In 1841 he wrote *Barnaby Rudge*, taking a subject from English history of the year 1780, known as the "Gordon Rebellion". In 1848 Dickens turned to history again; he wrote *A Tale of Two Cities*, a story about people closely connected with the French Bourgeois Revolution, and the time that preceded it.

Dickens' prose varies in quality, but he is nearly always readable. In his different novels he describes and attacks many kinds of government departments, bad prisons, dirty houses. His characters include thieves, murders, men in debt, stupid and unwashed men and women, hungry children, and those who do their best to deceive the honest. Although many of his scenes are terribly unpleasant, he usually keeps the worst descriptions out of his books, therefore the reader does not throw the book into the fire,

but continues to read. Some of his gentler characters are very weak; some of the sad situations that he describes are too miserable to be true. He uses too much black paint. But he wanted to raised kindness and goodness in men's hearts, and he used tears and lighters to reach his aim.

DOMBEY AND SON

This novel was written in 1848. It is the story of a city business man, whose only interest in life is his firm. According to Dombey "The earth was made for *Dombey and Son* to trade in, and the sun and moon were made to give them light. Rivers and seas were formed to float their ships; rainbows to give them promise of fair weather: winds blew for, or against, their enterprises; stars and planets circled in their orbits to preserve inviolate a system of which they were the centre".

Dombey is busy with money-making, and all that surrounds him is of little or no importance. His coldness, his absolute lack of human feeling towards people is extraordinary.

The firm, which is his life, is called Dombey and Son. He has a daughter, Florence. whom he considers to be "a piece of base coin" because she is a girl. He does not love her, although the little girl loves him dearly.

When at last a son is born, it is he who becomes the centre of Dombey's life and interests. However, he sees in little Paul only a means to continue his business. His main feeling now becomes his anxiety to see Paul grown up and ready to work with him, to continue his money-making business. He does not notice that the little boy sickens at school, where he is sent to be made a man as quickly as possible. The little boy's weak health breaks under the strain of misery. He cannot get accustomed to school life, far away from home, from his sister Florence whom he loves so much. Little Paul feels that he will not get better, that he will die like his mother died

when he was born. He cannot understand why the money, that his father considers to be so powerful, could not save his mother and cannot make him strong and quite well.

The death of little Paul is the beginning of Dombey's misfortunes. His second wife, Edith, hates him and leaves him. His secretary Carker runs away with his money and ruins him. Only Florence's love for him remains unchanged and she and her husband take care of the lonely old man.

The extract below (abridged) presents a conversation between Dombey and little Paul, who asks his father to explain to him what money is.

...Thus Paul grew to be nearly five years old. He was a pretty little fellow; though there was something wistful in his small face. He had a strange, old-fashioned, thoughtful way of sitting in his miniature arm-chair, when it was carried down into his lather's room after dinner and placed by the fire. They were the strangest pair at such a time. The two so very much alike, and yet so monstrously contrasted.

On one of these occasions, when they had both been perfectly quiet for a long time, and Mr. Dombey only knew that the child was awake by occasionally glancing at his eye, where the bright fire was sparkling like a jewel, little Paul broke silence thus:

"Papa! What's money?"

The abrupt question made Mr. Dombey quite disconcerted.

"What is money, Paul?" he answered. "Money?"

"Yes", said the child, laying his hands upon the elbows of his little chair, and turning his face tip towards Mr. Dombey's; "what is money?"

Mr. Dombey was in a difficulty. He would have liked to give him some explanation but looking down at the little chair, and seeing what a long way down it was, he answered: "Gold, and silver, and copper. Guineas, shillings, halfpence. You know what they are?"

“Oh yes, I know what they are”, said Paul. “I don’t mean that. Papa. I mean what’s money after all?”

Heaven and Earth, how old his face was as he turned it up again towards his father’s!

“What is money after all!” said Mr. Dombey, backing his chair a little, that he might the better gaze in sheer amazement at the presumptuous atom that made such an inquiry.

“I mean. Papa, what can it do?” returned Paul folding his arms (they were hardly long enough to fold), and looking at the fire and up at him, and at the fire, and up at him again.

Mr. Dombey drew his chair back to its former place, and patted him on the head. “You’ll know better by-and-by, my man”, he said. “Money, Paul, can do anything”. He took hold of his little hand, and beat it softly against one of his own, as he said so.

But Paul got his hand free as soon as he could; looking at the fire again, as though the fire had been his adviser, he repeated after a short pause:

“Anything, Papa?”

“Yes. Anything — almost”, said Mr. Dombey.

“Anything means everything, don’t it. Papa?” asked his son.

“I suppose so”, said Mr. Dombey.

“Why didn’t money save me my Mama?” returned the child. “It isn’t cruel, is it?”

“Cruel!” said Mr. Dombey, setting his neckcloth, and seeming to resent the idea. “No, A good thing can’t be cruel”.

“If it’s a good thing, and can do anything”, said the little fellow, thoughtfully, as he looked back at the fire, “I wonder why it didn’t save me my Mama”...

Dombey and Son is called a miracle that made all other works written by Dickens seem pale and weak. He said that it was “something ugly,

monstrously beautiful”. Dickens managed to disclose the ugliness of relations based on money in a work of art. Dickens had an eye that penetrated into the very depths of contemporary society. The principle of the critical realistic approach to the environment was established by Dickens at the very beginning of his creative work. It remained throughout his life though his criticism of reality became sharper, as his world outlook and his art matured. As the years passed, the soft humour and light-hearted laughter of his first works, gave way to mockery and satire.

Thus, the sombre Dombey was shown as a cold and tragic figure, a product of the money-making environment. Opposed to him are his two children, Florence and Paul. Dickens made them loving and lovable creatures who despised money. That is why the novel sounds at times as the story of the two children, rather than that of their money-making father.

The richness of Dickens’ language can be traced back to the everyday speech of the people. A master of style, he reaches the very depths of the treasures of English. The power of his pen made the contemporary reactionary critics fear him; even now the reaction fears his merciless truth, directed against the evils of bourgeois society.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. How was English literature influenced by Chartism?
2. Who was the founder of critical realism and the social novel in England? Speak about his life,
3. What social problems did Charles Dickens write about?



**WILLIAM MAKEPEACE
THACKERAY
(1811-1863)**

W. M. Thackeray was born in Calcutta, India, in the family of an English official of high standing. Contrary to Charles Dickens, Thackeray had a very good education both at school and at Cambridge University. The future writer wanted to be an artist and went to Europe to study art. For some time he lived among the artistic circles of Paris. Later, when he returned to London, he learned that he had lost all his money, for the bank where it was deposited had gone bankrupt. Thus, he had to earn his living. He began to draw sketches, but was not very successful. He started writing satirical and humorous stories and essays. Later he wrote novels and delivered lectures.

Thackeray wrote in the same years and under the same political conditions as his great contemporary Dickens did. Together they are better appreciated than apart; they present the life of their period more completely together. Dickens usually chose for his main character the “little” man with his troubles and difficulties. Thackeray directed his satire against the representatives of the upper classes of society, whom he knew better. Dickens was inclined to look for a happy solution that smoothed over the existing contradictions. Thackeray, on the contrary, was merciless in his

satirical attacks on the ruling classes. He considered that art should be a real mirror of life. He showed bourgeois society and its vices without softening their description. In this approach to art he was a follower of the great satirist of the Enlightenment, Jonathan Swift.

Thackeray was not a romantic, he did not produce his characters for the purpose of expressing violent feelings. He could describe strange qualities in human beings, and he could also show how life's cruelties and people's weaknesses. He wrote as an educated man. Some of the characters in one novel are related to those in another. This gives an appearance of reality to the families concerned; yet many people find Thackeray hard to read. He is suspected of being very conscious of the importance of noble rank and good family.

Thackeray's most outstanding works are *The Book of Snobs* (under this title he published a collection of satirical essays) that appeared in 1846-1847, and his novel *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848).

THE BOOK OF SNOBS

In this book Thackeray presents a gallery of men and women of the ruling classes of England. He writes about the parasitical life of the aristocracy; he describes the evils of the bourgeoisie, which is only interested in coming up as near as possible to the aristocracy. Thackeray also writes about the English military men of high rank, who in their stupidity and self-conceit place themselves entirely apart and beyond the rank and file; he also attacks the clergy with his biting satire. All these people are snobs, according to Thackeray, because they cringe before those who are superior, and are rude and despotic towards those who are below them.

Most of the chapters of this book have the word "snob" in the heading. Thus, there is a chapter on *The Snob Royal*, on *Great City Snobs*,

Military Snobs, Party-Giving Snobs, On Clerical Snobs, On Some Country Snobs and so on. The word “snob” that existed long before Thackeray’s time, acquired a new meaning under his pen. It became a mirror of moral and psychological notions of national character, customs and personal traits.

The book is a perfect reflection of Thackeray’s satirical and highly negative approach to the bourgeois society. It is a real encyclopedia of the life of the ruling classes in England. These classes have retained much of what Thackeray saw in them to our days.

VANITY FAIR. A NOVEL WITHOUT A HERO

The title *Vanity Fair* was taken by Thackeray from a book written in the 1660s by John Bunyon. The book *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is an allegory representing the life of man as a journey through different towns. One of them is called the Town of Vanity in which there is a Fair, that is open all the year round. Everything can be bought or sold at this Fair, including people.

The sub-title states that the book is a novel without a hero. There can be no “hero” in the *Vanity Fair* of bourgeois life. Thackeray makes the reader understand this by giving a gallery of negative characters from the higher layers of bourgeois society. In this satirical gallery of high-ranking people who march through the novel, one is particularly repulsive, due to his degradation and vice, It is old Sir Pitt Crawley, disgusting in all his actions and behaviour. But he is a baronet, and is very rich. He is one of those who “defend” the English monarchy. Therefore, nobody notices his morals, but accepts him because of his great wealth. People disclose the worst side of their nature in their lust for power and money. Thus, Thackeray chooses Becky Sharp as a typical heroine of her day. She is the central figure of the

novel. Her only desire is to achieve a high position in life and become a wealthy woman. She stops at nothing to gain her aim.

The reader may think that the author opposes Amelia Sedley's character and her good qualities to Becky's badness. However, Amelia's "goodness" is really no more than puritanical hypocrisy.

This "goodness" is, of course, just as negative as Becky's lust for riches. It makes the people around her suffer, especially captain Dobbin, who loves Amelia dearly.

Thus, lust for power and money, on the one hand, and puritanical hypocrisy, on the other, were the main traits of Thackeray's characters.

The only character of the novel who is neither lustful nor hypocritical is captain Dobbin. He is kind, honest and decent. But while the reader sympathizes with him, he also thinks him a bit absurd, especially when he arranges the marriage of Amelia whom he himself loves dearly, to George Osborne.

Here is an extract (abridged) from *Vanity Fair*. It will acquaint the reader with Rebecca Sharp, with her hopes and desires, with her attitude to her "dear" friend Amelia Sedley. Amelia is only "dear" to her, because through her Rebecca hopes to achieve what she wants most of all — a rich husband.

...The first move showed considerable skill. When she called Sedley a very handsome man, she knew that Amelia would tell her mother, who would probably tell Joseph, or who, at any rate, would be pleased by the compliment paid to her son. All mothers are perhaps too, Joseph Sedley would overhear the compliment — Rebecca spoke loud enough — and he did hear, and (thinking, in his heart that he was a very fine man) the praise thrilled through every fibre, of his big body, and made it tingle with pleasure. Then, however, came a recoil. "Is the girl

making fun of me?” he thought and straightway he bounced toward the bell, and was for retreating, when his father’s jokes and his mother’s entreaties caused him to pause and stay where he was. He conducted the young lady down to dinner in a dubious and agitated frame of mind. “Does she really think I am handsome?” thought he, “or is she only making game of me?”...

Down-stairs then, they went. Joseph very red and blushing, Rebecca very modest, and holding her green eyes downward. She was dressed in white, with bare shoulders as white as snow — the picture of youth, unprotected innocence, and humble virgin simplicity. “I must be very quiet”, thought Rebecca, “and very much interested about India”...

Thackeray gave his novel the original form of a puppet show which he presented as if from a stage. He often interfered in the development of the action and addressed the reader with a marked ironical intonation. His sharp satirical mind made it easy for him to see the negative sides of life in bourgeois society. His great literary talent helped him to draw a highly realistic picture of this society.

Thackeray’s language is expressive and simple. He enriched the language of literature by giving additional, wider meanings to words (as he did with the word “snob” for example). He also created a peculiar satirical geography that expressed very well his opinion of places and of people who lived there. Such was the town of Mudbury, for instance. His style was very laconic. He avoided the use of grotesque, very widely used by Dickens; Thackeray expressed his negative opinion mostly by means of sharp mockery.

Contrary to his contemporary Charles Dickens, who always suffered and rejoiced with his characters, Thackeray adopted the attitude of an

observer. This literary manner received the name of “objective” realism and became a permanent characteristic of English literature.

1. What are the peculiarities of Thackeray’s creative work?
2. What additional meaning did he give to the existing word “snob”?
3. Where does the title *Vanity Fair* come from? 4. Why is the book also called *A Novel Without a Hero*?
5. What can you say of Thackeray’s style and language?



CHARLOTTE BRONTË

We now turn to Yorkshire where a girl, Charlotte Brontë, was brought up in poor surroundings. As a result of a stay in Brussels, she wrote *The Professor* (written in 1846 and published in 1857), which describes events in the life of a schoolmaster in that city. *Villette* (1853) uses the same material; it reflects the personal experiences of the writer when she was in Brussels; without beauty or money, the heroine becomes a teacher and wins respect by her fine character.

Her finest novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847) also describes the life of a poor and unbeautiful girl who is brought up by a cruel aunt and sent to a miserable school. After that she goes to teach the daughter of Mr Rochester at Thornfield Hall. Although she is not beautiful, Rochester falls in love with her; but when she discovers that his (mad) wife is still alive, she runs away. Later the Hall is burnt down and the mad wife is killed. In trying to save her, Rochester is blinded and loses all hope of happiness. On hearing of all this, Jane marries him and so is able to bring comfort into the remaining part of his life.

This book was very successful, although the heroine was neither beautiful nor rich. It is an honest description of strong feelings at a time when some feelings expressed in books were shallow. The power of the writing made it sell fast. The dialogue is more realistic and less formal than in many novels of the period. Here are a few lines of dialogue between Jane Eyre and Rochester which come near the end of the book. Jane's use of 'sir' might be explained by the fact that she had been Rochester's employee:

'Jane, will you marry me?'

'Yes, sir'

'A poor blind man, whom you will have to lead about by the hand?'

'Yes, sir'

'A crippled man, twenty years older than you, whom you will have to wait on?''

'Yes, sir.'

'Truly, Jane?'

'Most truly, sir.'

'Oh! My darling! God bless you and reward you!'

EMILY BRONTE

Charlotte's sister, ***Emily Bronte***, wrote one of the greatest of English novels, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). *Emily Bronte* was born on July 30, 1818 in Yorkshire. The family moved to a parsonage near the moors in Haworth, Yorkshire, two years later. Emily was the fifth of six children born into this literary family. Two of her older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, got sick while away at school and died in 1824. Emily's mother had died three years after giving birth to Emily. As an escape from these hardships, the remainder of the family--father Patrick, and siblings Charlotte, Anne, and Branwell, wrote

their own stories and delved into the land of fantasy. They were all educated and encouraged to read and write by their father, who was born into a poor Irish family and worked his way up in the Anglican Church. Patrick Brontë's family in Ireland was illiterate; therefore, he prized learning and the power it had to change lives. Only a poor minister, he knew his daughters would likely have to work as teachers or governesses, and their education would be indispensable.

Emily was the most reserved and least social of the Brontë children, intensely private, she was infuriated when Charlotte read her poetry notebook and suggested she publish it. She normally did not show her writings to anyone. She liked to tell stories, though, and she and her little sister Anne invented Gondal, an imaginary kingdom. Emily never tired of creating stories about the land of Gondal and its inhabitants.

Though she studied away from home several times, Emily hated being away from Haworth, and she disliked the loss of privacy and writing time. She preferred to be at home, and she helped around the house, caring for father, and doing the finances and housework. In 1824, she and her sister Anne tried to start a school in their home, but there was no interest.

Emily Brontë's first publication came in 1846, when her poems were published along with Anne's and Charlotte's. They chose androgynous pseudonyms: Currer, Ellis, and Action_Bell, corresponding to Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. There was no reaction, but they decided to try writing novels. In 1847, a publisher accepted books by two of the sisters. Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* was already published, and receiving rave reviews. The dishonest publisher suggested that Currer Bell wrote *Wuthering Heights* too, in the hopes of increasing sales.

Critics found *Wuthering Heights* to be intense and original. But they were also troubled by what they saw as moral ambiguity. They did not think the villains of the story were adequately punished. After the publication of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, Emily wrote little. She wanted nothing do with publishing and fame, and Was not even interested in making a trip to London to affirm that it was she and not Charlotte who wrote *Wuthering Heights*.

Brontë was influenced by other writers, but also forged her own path. She explored the dark areas of the soul with her unique vision. Critic Richard Benvenuto writes of her:

“Like Brontë’s poetry, Wuthering Heights anticipates twentieth-century literature-in its complex point of view, its violence, its use of dramatic scene instead of authorial comment or summary, its moral impartiality. It transcends time as few other Victorian novels do, yet it has points of connection with them and with the literary traditions of the nineteenth century” (86).

The pseudonym from *Wuthering Heights* was not removed until after Emily’s death in 1848. Branwell had died months before Emily, and Anne died the following year. The only child remaining, Charlotte, published a new version of *Wuthering Heights* in 1850, correcting the mistakes the first publisher had ignored.

Wuthering Heights (1847) - the story is narrated by Lockwood, a gentleman visiting the Yorkshire moors where the novel is set, and of Mrs Dean, housekeeper to the Earnshaw family, who had been witness of the interlocked destinies of the original owners of the Heights. In a series of flashbacks and time shifts, Brontë draws a powerful picture of the enigmatic Heathcliff, who is brought to Heights from the streets of Liverpool by Mr

Eamshaw. Heathcliff is treated as Eamshaw's own children, Catherine and Hindley. After his death Heathcliff is bullied by Hindley, who loves Catherine, but she marries Edgar Linton. Heathcliff's destructive force is unleashed, and his first victim is Catherine, who dies giving birth to a girl, another Catherine. Isabella Linton, Edgar's sister, whom he had married, flees to the south. Their son Linton and Catherine are married, but always sickly Linton dies. Hareton, Hindley's son, and the young widow became close. Increasingly isolated and alienated from daily life, Heathcliff experiences visions, and he longs for the death that will reunite him with Catherine.

CHAPTER VI. LITERATURE OF THE LAST DECADES OF THE 19TH CENTURY

A new stage of social development set in during the last two decades of the 18th century. Great Britain had become a highly developed capitalist country and a great colonial power. The merging of individual capital into monopolies began. With it Britain passed to a higher form of capitalism, known as imperialism.

A violent economic crisis that occurred in the early 80s deepened the social contradictions in the country. On the one hand, the workers' movement became stronger. The bourgeoisie looked for ways of imperialist expansion in search of new markets. The monopolies demanded still larger profits and plundered colonial peoples robbing them of raw material. In 1899 the Anglo-Boer war was unleashed by Britain against the Transvaal in South Africa. This was a shameful example of its colonial brutality. Puritanical hypocrisy now became the accepted form of behaviour in society. A complete degradation of moral and cultural values followed.

New literary trends Decadence reflected the political and economic situation in Britain.

DECA DENCE

The general crisis of the bourgeois ideology and culture was reflected in literature and fine arts by the trend that received the name of Decadence. This French word means "decline" (of art or of literature). M. Gorky, who made a thorough study of Decadence, considered it an unhealthy phenomenon. Decadence manifested itself in various trends that came into being at the end of the 19th century: symbolism, impressionism, imagism, futurism and others.

The most widely known manifestation of Decadence in the social life of bourgeois England was Aestheticism (a movement in search of beauty).

The roots of Aestheticism could be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century, to some of the romanticists. It was governed by the principle of “Art for Art’s Sake”, that is to say of pure Art.

Like neoromanticists, aestheticists protested against the severe and vulgar reality, against bourgeois pragmatism. However, while neoromanticists chose the world of adventure and cult of strong man, opposing these to the routine of life, aestheticists concentrated their art on pure form.

Aestheticists rejected both the social and the moral function of art. One of the leaders of the aesthetic movement put forward the thesis: “Art is indifferent to what is moral and what is immoral”. Aestheticists tried to lead the reader away from the problems of the day into the world of dreams and beauty.



OSCAR WILDE
(1854-1900)

Oscar Wilde, one of the greatest literary showmen of the English nineteenth century, was born in Dublin on October 16th, 1854. Oscar Wilde was the most outstanding representative of Decadence. He was the son of a well-known Irish physician. In his youth he was very much influenced by his mother, who was a highly educated woman. She wrote poetry and was an ardent Irish patriot. Her scornful attitude towards the hypocrisy of British bourgeois morals was probably responsible for the disrespect that characterized Wilde's approach towards bourgeois customs and habits.

Wilde distinguished himself both at Trinity College, Dublin, and at Magdalen College, Oxford. Once he had gone down, he plunged into popular journalism. In 1882 he made lecture tours throughout the United States, where he preached the gospel of "Art for Art's sake", and astonished his audience both by his long ambrosial locks and by his velvet breeches and his silk stockings.

Under the influence of his teacher, John Ruskin, Wilde joined the Aesthetic Movement and soon became the most sincere supporter of this movement.

After graduating from university, Wilde turned his attention to writing, travelling and lecturing and when the Aesthetic Movement became popular Oscar Wilde earned a reputation of being the leader of the movement and as apostle of beauty.

Wilde's youth coincided with the increasing crisis of bourgeois culture and the heyday of Aestheticism. The vulgarity of bourgeois life in general, the money-making fever of the bourgeoisie, its hypocritical approach to moral standards, all this made the young man turn to the movement of the day — aestheticism. Attracted by its search for beauty and its motto "Art for Art's Sake", Wilde became an avowed aesthete and was very soon considered the leading figure of the movement.

In 1884 Wilde married a pretty self-affected young woman, who duly bore him two sons. Their London house, which Wilde proceeded to equip with nicely chosen modern furnishings became a citadel of advanced contemporaries.

The next ten years saw the appearance of all his major works. They included fairy tales:

"The Happy Prince" (1888), *"A House of Pomegranates"* (1891); stories: *"Lord Arthur Savile's Crime"* (1891); the novel *"The Picture of Dorian Gray"* (1891) and several sparkling comedies. *"Lady Windermere's Fan"* (1892) brought him the fashionable acclaim. It was followed by *"A Woman of No Importance"* in 1893, *"An Ideal Husband"* in 1895 and during the same year, by his memorable comedy *"The Importance of Being Earnest"*. Except for his last comedy *"The Importance of Being Earnest"*, all of his plays, though led with glittering veins of wit, are common place with thought and structure.

Wilde also wrote poems, essays, reviews and political tracts, letters and occasional pieces of every subject such as history, drama, painting, etc. Some of these pieces were serious, some satirical, the variety of the themes reflected a personality that could never remain inactive.

At the height of his popularity and success, disaster overtook the dramatist. Accused of immorality he was condemned to two years' hard labour. He emerged from prison in 1897 a ruined and broken man. In 1898 he published his powerful poem: "*Ballad of Reading Gaol*" and he died in a Paris hotel in 1900.

Oscar Wilde's works reflected the emotional protest of an artist against social conditions in England at the end of the nineteenth century. Wilde understood that art can not flourish under capitalism and he came to a false conclusion that art is isolated from life, that art is the only thing that really exists and is worth living for. Life only mirrors art and beauty is the measure of all things, hence his desire to escape from all the horrors of reality into the realm of beauty.

Like most writers and poets, Wilde glorifies natural beauty but at the same time he is an admirer of artificial colours. In his works he compared blood to a ruby, the blue sky to a sapphire, man's beauty to that of silver, gold, ivory and precious stones.

Though Wilde claimed the theory of extreme individualism, he often contradicted himself. In his works, in his tales in particular, he glorified beauty, and not only the beauty of nature and artificial beauty but also the beauty of devoted love. He admired unselfishness, kindness and generosity ("The Nightingale And The Rose"). He despised egoism and greed ("The Selfish Giant"). The writer laid great stress on the good qualities of the poor, and the vices of those who had power and money. Thus in the tale "The

Devoted Friend”, Wilde achieved a very bitter satirical portrayal of a money-grabbing and hypocritical man of property. The Miller was Hans’ “devoted friend” in summer, when he took flowers and fruit from him. Little Hans was always happy to give them to his “devoted friend”. But when winter came the Miller would not give little Hans any flour, to help him during the hungry months. Wilde achieved real artistic heights in symbolic generalization in the story of little Hans, robbed in summer and sent to his death in winter by the rich Miller who called himself his “devoted friend”.

In his plays Wilde gave a realistic picture of contemporary society and exposed the vices of the bourgeois world. His only novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray” is considered his masterpiece.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

This is Wilde’s most important work: in it he conveys his main views on life, his aesthetical principle of “Art for Art’s Sake”.

Dorian Gray, a beautiful young boy, dreams of preserving for ever his youth and beauty. Basil Hallward, a fine artist, creates a portrait of the boy. The portrait has an extraordinary quality. It reflects all the changes in the appearance of the youth, brought about by time and the dissipation in which he indulges. At the same time the appearance of Dorian Gray himself remains untouched. He lives throughout his life as youthful and as beautiful as he was when the portrait was painted.

Basil Hallward, defending Dorian, whom he loves dearly, struggles with all his might against the destructive influence of Lord Henry, who has found the way to the boy’s soul. Lord Henry is a refined aesthete, whose only feelings are for beauty that shields him from the ugliness of everyday life. He considers that life must be lived in such a way as to bring a person

all the pleasure he desires. These two men, who represent Good and Evil, struggle for Dorian and finally Lord Henry wins him over, Dorian begins to live a life entirely outside the line of morals; he gives in to all his fancies, commits a number of crimes.

The picture, hidden away by Dorian in a small room that he keeps locked, reflects the terrible degradation of a man who stops at nothing in pursuit of pleasure. However, there comes a moment when this terrible picture causes misgivings in Dorian's soul. He wants it also to regain its initial youth and beauty; he wants to efface all signs of degradation from the portrait that has turned out to be his soul. Finally, he attacks the portrait with a knife.

When people enter the room they see the portrait of a lovely youth and a horrible old man, wrinkled and disgusting in appearance, lying dead on the floor with a knife in his heart.

Thus Wilde discloses his idea of Art being superior to life, it was in the work of art that the repulsive nature of the man was seen, while those who saw him alive noticed no change in his appearance.

Here is the end of the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which the author describes the death of his main character.

...There was only one bit of evidence left against him. The picture itself — that was evidence. He would destroy it. Why had he kept it so long? Once it had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it.

He looked round, and saw the knife that had stabbed Basil Hallward. He had cleaned it many times, till there was no stain left upon it. It was bright, and glistened. As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all (hat meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul life, and without its hideous warnings he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it.

There was a cry heard, and a crash. The cry was so horrible in its agony that the frightened servants woke, and crept out of their rooms. Two gentlemen, who were passing in the Square below, stopped and looked up at the great house. They walked on till they met a policeman, and brought him back. The man rang the bell several times, but there was no answer. Except for a light in one of the top windows, the house was all dark. Alter a time, he went away, and stood in an adjoining portico and watched.

'Whose house it that, constable?' asked the eider of the two gentlemen.

"Mr. Dorian Gray's, sir", answered the policeman.

They looked at each other, as they walked away, and sneered.

Inside, in the servants' part of the house, the half-clad domestics were talking in low whispers to each other. Old Mrs. Leaf was crying, and wringing her hands. Francis was as pale as death.

After about a quarter of an hour, he got the coachman and one of the footmen and crept upstairs. They knocked, but there was no reply. They called out. Everything was still. Finally, after vainly trying to force the door, they got on the roof, and dropped down onto the balcony. The windows yielded easily: their bolts were old.

When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him, in all the wonder of his exquisite youth and beauty. Lying on (he floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage, It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was...

Notwithstanding all the complicated contradictions of Oscar Wilde's art there are many positive sides of his talent.

His great gift of writer lies in his ability to express the contradictions of life in accurate paradoxes. that is, in affirming things that seem absurd at first sight. This, as well as Wilde's outstanding knowledge of language and a gift for dialogue, make his works sparkle with wit.

The peculiar charm of his style and language, even in his most decadent work, is due to the brilliant form he gives to his thoughts. His masterly approach to the choice of words, the classic simplicity of his sentences, all this has placed him among the great writers of his country.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What new trends arose in English literature at the end of the 19th century and what caused their appearance?
2. What brought about the trend known as Decadence in literature? What was one of the English manifestations of this trend?
3. In what work of Oscar Wilde does the reader find the most defined traditions of critical realism?
4. What views on life and art does Wilde express in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
5. What can be said of Wilde's style and language?

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APPENDIX I

FURTHER READING:
OTHER AUTHORS OF ENGLISH AMERICAN LITERATURE &
SHORT STORIES BY OSCAR WILDE

OTHER AUTHORS OF ENGLISH AMERICAN LITERATURE



O'HENRY
(William Sydney Porter)
(1862-1910)

Life and works

William Sydney Porter (O'Henry) was born September 11, 1862, near Greensboro, North Carolina. At twenty, he moved to Texas. Jailed in 1896 for bank embezzlement, he served for three years and three months of his five-year sentence. He died in New York city on June 5, 1910. after a decade during which he wrote the several hundred stories that have made his reputation.

The most famous short story writer in America history grew up in a shattered world-the pattern that would convulse, bedevil, and eventually end his short life was already emerging. An elusive and mysterious figure, he exaggerated and fabricated so much about his life that contradictions abound. One can still read biographical articles that state that he moved to Texas because he had tuberculosis and that he eventually died of it, though there's no evidence for the first claim, and his death came from cirrhosis of the liver and diabetes, the legacy of nine years of drinking two bottles of whiskey a day.

Will Porter's mother died, before he could remember her, at the devastating end of the Civil War and a whole Southern way of life. Previously a successful physician, his father withdrew to ' his barn with his perpetual motion machines and bottle, oftentimes sleeping as much as one half of the time. Young Will was well educated by his forceful aunt, 'Miss Lina', who ran a private primary school. Though he seemed to have had no other formal education, he became to have the vast knowledge of English literature, and

he probably employed a larger vocabulary than any other American writer; he picked up Spanish, French, and German somewhere along the way. From seventeen to twenty, Will worked as a pharmacist in his uncle's drug store, where as his stories gradually reveal, he began his study of human foibles and regional speech. While he read incessantly, he had also become a charming and dreamy young man, one who easily called forth favors, loans, and protection from friends- and forgiveness when he failed to act responsibly.

After two years on a Texas ranch, as a house guest of the Richard Hall family, W'II moved on in 1884 to the Joseph Harrell family in Austin, where he lived two years, reading writing sketches, and developing his considerable talent as a cartoonist. On

July 1, 1887, he eloped with nineteen year-old Athol Estes, who had tuberculosis, marrying against her parents' will. He now worked briefly as a bookkeeper and then, through the favour of Richard Hall, who headed the office, as a draftsman in the Texas Land Office. His first son died in 1888. Margaret was born the next year, but Athol's health suffered and she did not ever fully recovered.

In 1891 Will became the teller at the First National Bank of Austin, and in 1894 wrote and drew and published a weekly humour magazine, *The Rolling Stone*, which survived a year, losing some of his and friends' money, and quite probably that of First National Bank as well. In any case, shortages appeared in his accounts in December, when he had to resign; indictment followed in July 1895. Again friends helped, and the Grand Jury no-billed him. He became a feature writer for the *Houston post*, turning out successful sketches and short stories for six months until bank examiners revived the charge against him. He was arrested in February, 1896, released on his friends bonds and borrowed money for his defence-which he then used to flee to New Orlean and finally Honduras, where he impractically hoped Athol and Margaret might join him. After five months he received a package from Athol into which a friend had secretly slipped a note reading, "Athol packed this with temperature 105. Will, come home, which he did. He was permitted to remain free until Athol's death few months later, His most famous story, "The Gift of the Magi", reflected some of the poignancy of their relationship.

Though he now had a series of stories accepted by McClure's magazine and continued to write, Will retreated from his friends and further into himself, finding it too painful to discuss details of his case with his lawyer. In April of 1898, he became number

30664 in the Federal Penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio. A prison doctor later wrote he had “never known a man so deeply humiliated by prison”. Margaret was not told where he was, and Will wrote her high-hearted letters about his business activities in the Northeast. For the rest of his life, he was to do all he could to conceal and deny his prison life. Working as a night druggist in the prison hospital, he wrote and published the first fourteen O’Henry stories: “Porter entered prison an amateur, but he came out three years later as O’Henry, the professional literary artist.” It is impossible to imagine a more arduous apprenticeship.

Released in 1901, he came to New York in 1902 and thereafter wrote at a furious pace, mostly for newspapers and new, popular magazines like Everybody’s, McClure’s, and the Cosmopolitan. By December 1903, the New York World had put him on a salary as a writer of stories—once a week—for its Sunday edition and he proceeded to write 113 stories in about 30 months. His first collection was *Cabbages and Kings* (1904). Many others followed, including *The Four Million* (1906), *The Trimmed Lamb* (1907), *Heart of the West* (1907), *The Voice of the City* (1908), *Roads of Destiny* (1909), *Options* (1909). Other volumes appeared posthumously, including, in 1936, a volume of sketches culled from the files of the *Houston Post*.

Henry wrote short shorts, stories around 5,000 words. He also wrote “sketches” of much the same length, meaning a brief, atmospheric picture of a compelling, and revealing human scene, capped with some ironic comments. But O’Henry’s reputation ultimately has to rest on the short shorts, which unlike the sketch, has in miniature the beginning, middle, and intricately prepared powerfully surprising climax of long works.

No other authors had so sure a command of the regional speech and realities of so many ordinary human beings. No one celebrated more their right to triumph and tragedy. The book that first won him clear popular and critical acclaim for his tales of New Yorkers, *The Four Million*, was titled so in mocking contrast to the then famous list of New York’s most prestigious families, *The 400*. Every bit of ill-spent life—Honduras, New Orleans, Texas, New York City, all the way back to his uncle’s drug store—fed the stories. When Porter was rushed dying to New York City Policlinic a decade later, he told the attendant who asked for his name, ‘Call me Dennis. My name will be Dennis in the

morning.” The physician who opened him said he had the most enlarged and congested heart he had never seen.

O'Henry

THE LAST LEAF

In a little district west of Washington Square the streets have run crazy and broken themselves into small strips called 'places'. These 'places' make strange angles and curves. One street crosses itself a time or two. An artist once discovered a valuable possibility in this street. Suppose a collector with a bill for paints, paper and canvas should, in traversing this route, suddenly meet himself coming back, without a cent having been paid on account!

So, to quaint old Greenwich Village the art people soon came prowling, hunting for north windows and eighteenth century gables and Dutch attics and low rents. Then they imported some pewter mugs and a chafing dish or two from Six Avenue, and became a 'colony'.

At the top of a squatty, three-story brick Sue and Johnsy had their studio. 'Johnsy' was familiar for Joanna. One was from Maine, the other from California, They had met at the table d'hote of an Eighth Street 'Delmonico's, and found their tastes in art, chicory salad and bishop sleeves so congenial that the joint studio resulted.

That was in May. In November a cold, unseen stranger, whom the doctors called Pneumonia, stalked about the colony, touching one here and there with his icy finger. Over on the East Side this ravager strode boldly, smiting his victims by scores, but his feet trod slowly through the maze of the narrow and mossgrown 'places'.

Mr. Pneumonia was not what you would call a chivalric gentleman. A mite of a little woman with blood thinned by Californian zephyrs was hardly fair game for the red-fisted, short breasted old daffer. But Johnsy he smote; and she lay scarcely moving, on her painted iron bedstead, looking through the small Dutch window-panes at the blank side of the next brick house. Morning the busy doctor invited Sue into the hallway with a shaggy, grey eyebrow.

“She had one chance in — let us say, ten,” he said as he shook down the mercury in his clinical thermometer. “And that chance is for her to want to live. This way people have of lining- up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly. Your little lady has made up her mind that she’s not going to get well. Has she anything on her mind?”

“She- she wanted to paint the Bay of Naples some day,” said Sue,

“Paint?- bosh! Has she anything on her mind worth thinking about twice?- a man for instance?”

“A man?” said Sue, with a jews-harp twang in her voice. “Is a man worth — but no, doctor; there is nothing of the kind.”

“Well, it is the weakness, then,” said the doctor. “I will do all that science, so far as it may filter through my efforts, can accomplish. But whenever my patient begins to count the carriages in her funeral procession I subtract 50 percent from the curative power of medicines. If you will get her to ask one question about the new winter styles in cloak sleeves I will promise you a one-in five chance for her, instead of one in ten.”

After the doctor had gone, Sue went into the workroom and cried a Japanese napkin to a pulp. Then she swaggered into Johnsy’s room with her drawing -board, whistling ragtime. Johnsy lay, scarcely making a ripple under the bedclothes, with her face toward the window. Sue stopped whistling, thinking she was asleep.

She arranged her board and began a pen-and-ink drawing to illustrate a magazine story. Young artists must pave their way to Art by drawing pictures for magazine stories that young authors write to pave their way to Literature.

As Sue was sketching a pair of elegant horseshow riding trousers and a monocle on the figure of the hero, an Idaho cowboy, she heard a low sound, several times repeated. She went quickly to the bedside. Johnsy’s eyes were open wide. She was looking out the window and counting— counting backward.

“Twelve,” she said, and a little later, “eleven”, and then “ten”, and “nine”; and then “eight” and “seven”, almost together.

Sue looked solicitously out the window. What was there to count? There was only a bare, dreary yard to be seen, and the blank side of the brick house twenty feet away an old, old ivy vine, gnarled and decayed at the roots, climbed half- way up the brick wall.

The cold breath of autumn had stricken its leaves from the vine until its skeleton branches clung, almost bare, to the crumbling bricks.

“What is it, dear?” asked Sue.

“Six,” said Johnsy, in a almost a whisper. “They’re falling faster now. Three days ago there were almost a hundred. It made my mind ache to count them. But now it’s -eas- There goes another one . There are only five left now.”

“Five what, dear? Tell your Sudie.”

“Leaves. On the ivy vine. When the the last one falls I must go too. I’ve known that for three days. Didn’t the doctor tell you?”

“Oh, I never heard of such nonsense,” complained Sue, with magnificent scorn. “What have old ivy leaves to do with your getting well? And you used to love that vine so, you naughty girl. Don’t be a goosey. Why, the doctor told me this morning that your chances for getting well real soon were — let’s see exactly what he said — he said the chances were ten to one! Why, that’s almost as good a chance as we have in New York when we ride on the street — cars or walk past a new building. Try to take some broth now, and let Sudie go back to her drawing, so she can sell the editor man with it, and buy port wine for her sick child, and pork chops for her greedy self.”

“You needn’t get any more wine,” said Johnsy, keeping her eyes fixed out the window.

“There goes another. No, I don’t want any broth. That leaves just four. I want to see the last one fall before it gets dark. Then I’ll go too.”

“Johnsy, dear,” said Sue, bending over her, ”will you promise me to keep your eyes closed, and not look out of the window until I am done working? I must hand those drawings in by tomorrow. I need the light or I would draw the shade down.”

“Couldn’t you draw in the other room?” asked Johnsy coldly.

“I’d rather be here by you, ”said Sue. “Besides, I don’t want you to keep looking at those silly ivy leaves.”

“Tell me as soon as you have finished,” said Johnsy, closing her eyes, and lying white and still as a fallen statue, “because I want to see the last one fall. I’m tired of waiting. I’m tired of thinking.. I want to turn loose my hold on everything, and go sailing down, down, just like one of those poor, tired leaves.”

“Try to sleep,” said Sue. “I must call Behrman up to be my model for the old hermit miner. I’ll not be gone a minute. Don’t try to move till I come back.”

Old Behrman was a painter who lived on the ground floor beneath them. He was passing sixty and had a Michael Angelo’s Moses beard curling down from the head of a satyr along the body of an imp. Behrman was an failure in art. Forty years he had wielded the brush without getting near enough to touch the hem of his Mistress’s robe. He had been always about to paint a masterpiece, but had never yet begun it. For several years he had painted nothing except now and then a daub in the line of commerce or advertising. He earned a little by serving as a model to those young artist in the colony who could not pay the price of a professional. He drank gin to excess, and still talked of his coming masterpiece. For the rest he was a fierce little old man, who scoffed terribly at softness in anyone, and who regarded himself as special mastiff-in-waiting to protect the two young artists in the studio above.

Sue found Behrman smelling strongly of juniper berries in his dimly-lighted den below.. In one corner was a blank canvas on an easel that had been waiting there for twenty-five years to receive the first line of the masterpiece. She told him of Johnsy’s fancy, and how she feared she would, indeed, light and fragile as a leaf herself, float away when her slight hold upon the world grew weaker.

Old Behrman, with his red eyes plainly streaming, shouted his contempt and derision for such idiotic imaginings.

“Vass!” he cried. “Is dere people in de world mit der foolishness to die because leafs dey drop off from a confounded vine? I had not heard of such a thing. No, I will not bose as a model for your fool hermit- dunderhead. Vy do you allow dot silly pusiness to come in der pram of her? Ach, dot poor little Miss Yohnsy.”

“She is very ill and weak,” said Sue, “and the fever has left her mind morbid and full of strange fantacies. Very well, Mr. Behrman, if you do not care to pose for me, you needn’t. But i think you are a horid old — old flibberti — gibbet.”

“You are just like a woman!” yelled Behrman. “Who said I will not bose? Go on. I come mit you. For half an hour I hat peen trying to say dot I am ready to bose. Gott! dis is not any blace in which one so goot as Miss Yohnsy shall lie sick. Some day I will baint a masterpiece, and we shall all go away. Gott! yes.”

Johnsy was sleeping when they went upstairs. Sue pulled the shade down to the window-sill and motioned Behrman into the other room. In there they peered out the window fearfully at the ivy vine. Then they looked at each other for a moment without speaking. A persistent, cold rain was falling, mingled with snow. Behrman, in his old blue shirt, took his seat as the hermit-miner on an upturned kettle for a rock.

When Sue awoke from an hour's sleep the next morning she found Johnsy with dull, wide-open eyes staring at the drawn green shade,

“Pull it up! I want to see,” she ordered, in a whisper.

Wearily Sue obeyed.

But, Lo! after the beating rain and fierce gusts of wind that had endured through the livelong night, there yet stood out against the brick wall one ivy leaf. It was the last on the vine. Still dark green near its stem, but with its serrated edges tinted with the yellow of dissolution and decay, it hung bravely from a branch some twenty feet above the ground.

“It is the last one,” said Johnsy. “I thought it would surely fall during the night. I heard the wind, It will fall to-day, and I shall die at the same time.”

“Dear, dear!” said Sue, leaning her worn face down to the pillow; “think of me, if you won't think of yourself. What would I do?”

But Johnsy did not answer. The loneliest thing in all the world is a soul when it is making ready to go on its mysterious, far journey. The fancy seemed to possess her more strongly as one by one the ties that bound her to friendship and to earth were loosed.

The day wore away, and even through the twilight they could see the lone ivy leaf clinging to its stem against the wall. And then, with the coming of the night the north wind was again loosed, while the rain still beat against the windows and pattered down from the low Dutch eaves,

When it was light enough Johnsy, the merciless, commanded that the shade be raised.

The ivy leaf was still there.

Johnsy lay for a long time looking at it. And then she called to Sue, who was stirring her chicken broth over the gas stove.

“I’ve been a bad girl, Sudie,” said Johnsy. “Something has made that last leaf stay to show me how wicked I was. It is a sin to want to die. You may bring me a little broth now, and some milk with a little port in it, and -; bring me and hand mirror first; and then pack some pillows about me, and I will sit up and watch you cook.”

An hour later she said:

“Sudie, some day I hope to paint the Bay of Napples.”

The doctor came in the afternoon, and Sue had an excuse to go into the hallway as heie.

“Even chances,” said the doctor, taking Sue’s thin, shaking hand in h. ‘With good nursing you’ll win. And now I must see another case I have downstairs. Benman, his name is — some kind of an artist, I believe. Pneumonia, too. He is old, weak man, and the attack is acute. There is no hope for him; but he goes to the hospital to-day to be made more comfortable.”

The next day the doctor said to Sue: “She’s out of danger. You’ve won. Nutrition and care now- that’s all.”

And that afternoon Sue came to the bed where Johnsy lay, contentedly knitting a very blue and very useless woolen shoulder scarf, and put one arm around her, pillows and all.

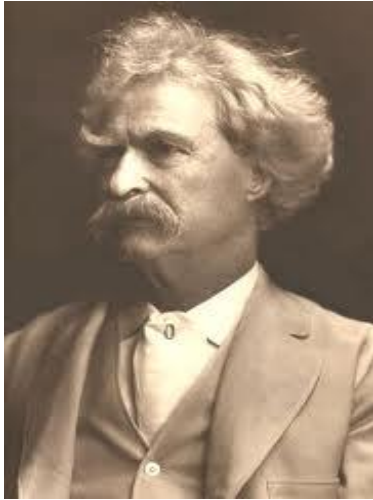
“I have something to tell you, white mouse,” she said. “Mr. Behrman died of pneumonia today in hospital. He was UI only two days, The janitor found him on the morning of the first day in his room downstairs helpless with pain. His shoes and clothing were wet through and icy cold. They couldn’t imagine where he had been on such a dreadful night. And then they found a lantern, still lighted, and a ladder that had been dragged from its place, and some scattered brushes, and a palette with green and yellow colours mixed on it, and - look out the window, dear, at the ivy leaf on the wall.

Didn’t you wonder why it never fluttered or moved when the wind blew? Ah, darling, it’s Behrman’s masterpiece — he painted it there the night that the last leaf fell.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. Why, do you think, Greenwich village is a fashionable quarter? What sort of people resided there? Why?

2. What did the doctor mean by saying: 'This way people have of lining- up on the side of the undertaker makes the entire pharmacopoeia look silly.'? What was Johnsy's problem?
3. What was Johnsy counting? Why did she do that?
4. What made Johnsy change her mind and want to live again?
5. What do you think of Behrman and Sue, and of what they did for their friend Johnsy?



MARK TWAIN
(Samuel Langhorn Clemens'
(1853—1910)

Samuel Langhorn Clements took his pen name, "Mark Twain", from the signal for safe water (two fathoms-3,7 metres) he heard as boy on riverboats on the Mississippi River, which flowed past his boyhood home, Hanibal, Missouri. M.Twain's masterpieces. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885), and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer(1876) were based on his boyhood experiences and Hanibal settings. and he produced, in the eyes of many later writers, the first truly American literature by creating characters who speak an American vernacular, a mix of the English spoken by various white classes, African-American dialects spoken by blacks and many whites, the language of pretentious or pious easterners and elite, and the language of a frontier spoken by roughnecks, children, Indians and slaves. Mark Twain also brought all of American experience, in all its contradictions and complexity, into satirical and humorous novels, essays, travel narratives and autobiographical forms.

After the death of his father when Twain was 11, his formal education ended. He was apprenticed to a printer, and the printshop and newspaper office provided him with an education and literature training, as it had done for many authors since the day of Benjamin Franklin. His newspaper work brought him, at age of 18, to Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, and the letters he published about these travels commenced his career as a travel writer with a keen eye for American life. These were exciting and trouble years in American history, with a burgeoning boom and burst economy, creating an American dream of individual opportunity for success and some events as new waves of immigrants, westward expansion, an imperialistic conquest of Mexico in 1848, the

California gold rush in 1849, and of course the corrosive and decisive facts of slavery challenged ingenuity was probed in the fantasy "*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*" (1889). For the rest of his career, Mark Twain would periodically revisit the themes of the spiritual emptiness of American economic life, and he created bitter yet satiric commentaries on American imperialism and its 1889 war of conquest. "*Following the Equator?*" (1897) presenting Twain's critique of American imperialism, and his "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (1901) and "*A War Prayer*" (1905) are dark ruminations on the corruption of American innocence, Mark Twain turned to domestic issues of the 1890s in "*Pudd'n head Wilson*" (1894), especially the scientific racism used to justify the segregation of African Americans into second —class citizenship enforced by lynching and economic exploitation. Some of the later works, written in the voice of Satan, were withheld by Twain from publishing, since they cut so hard against his public image as a member of genteel society, a businessman and a humorist. Tragedies in Twain's life, including the death of his daughter and the failure of his business enterprises contributed to this growing scepticism and determinism. Despite these undercurrents he is best remembered for those which balance American optimism and innocence with a realistic description of darker facets of American life. As a writer Mark Twain's genius was in capturing the American vernacular, and to do so, he returned to the scenes of his youth memories which seemed to liberate his imagination to provide a mirror of antebellum society in which to reflect the face of America in the 1780s and 1880s.

"*Tom Sawyer*" was written as a "boy book" in response to the success of Thomas Bailey Aldrich's "*The Story of a Bad Boy*" (1869), but it also appeal to adult readers for its idyllic recollections of antebellum life set against the violence and hypocrisy of adults. We see Tom Sawyer, Huck Finn, Becky Thatcher and other children play out their romantic fantasies based on European novels; game of treasure hunting which turns deadly real when they witness a murder and overhear plots of robbery and murder. In this book, children's innocence triumphs and is rewarded with gold, even as Tom Sawyer learns how to manipulate society to his advantage by playing the role of the innocent, respectable, hardworking American boy we see in the chapters on his fence painting and his first love. Tom Sawyer introduces Huck Finn, explores the racism which betrays African-Americans at the end of the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877). Huck runs

away from his abusive, alcoholic and fiercely anti-government father, traveling down the Mississippi on a raft. He is joined by Jim, who is running away from his owner. Their freedom on the raft, even as they drift ever deeper into the slave states, is punctuated by Huck's struggle with his racist attitudes which threaten to blind him to Jim's humanity, and by contact with people along the river, a veritable cross-section of American life. It has been suggested that Huck's language, and thus Twain's style, was based on black speech, and despite the problematic presentation of Jim, black writers as well as white continue to find inspiration in this example of the creation of a truly American interracial literary discourse.

Mark Twain was born and died in the years in which Halley's comet appeared, a seeming omen to Twain and to his readers of the ways in which his life and writings span an era of American life. Twain traveled from a frontier society in the West to an urbanized and industrialized life, even as America emerged from an agricultural past, through the cauldron of the Civil war, and into an industrial and imperialist century. In his works, Americans read their past, and perhaps, the darkness and the light of their future.

Introduction to "Tom Sawyer" and Huckleberry Finn"

The two books "*Tom Sawyer*" and "*Huckleberry Finn*" combine reflections of Hanibal in Twain's youth, the spell of a great river, and the intangible quality of an art that relies on simplicity for its greatest effect. On one level, the nostalgic account of childhood, on another, the social and moral record and judgment of an epoch in American history, the two books have attained the position of classic in the world literature.

"*Tom Sawyer*" is the story of a boy's adventures in a small town on the banks of the Mississippi over a hundred years ago. Tom, the cheerful, adventurous character of the novel, is a boy of typical boyishness, self-indulgent, generous, given to romantic dreaming, mischievous and kind. He feeds on detective and adventurous stories and strives to translate what he reads into the real world around him.



EARNEST HEMINGWAY
(1899-1961)

Ernest Hemingway was born in Oak park, a small town in the state of Illinois. As a boy he was often taken on frequent hunting and fishing trip by his father to Michigan, the locale of many of his stories, and where he soon got acquainted with the life of the Indians and such virtues as courage and endurance, which were later revealed in his fiction.

After high school Hemingway worked as a newspaper reporter and then joined a volunteer ambulance unit to take part in World War I. After the war he came home a hero. He lived for several years in Paris after that. He joined a group of expatriated American writers who considered themselves a lost generation. In Paris he published *'Three Stories and ten Poems'* (1923) and *'In Our Time'* (1924) in which his own experiences of life are revealed, and which brought him fame immediately. In 1926, the year he left Paris, he published *'The Sun Also Rises'* that reflects the bitter feelings and the disillusionment of the so-called lost generation and their escape in violent diversions they could think of. The year 1928 was marked by the publishing of his famous novel

'A Farewell to Arms' that stresses the necessity to attain moral courage to live and face the social chaos. From 1928 to 1938 the writer lived in Florida. He travelled a lot to France and Spain. His two volumes of short stories were produced during this period:

'Men Without Woman' (1927) and *'Winner Take Nothing'* (1933), *'Death in the Afternoon'* (1932) and *'Green Hills of Africa'* (1935) that respectively describe bullfighting in Spain and big game fighting in Africa. Belong also to the most prominent

short stories of his are *'The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber'* (1936) and *The Snow of Kilimanjaro'* (1936)

Hemingway's social novel *'To Have and Have Not'* (1937) illustrates the antagonism between the rich and the poor. *'The Fifth Column'* (1937) was written in the same line, that denounces the fascist regime in Spain. In 1940, he completed the novel *'For whom the Bell Tolls'*. It tells the story of a young American teacher who thinks it his duty to fight against the fascist regime in Spain and become a friend of the Spanish partisans in the devotion of his own life to the cause of freedom.

During World War II he was a war correspondent in the East, and then in 1942-1944, he helped to maintain the antisubmarine cordon in American and Cuban waters.

In the 40s and 50s, Hemingway published little. In 1950 came his novel *'Across the River and into the trees'* related to World War. His tale *'The Old Man and the Sea'* was finished in 1952. For this story he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1953. This is the story of an old Cuban fisherman, Santiago. He lives in a small hut by the seaside on the outskirts of La Havana. He is an old poor man, skin and bone. After a long day fishing, he can't catch a single fish. The other fishermen look at him, tease him and laugh at him.

However, he does not lose his heart, but he is firm in his belief that one day he will have a big catch, big enough to match his former fame when he was still young. And that day comes. He is at sea when it is still very early and waits till midday when he manages to catch a big fish. It is a huge marline. The fish is so strong that it takes him three days to struggle with it. He manages to kill it at last. The fish is longer than his skiff and is about seven tons. He feels very pleased with himself. But as soon as he is about to relax after very hard days, sharks sense the smell of blood and begin to attack the fish. He exhausts himself fighting with the sharks, he kills many of them and saves the fish, but now only a bare skeleton. He is tired but feels ever better. He does not consider himself defeated. He says: *'Man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated.'* The tale is a hymn to human courage and endurance.

Hemingway is known to have left some works unfinished. Among them are *'Dangerous Summer'* (1960) and *'Islands in the Stream'* in 1954 Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. In his speech of acceptance read by the American ambassador in Stockholm, Hemingway summed his philosophy outlook. He wrote:

‘...Things may not be immediately discernible in what a man writes, and in this he is sometimes fortunate; but eventually they are quite clear and by these and the degree of alchemy that he possesses he will endure or be forgotten.’

Hemingway is a democrat and humanist. He devoted his whole life to the struggle against fascism and wars. Seeing the horrors and sufferings caused by the wars to the common people, he wrote in his *‘Man at War’*, a collection of war stories, (1942), that it (World War I) had been ‘the most colossal, murderous, mismanaged butchery that has ever taken on Earth’. He took part in World War I, the Spanish Civil War and World War II in order to see the real nature of wars. He believed that all those who “stand to profit by war and who help to provoke should be shot on the first day it starts...” Hemingway was one of the first to warn against the fatal danger of fascism. For him fascism means war first of all. He said: “There is only one form of government that can not produce good writers, and that system is fascism. For fascism is a lie told by bullies. A writer who will not lie cannot live and work under fascism.”

Hemingway considered arts and literature as having an important role in the world. He highly appreciated the role of the writers. In comparing a writer to a well he stressed the knowledge, the experience, the talent, the conscience and the discipline of the writer. He said that all these taken together were to “prevent faking”. As for the importance of truth in fiction he wrote, “A writer’s problem does not change. He himself changes and the world he lives in changes but his problems remain the same. It is always how to write truly and, having found what is true, to project it in such a way that it becomes a part of the experience of the person who reads it’, and ‘a writer’s job is to tell the truth.”

Hemingway’s style of writing is striking. His sentences are short, his words are simple. Yet they are often filled with emotion. A careful reading can show us furthermore that he is a master of the pause. That is, if we look closely, we see how the action of his stories continues during the silences, during the time his characters say nothing. This action is often full of meaning. There are times when the most powerful effect comes from restraint. Such times occur in Hemingway’s fiction. He perfected the art of conveying emotions with few words... Hemingway is a classicist in his restraint and understatement. He believes that the strongest effect comes with an economy of means.

The language of Hemingway's work is bare simplicity: it is in keeping with the characters he wanted to portray. It is surprising how he reveals the inner world of his personages in short dialogues and colloquial phrases. Plain words in simple declarative sentences bring out the sensations of the central characters and at the same time make the reader participate in the events of the story.

Hemingway's style of writing follows the 'theory of an iceberg' which means that the writer may omit things that he knows what he is writing about, and that if he writes truly the reader will have a feeling of those things as strongly as the writer has tasted them. "The dignity of the movement of an iceberg is due to only one eighth of it being above the water", he wrote.

A Farewell to Arms

(1929)

'A Farewell to Arms' is an anti-war novel in which Hemingway wanted to make his reader see war as a merciless massacre of men and women and the senseless destruction of the values created. It is the story of an American lieutenant, Frederic Henry, who serves in an Italian ambulance corps during World War I. The novel falls into five parts, each describes a different phase in Henry's adventures. He falls in love with Catherine Barkley, a volunteer nurse from Great Britain. When he is wounded she nurses him at the hospital. His convalescence is over, he returns to the front and finds himself in a disorganised retreat. He deserts during the mass retreat, rejoining the girl he loves, and they escape to Switzerland in a small boat over the lake Maggiore. Their idyll comes to an end when she dies in child-birth.

The plot is revealed in the famous concise Hemingway style where many detailed descriptions of characters are omitted leaving room for full description of events. The reader is expected to follow the events carefully and imagine the details himself. Each personage is sketched with colorful strokes using the least number of words as possible. It is the dialogues that disclose the characters in full so that they can be seen eventually in retrospect. *'A Farewell to Arms'* is often referred to by literary critics as *'a masterpiece of imaginative omissions'*

The story is told in the first person, by Frederic Henry, the hero of the novel, The narration is the mixture of feelings both sweet and bitter, the bitter feeling caused by the war and the sweet feeling brought about by his love for the woman who bears his child.

Frederic Henry is a former student of architecture. He has dropped his studies and volunteered as an ambulance driver. Frederic Henry is depicted here as one of the many who were made to believe when the war broke out that their participation in the war was patriotism and that their sacrifice was not in vain. Soon, however, sufferings and misfortunes sobered the young generation. They came to realize the aimlessness and the senselessness of their fighting and questioned themselves what and whose interest they were fighting for. Henry, too, becomes to be aware of the terrible difference between words and deeds.

Catherine Barkley, the girl Henry loves, goes to the front with her fiancée. She nurses the silly idea that one day the boy might come to the hospital where she works with a sabre cut, or a bandage round his head, or shot through the shoulder. But he never does. he is killed. She says to Henry, "He didn't have the sabre cut. They blew him all to bits." The couple is called by Hemingway his Romeo and Juliet. They are happy. But in the sea of troubles they are alone and their happiness can not last long.

A certain mood felt in the novel which later becomes Hemingway's chief lyric motif: that is a moral advantage in defeat. Man may be trampled by war, man may die, but the proud spirit of man can not be conquered. Hemingway's heroes do not panic in the face of disaster.

'A Farewell to Arms' is still read and admired by many generations to come.

Short stories by Oscar Wilde

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE ROSE

“She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses,” cried the young Student, “but in all my garden there is no red rose.”

From her nest in the hollow oak tree the Nightingale heard him, and she looked out through the leaves and wondered.

“No red rose in all my garden!” he cried, and his beautiful eyes filled with tears. “Ah, on what little things does happiness depend! I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secret of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a red rose is my life made wretched.”

“Here at last is a true lover,” said the Nightingale. “Night after night have I sung of him though I knew him not: night after night have I told his story to the stars and now I see him. His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are red as the rose of his desire, but passion has made his face like pale ivory and sorrow has set her seal upon his brow.”

“The Prince gives a ball tomorrow night,” murmured the young Student, “and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder and her hand will be clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break.”

“Here, indeed, is the true lover,” said the Nightingale. “What I sing of, he suffers: what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the market place. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold.”

“The musicians will sit in their gallery,” said the young Student, “and play upon their stringed instruments, and my love will dance to the sound of the harp and the violin. She will dance so lightly that her feet will not touch the floor, and courtiers in their gay dresses will throng round her. But with me she will not dance, for I have no red rose to

give her”; and he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.

“Why is he weeping?” asked a little Green Lizard, as he ran past him with his tail in the air. “Why, indeed?” said a Butterfly, who was fluttering about after a sunbeam.

“Why, indeed?” whispered a Daisy to his neighbour, in a soft, low voice.

“He is weeping for a red rose,” said the Nightingale.

“For a red rose?” they cried; “how very ridiculous!” and the little Lizard, who was something of a cynic, laughed outright.

But the Nightingale understood the secret of the student’s sorrow, and she sat silent in the oak-tree, and thought about the mystery of Love.

Suddenly she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She passed through the grove like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed across the garden.

In the centre of the grass-plot was standing a beautiful rose-tree, and when she saw it, she flew over to it, and lit upon a spray.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.” But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are white,” it answered; “as white as the foam of the sea, and whiter than the snow on the mountain. But go to my brother who grows round the old sun-dial, and perhaps he will give you what you want.”

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing round the old sun-dial.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.” But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are yellow,” it answered; “as yellow as the hair of the mermaiden who sits upon an amber throne, and yellower than the daffodil that blooms in the meadow before the mower comes with his scythe. But go to my brother who grows beneath the Student’s window, and perhaps he will give you what you want.”

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing beneath the Student’s window.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.” But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are red,” it answered; “as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year.”

“One red rose is all I want,” cried the Nightingale, “only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?”

“There is a way,” answered the Tree; “but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you.”

“Tell it to me,” said the Nightingale, “I am not afraid.”

“If you want a red rose,” said the Tree, “you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart’s blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your lifeblood must flow into my veins, and become mine.”

“Death is a great price to pay for a red rose,” cried the Nightingale, “and Life is very dear to all. It is pleasant to sit in the green wood, and to watch the Sun in his chariot of gold, and the Moon in her chariot of pearl. Sweet is the scent of the hawthorn, and sweet are the bluebells that hide in the valley, and the heather that blooms on the hill. Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?”

So she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove.

The young Student was still lying on the grass, where she had left him, and the tears were not yet dry in his beautiful eyes.

“Be happy,” cried the Nightingale, “be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own heart’s blood. All that I ask of you in return is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though he is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty. Flame-coloured are his wings, and coloured like flame is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like frankincense.”

The student looked up from the grass, and listened, but he could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he only knew the things that are written down in books.

But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he was very fond of the little Nightingale who had built her nest in his branches.

“Sing me one last song,” he whispered; “I shall feel lonely when you are gone.”

So the Nightingale sang to the Oak-tree, and her voice was like water bubbling from a silver jar.

When she had finished her song, the Student got up, and pulled a notebook and a lead pencil out of his pocket.

“She has form,” he said to himself, as he walked away through the grove - “that can not be denied to her; but has she got feeling? I am afraid not. In fact, she is like most artists; she is all style without any sincerity. She would not sacrifice herself for others. She thinks merely of music, and everybody knows that the arts are selfish. Still, it must be admitted that she had some beautiful notes in her voice. What a pity it is that they do not mean anything, or do any practical good!” And he went into his room, and lay down on his little pallet-bed, and began to think of his love; and, after a time, he fell asleep.

And when the moon shone in the heavens the Nightingale flew to the Rose-tree, and set her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened. All night long she sang, and the thorn went deeper and deeper into her breast, and her lifeblood ebbed away from her.

She sang first of the birth of love in the heart of a boy and a girl. And on the topmost spray of the Rose-tree, there blossomed a marvelous rose, petal following petal, as song followed song. Pale was it, at first, as the mist that hangs over the river- pale as the feet of the morning, and silver as the wings of the dawn. As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, as the shadow of a rose in a water-pool, so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost spray of the Tree.

But the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. “Press closer, little Nightingale,” cried the Tree, “or the Day will come before the rose is finished.”

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and louder and louder grew her song, for she sang of the birth of passion in the soul of a man and a maid.

And a delicate flush of pink came into the leaves of the rose, like the flush in the face of the bridegroom when he kisses the lips of the bride. But the thorn had not yet

reached her heart, so the rose's heart remained white, for only a Nightingale's heart's blood can crimson the heart of a rose.

And the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb.

And the marvelous rose became crimson, like the rose of the eastern sky. Crimson was the girdle of petals, and crimson as a ruby was the heart.

But the Nightingale's voice grew fainter, and her little wings began to beat, and a film came over her eyes. Fainter and fainter grew her song, and she felt something choking in her throat.

Then she gave one last burst of music. The white Moon heard it, and she forgot the dawn, and lingered on in the sky. The red rose heard it, and it trembled all over with ecstasy, and opened its petals to the cold morning air. Echo bore it to her purple cavern in the hills, and woke the sleeping shepherds from their dreams. It floated through the reeds of the river, and they carried its message to the sea.

"Look, look!" cried the Tree, "the rose is finished now"; but the Nightingale made no answer, for she was lying dead in the long grass, with the thorn in her heart,

And at noon the Student opened his window and looked out.

"Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!" he cried. "Here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"; and he leaned down and plucked it.

Then he put on his hat, and ran up to the Professor's house with the rose in his hand.

The daughter of the Professor was sitting in the doorway winding blue silk on a reel, and her little dog was lying at her feet.

“You said that you would dance with me if I brought you a red rose,” cried the Student. “Here is the reddest rose in all the world. You will wear it tonight next your heart, and as we dance together it will tell you how I love you.

But the girl frowned. “I am afraid it will not go with my dress,” she answered; “and, besides, the Chamberlain’s nephew has sent me some real jewels, and everybody knows that jewels cost far more than flowers.

“Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful,” said the Student angrily, and he threw the rose into the Street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cartwheel went over it.

“Ungrateful!” said the girl. “I tell you what, you are very rude; and, after all, who are you? Only a student. Why, I don’t believe you have even got silver buckles to your shoes as the

Chamberlain’s nephew has”; and she got up from her chair and went into the house.

“What a silly thing Love is!,, said the Student as he walked away. “It is not half as useful as Logic, for it does not prove anything, and it is always telling one of things that are not going to happen, and making one believe things that are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical, and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics.”

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What troubles the young student at the beginning of the story?
2. How does the nightingale help him?
3. Is the sacrifice of the nightingale worthwhile? Why or why not?
4. What does the nightingale symbolize in life?
5. What do you think of the young student in the story?

THE HAPPY PRINCE

High above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with the leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councilors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not so quite useful", he added fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. "The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything."

"I'm glad there is someone in the world who is quite happy", muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

"He looks just like an angel", said the Charity Children as they came out of the Cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean pinafores.

"How do you know?" said the Mathematical Master. "you have never seen one".

"Ah! but we have, in our dreams," answered the children; and the Mathematical Master frowned and looked very severe because he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little Swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful Reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

"Shall I love you?" said the Swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the Reed made him a low bow. So he flew round and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

“It’s a ridiculous attachment”, twittered the other Swallows; “she has no money, and far too many relations”, and indeed the river was full of Reeds. Then, when the autumn came they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady-ve. “She had no conversation”, he said, “and I am afraid that she is a coquette for she is always flirting with the wind.’ And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the Reed made the most graceful curtsies. “I admit that she is domestic”, he continued, “but I love traveling, and my wife, consequently, should love traveling also”.

“Will you come away with me?” he said finally to her, but the Reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

“You have been trifling with me”, he cried. “I am off to the Pyramids. Good bye!” and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night- time he arrived at the city. “Where shall I put up?” he said; “I hope the town has made preparations”.

Then he saw the statue on the tall column.

“I will put up there”, he cried; “It is a fine position, with plenty of fresh air”. So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

“I have a golden bedroom”, he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. “What a curious thing!” he cried; “there is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The Reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness”.

Then another drop fell.

“What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?” he said, “I must look for a good chimney-pot”, and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings, a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw — Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.

“Who are you?” he said.

“I am the Happy Prince”

“Why are you weeping then?” asked the Swallow “you have quite drenched me”.

“When I was alive and had a human heart,” answered the statue, “I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the Great Hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep”.

“What! is he not solid gold?” said the Swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks out loud.

“Far away,” continued the statue in a low musical voice, far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at a table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion-flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the Queen’s maids-of-honor to wear at the next Court ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword-hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move.”

“I am waited for in Egypt,” said the Swallow. “My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to the large lotus-flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great King. The King is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen, and embalmed with spices: Round his neck is a chain of pale, green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves.”

“Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow”: said the Prince, “will you not stay with me for one night and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty, and the mother so sad”

“I don’t think I like boys”, answered the Swallow. “Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller’s sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and besides I come of a family famous for agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect.”

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little Swallow was sorry. “It is very cold here,” he said, “but I will stay with you for one night, and be your messenger”

“Thank you, little Swallow,” said the Prince.

So the Swallow picked out the great ruby from the Prince’s sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. “How wonderful the stars are,” he said to her, “and how wonderful is the power of love”.

“I hope my dress will be ready in time for the State ball,” she answered: “I have ordered passion-flowers to be embroidered on it: but the seamstresses are so lazy.”

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hanging to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen sleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman’s thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy’s forehead with his wings. “How cool I feel!” said the boy, “I must be getting better”, and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the Swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. “It’s curious,” he remarked, “but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold”.

“That is because you have done a good action,” said the Prince. And the little Swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. “What a remarkable phenomenon!” said the Professor of Orthithology as he was passing over the bridge. “A swallow in winter!”. And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Everyone quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

“Tonight I go to Egypt,” said the Swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went the Sparrows chirruped, and said to each other “What a distinguished stranger!” so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. “Have you any commissions for Egypt?” he cried, “I am just starting”.

“Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow” said the Prince. “will you not stay with me one night longer?”

“I am waited for in Egypt,” answered the Swallow. “Tomorrow my friends will fly up to the second Cataract. The river-horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on the great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls’ and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract.”

“Swallow, Swallow. little Swallow,” said the Prince, “far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as pomegranate, and he has large and dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the Director of the Theatre, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint.”

“I will wait with you one night longer,” said the Swallow. who really had a good heart. “Shall I take him another ruby?”

“Alas! I have no ruby now,” said the Prince: “my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago.

Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweler, and buy firewood, and finish his play.” “Dear Prince,” said the Swallow, “I cannot do that”; and he began to weep. “Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow” said the Prince, “do as I command you.” So the Swallow plucked out the Prince’s eye, and flew away to the student’s garret. It was easy to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird’s wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying

on the withered violets. "I am beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "this is from some great admirer.

Now I can finish my play," and he looked quite happy.

The next day the Swallow flew down to the harbor. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. "Heave a - hoy they shouted as each chest came up. "I am going to Egypt!" cried the Swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

"I am come to bid you good-bye," he cried.

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"It is winter," answered the Swallow, "and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baabek, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear Prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea."

"In the square below," said the Happy Prince, "there stands a match-girl. She has let her matches fall in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money, and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her."

"I will stay with you one night longer," said the Swallow, "but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then."

"Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow," said the Prince, "do as I command you."

So he plucked out the Prince's other eye, and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. "What a lovely bit of glass" cried the girl: and she ran home, laughing.

Then the Swallow came back to the prince. "You are blind now," he said, "so I will stay with you always."

“No, little Swallow,” said the poor Prince, “you must go away to Egypt.” “I will stay with you always,” said the Swallow, and he slept at the Prince’s feet.

All the next day he sat on the Prince’s shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile, and catch goldfish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels and carry amber beads in their hands; of the King of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honey-cakes; and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

“Dear little Swallow,” said the Prince, “you tell me of marvelous things, but more marvelous than anything is the suffering of men and women. There is no Mystery so great as Misery. Fly over my city, little Swallow, and tell me what you see there.”

So the Swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets.

Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another’s arms to try to keep themselves warm. “How hungry we are!” they said. “You must not lie here,” shouted the watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the Prince what he had seen.

“I am covered with fine gold,” said the Prince, “you must take it off, leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy.”

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the Swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and grey. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. “We have bread now!” they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just enough strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. "Goad-bye, Dear Prince!" he murmured, "will you let me kiss your hands?"

"I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little Swallow," said the Prince, "you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you."

"It is not to Egypt that I am going," said the Swallow. "I am going to the House of Death. Death is the brother of Sleep, is he not?"

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue, as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the Mayor was walking in the square below in company with the Town Councilors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue: "Dear me! How shabby the Prince looks!" he said.

"How shabby, indeed!" cried the Town Councilors, who always agreed with the Mayor: and they went up to look at it.

"The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer," said the Mayor: "in fact, he is little better than a beggar"

"Little better than a beggar," said the Town Councilors.

"And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!" continued the Mayor. "We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here." And the Town Clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. "As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful," said the Art Professor at the University.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the Mayor held a meeting of the Corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

“Of myself,” said each of the Town Councilors, and they quarreled. When I last heard of them they were quarrelling still.

“What a strange thing!” said the overseer of the workmen of the foundry. “This broken heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away.” So they threw it on a dust-heap where the dead Swallow was also lying.

“Bring me the two most precious things in the city,” said God to one of His Angels; and the Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

“You have rightly chosen,” said God, “for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for ever-more, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me.”

Questions for literary understanding and appreciation:

1. What made the little Swallow stay behind when his friends flew to Egypt?
Why did his feeling for the Reed change?
2. Why did the little Swallow decide to stay on the column that night?
3. What did the Happy Prince look like? Why did people call it ‘Happy Prince’?
4. Why did the Prince weep? What did he want the Swallow to do for him? Why?
5. Why was the Swallow reluctant at first? How did he feel after he had brought the ruby
to the poor seamstress’s house? Why?
6. Why did the Swallow at last decide to stay with the Prince always? What do you think
of his decision?
7. What happened to the Happy Prince and the little Swallow at the end of the story?
8. What do you think of God’s comment: “You have rightly chosen”? when His Angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird?
9. Can you draw any moral lessons from the story? What is it?

APPENDIX II

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(for English majors from 5th semester of Haiphong Private University)

This survey questionnaire is for my research into designing a supplementary material: “A brief introduction of English literature from the Middle Ages to the 19th century”. Your assistance in completing these items is highly appreciated. You can be confident that this survey questionnaire is for research purpose only and you will not be identified in any discussion of the data.

Please tick (√) and fill in where appropriate

1. Is the subject ‘English American literature’ necessary for English majors?

Necessary & compulsory

Necessary & optional

Unnecessary

2. Do historical period, author’s style, and literary trend play an important role in appreciate a literary work or an extract?

Yes

No

3. Have you studied the knowledge of literary trends or typical authors, their outstanding works... before studying the subject English American Literature?

Yes

Seldom

No

(If Yes/ Seldom, go to question 4)

4. How do you search the knowledge of History of English literature?

Borrow books from university library

Search on Internet

Buy books of History of English literature

Other ways:
.....
.....

5. Is it necessary to be provided and to be guided a supplementary material of Overview of history of English Literature for self-study or as a compulsory one before study the subject English American Literature at HPU?

Yes, compulsory

Yes& self-study

No

