

OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE

- Palaeolithic nomads from mainland Europe;
 - New inhabitants came from western and possibly north-western Europe (New Stone Age);
 - in the 2nd millennium BC new inhabitants came from the Low Countries and the middle Rhine (Stonehenge);
 - Between 800 and 200 BC Celtic peoples moved into Britain from mainland Europe (Iron Age)
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- first experience of a literate civilisation in 55 B.C.
 - remoter areas in Scotland retained independence
 - Ireland, never conquered by Rome, Celtic tradition
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- The language of the pre-Roman settlers - British (Welsh, Breton); Cornish; Irish and Scottish Gaelic (Celtic dialect)
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- The Romans up to the fifth century
 - Britain - a province of the Roman Empire 400 years
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- the first half of the 5th century the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes (N Germany, Jutland)
 - The initial wave of migration - 449 A. D.
 - the Venerable Bede (c. 673-735)
 - the Britain of his time comprised four nations English, British (Welsh), Picts, and Scots.
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- invaders resembling those of the Germans as described by Tacitus in his Germania.
 - a warrior race
 - the chieftain, the companions or comitatus.
 - the Celtic languages were supplanted (e.g. ass, bannock, crag).
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- Christianity spread from two different directions:
 - In the 5th century St Patrick converted Ireland, in the 7th century the north of England was converted by Irish monks;
 - in the south at the end of the 6th century Aethelberht of Kent allowed the monk Augustine and his helpers, who came directly from Rome, to convert his kingdom to Christianity.
 - The monks adapted the Roman alphabet from Latin to write English and replaced the old writing system based on the use of signs called **runes**, which were developed to be carved in wood or stone.

Brittene igland is ehta hund mila lang.

7 twa hund brad. 7 her sind on his iglande fif geheode. Englisc. 7 brittisc. 7 wilsc. 7 scvttisc. 7 pyhtisc. 7 bon leden. Erest weron bugend rises landes brittes.

Word-for-word translation

Of-Britain island is eight hundred miles long. & two hundred broad. & here are in this island five languages. english. & british. & Welsh. & scottish. & pictish. & book latin. First were inhabitants of-this land britons.

- a Romano-British king called Arthur in the 470s (against the Saxons)

- The strongest social bond - kinship
 - wergild - the sum that the kindred could accept in place of vengeance if a man were killed
 - nobles (3 ceorl's wergild in Kent or 6 x ceorl's wergild elsewhere), a ceorl (a normal freeman), slaves (no wergild)
- the language is different dialects of West Germanic
 - from 5th cent. to 12th century - Old English.
- Art - a combination of native elements and influences from Ireland and the Mediterranean.
 - The Hiberno-Saxon style of manuscript illumination - the Lindisfarne Gospels
- During the 8th century - the Norwegian sea-raiders, the Danes
 - the Danelaw - the territory in the North and East Midlands
 - King Alfred the Great (871-899), a great revival of learning, a translator
- Literature - the common Germanic metre
 - The earliest oral poetry - little or none survives
 - The manuscripts in which Old English poetry is preserved are almost all unique, almost none of them were written until the end of the tenth century.
- St. Bede the Venerable, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* ("Ecclesiastical History of the English People"), the late 7th century Caedmon, an illiterate Northumbrian cowherd, a short hymn in praise of the creation
- figurative diction - the chief characteristics of Old English poetry
 - form - alliterative verse: a single-line unit, consisting of two hemistichs (half lines) separated by a caesura (pause). The words alliterate, i.e. consonant sounds at the beginning of words or stressed syllables are repeated.

A song I sing of sorrow unceasing

- Religious Old English poetry: *The Dream of the Rood*
- Heroic OE poetry: *Beowulf*, anonymous.
- it refers to the common heroic past of the Germanic race
- the perpetual struggle of light against dark, good against evil
- Beowulf as an example to follow
- The poem falls into two parts.

Part I

- In Denmark, King Hrothgar in Heorot
- 12 years visited by an evil monster, Grendel
- young Beowulf, a prince of the Geats of southern Sweden, offers to cleanse Heorot of its monster.
- Grendel devours one of the sleeping Geats, fights with Beowulf, tears off his arm, and leaves, mortally wounded.
- The next night Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son and kills one of Hrothgar's men.

- Beowulf kills her in her cave at the bottom of a mere and kills her
- Beowulf returns home to King Hygelac of the Geats.

Part II

- King Hygelac dies in a battle, Beowulf becomes the king and rules for 50 years
- He fights a fire-breathing dragon
- Beowulf kills the dragon but is mortally wounded.
- The poem ends with his funeral rites and a lament.

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD AND GEOFFREY CHAUCER

- The OE age ends in 1066 when the Normans invaded the Island.
- Harold vs. William
- The Normans - the descendants of Scandinavians, the north coast of France
- subjects of the French king, speaking the French language
- states in South Italy and Sicily
- the French language became the norm of educated and aristocratic communication.

The Norman Conquest

- Christmas Day, 1066, William of Normandy
- English aristocracy driven to a lower position in society
- They created one kingdom from many.
- Every inch of the land was declared to be the king's
- William and his followers as his tenants with defined services
- The building of strongholds, castles
- Domesday Book - a written record of a statistical survey of England (1086)
- relatively stable 11th century and the beginning of the 12th, sons of William the Conqueror
- the period of anarchy, the reign of Matilda and Stephen, civil war.
- northern dialect of the French language, Latin, Old English
- Middle English: a mixture of English, felt in syntax and morphology, and of French, which contributed much vocabulary.
- literature influenced by France
- the beginning of the Middle English Period literature in English was scarce (*Ancrene Riwe*, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Layamon's history of King Arthur)
- education - the beginnings of the University of Oxford; Cambridge was founded during the early thirteenth century.
- the only English universities for more than five hundred years.
- Henry Plantagenet (1154)
- Thomas à Beckett
- Richard I, a.k.a. the Lion-Heart, the Crusades
- his brother John, the beginning of the 13th century, lost his estates in France, was excommunicated, forced to sign Magna Carta which ensured that the king was beneath the law.
- literature - tales of Charlemagne, Roland and the rest (Matter of France), of Arthur (Matter of Britain (i.e. Brittany)), of Alexander the Great and of Troy (Matter of Rome / Gesta romanorum) displaced the Germanic heroic legends.
- The romances were written in the French verse: rhyme, stanza form, metrical feet - i.e. with alternating stressed and unstressed syllables.

- The subject matter: the virtues of chivalry, warlike
- courage, true courtesy, honour and ideal knighthood in the service of the Christian faith and of the lady.
- women, love, and praise of women occupy a dominant position
- The 13th century - the beginning of Parliament.
- The ideal of a parliament - a council of regency ruled on behalf of a child king not yet able to govern in his own right.
- Edward I - representatives in Parliament were needed to give consent to taxation
- the wars against the Welsh, French, and Scots
- The 14th century - the age of war and plague.
- England and France, conflicts from 1337 onward were called the Hundred Years' War.
- In 1381 the Peasants' Revolt
- the Bible was translated into English
- The Black Death struck in 1348-49
- the increasing use of English

Geoffrey Chaucer

- Influence of Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante
- independence of the tradition he respected
- Canterbury Tales (1390s)
- A group of 30 pilgrims at the Tabard Inn
- storytelling contest
- shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury
- the full plan for his book was not completed
- 120 tales - 22 tales + 2 uncompleted
- a unified book, not a collection of unfinished fragments
- Knight, prioress, monk
- merchant, man of law, Franklin, scholarly clerk
- miller, reeve, pardoner
- wife of Bath

Literary genres

- Courtly romance
- fabliau
- saint's life
- allegorical tale
- beast tale
- medieval sermon
- mixture of all genres

The outline

- General Prologue

- chivalric tale of the knight
- Miller's fabliau: the tale of the Reeve
- Summoner : Friar
- the Wife of Bath: the Clerk's tale
- short stories in verse
- two expositions in prose

Heroic couplet

- Ten- or eleven-syllable iambic pentameters rhyming in Twos

After Chaucer

- Sir Thomas Malory
- King Arthur

By the end of the 15th century

- Powerful kingdom
- commercially prosperous
- unified legal system
- beginnings of parliamentary government
- lagging behind Italy in arts and in scholarship

The prologue to the Wife of Bath's Tale

- Partly deaf, lustful
- scarlet stockings
- gap-toothed
- survived five husbands
- sexual, verbal, polemical vitality
- dominance in marriage
- resistance to aging and to death

THE RENAISSANCE

- The invention of movable-printing in 1454
- the discovery of the New World (1492)
- the new approach to classical learning
- the classical models for prose and verse styles

England's Renaissance

- 1509-1660
- the reign of the Tudor Henry VIII and his children and the first two Stuarts, and the government of the Commonwealth
- Catholic Church against Anglican Church
- wars with Spain

14th and 15th centuries in England

- Political and military conflicts at home and abroad
- the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453) - war with France

The Hundred Years' War

- Loss of all English possessions in France, except Calais
- developed a sense of nationalism
- English claims to French territory ended

The Wars of the Roses

- Mid 15th century
- Houses of York and Lancaster - two branches of the royal family
- Henry VI vs. Richard, Duke of York
- Henry VII
- Henry VIII; Catherine of Aragon, six children, only Mary I survived; Anne Boleyn (Elizabeth), the Church of England separated from Rome and Henry VIII became its supreme head, Anne beheaded
- Jane Seymour (Edward), died in childbirth
- 3 more wives (one divorced, one beheaded)

Religious controversies

- Martin Luther in Germany
- John Calvin in Switzerland
- Henry VIII in England
- John Knox in Scotland

England's revolutionary changes

- The new growth of the Parliament
- the break with Rome
- dissolution of monasteries

After Henry VIII

- Edward VI, the English Church becomes Protestant

- 9 days of Lady Jane
- Mary I, Roman Catholic Church
- 300 people accused of heresy
- loss of Calais
- "Bloody Mary"

Elizabeth I's reign

- Church on a moderate course
- neutralized the Scottish threat
- raided Spanish ships

The Spanish Armada

- Defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588
- prevented the invasion of England
- conquered Ireland in 1603

The theatre

- The age is dominated by drama (tragedy)
- A blend of English vernacular popular tradition with a Latin one.
- Tragedies of Seneca
- first outdoor theatre in London 1576
- travelling companies of actors, attached to the household of some nobleman
- 70 years of flourishing

The revenge tragedy

- Elizabethan and Jacobean period
- the plot - crime, its consequences, suffering, numerous murders (the tragedy of blood)
- influence of Seneca - horrific event, revenge, five acts, ghosts
- themes: lust, jealousy, ambition, revenge
- man's religious views vs. his desire for vengeance

Elizabethan and Jacobean drama

- Cyril Tourneur
- John Webster
- Ben Jonson
- Christopher Marlowe

Cyril Tourneur

- The Atheist's Tragedy
- The Revenger's Tragedy
- Vindice's lady was murdered by the Duke
- Duke's son wants to seduce Vindice's sister
- Duke kisses the skull of the woman he once raped, his tongue nailed to the ground, his bastard son makes love to his wife

John Webster

- The White Divel, The Duchess of Malfi
- The Duchess marries her steward Antonio
- Her brothers, a cardinal and a duke object
- the Duchess is strangled, her children too
- the Duke goes mad, the Cardinal is murdered, Antonio's death is a tragic mistake

Ben Jonson

- England's first poet laureate
- comedies: The Alchemist, Volpone, Bartholomew Fair
- masques, dancing and singing in a royal court or nobleman's house
- Inigo Jones - magnificent costumes and scenic effects

Comedy of humours

- Every Man in His Humour, Latin comedy
- four main characters or humours of medieval and Renaissance medicine: choler, melancholy, phlegm and blood
- selected side of a character, simplification
- the Restoration theatre

Christopher Marlowe

- Canterbury shoemaker
- Cambridge
- playwright, political missions
- violent, atheist, homosexual
- at 29 stabbed to death
- Tamburlaine, Doctor Faustus

Doctor Faustus

- temptation of forbidden knowledge
- the absence of virtue, disobedience to divine law
- religion and morality
- authenticity: collaboration
- first great tragic monologues vs. second-rate farce (clowns, devils, dragons)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

- Born in 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon
- father - a tradesman
- William married Anne Hathaway, four children
- left for London
- The plague
- Earl of Southampton (the Sonnets)
- theatrical company - the Lord Chamberlain's Men
- King James I - the King's Men
- the Theatre, the Globe, Blackfriars Theatre
- died at Stratford in 1616

Publications

- Authorized quartos carelessly printed
- the first folio in 1623 published by his friends
- it includes all his texts except Pericles

Shakespeare's popularity

- His work is varied
- Marxist neo-historicism - class struggle
- Feminists - oppressed and liberated heroines
- post-colonialists - emerging British Empire
- plays designed to be acted

Shakespeare - the poet

- Sonnets published in 1609
- no central mythical lady
- three figures: a blond young aristocrat, a dark lady, a rival poet
- the theme of time and its effects on people, things, buildings and human relationships

Sonnets

- Autobiographical?
- dedication to an unknown Mr. W. H.
- Early poems: urging the young man to marry and have children
- a group addressed to the lady
- 126 of the 154 sonnets are addressed by the poet to another man

Shakespearean form/sonnets:

- three quatrains (3x4 lines)
- one couplet (2 lines)
- rhyme: abab cdcd efef gg
- the idea is stated in the quatrains is summarized in the couplet (the solution is offered, the problem is resolved)

Plays

- 38 plays
- Romeo and Juliet vs. the Sonnets
- sonnets in the play, sonnet imagery
- the theme of the play: relation of love to time

The "meaning"

- The meaning of the play
- entertainment, stagecraft, observation of human nature, emotion, tragedy, comedy, etc.
- the "message" often not clear
- the conclusions often left to the audience

Romeo and Juliet

- Different and opposing interpretations
- Julia Kristeva: baroque sadomasochistic emotion, lust for death, hatred and desire
- Harold Bloom: healthy and normative passion

The Form

- Blank verse, i.e. unrhymed iambic pentameter - nobler characters
- prose - low born, common characters

Main topics

- Surface is an appearance, the truth lies underneath
- vanity and pride distort the truth
- self-knowledge is essential
- battle between good and evil
- evil: witches, Iago
- good: love, enthusiasm for life

Romeo and Juliet

- Written 1597
- set in Italy
- two families in Verona: the Montagues and the Capulets
- Romeo is a Montague, Juliet a Capulet
- families involved in a bitter feud
- Romeo loves Rosaline.
- Capulet banquet
- falls in love with Juliet
- they kiss, meet in secret, wed
- Romeo flees to Mantua
- Juliet should marry Paris and feigns suicide
- Paris, Romeo and Juliet die in the Capulet crypt

Characters

- Juliet, Mercutio, the Nurse, Romeo
- tragedy and comedy at the same time (Nurse and Mercutio)

- Mercutio: scene stealer, witty, courageous, obscene and quarrelsome, repressed homoeroticism?

Shakespeare 's characters

- Develop themselves
- soliloquy and dialogue
- more than 100 major characters, many hundreds minor
- complexity

Hamlet

- Son of the former king of Denmark
- Queen Gertrude married his brother Claudius
- the ghost accuses Claudius
- Hamlet does not know what to do
- Is he lovesick for Ophelia?
- A murder scene
- Claudius stops the performance
- Hamlet kills Polonius, Ophelia's father
- Hamlet is banished to England, escapes
- Ophelia drowns herself
- Laertes, her brother, fights Hamlet
- the final wisdom - the readiness is all
- Hamlet and Laertes are mortally wounded
- Queen drinks a poisoned cup
- Hamlet stabs the king
- Hamlet and Laertes die
- Fortinbras, Prince of Norway, takes over the country

The theme of Hamlet

- J. W. Goethe, 1795, weak character
- S. T. Coleridge, 1811, the action is the chief end
- A. C. Bradley, 1904, a man of genius and a weak character
- T. S. Eliot, 1919, an artistic failure: too much material, excessive
- Ian Kott, 1964, an intellectual and a moralist
- Marc Shell, 1993, Claudius his natural father
- Harold Bloom, 1998, leading Western representation of an intellectual
- a complex, plausible character

Sweet prince and arrant knave

- Arrant knave: violent towards his mother and Ophelia, murders Polonius, arranges the murders of his friends, places the players in danger
- Sweet prince: mother re-married too soon, Ophelia, Polonius, his friends were spies.

METAPHYSICAL POETS

After Elizabeth I

- The son of Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth's cousin
- The Scottish King James VI - James I of England (1603-1625)
- the crowns of England and Scotland united

The Stuart kings

- The Puritans dissatisfied with the Church of England
- Parliament dissatisfied with the kings
- James I and Charles I - monarchy by divine right

Charles I

- Tried to rule without Parliament and to impose English-style worship in Scotland
- the Long Parliament tried to get control of the government
- Charles I vs. Puritan remainder of Parliament (Roundheads)
- civil war

The English Civil War

- The Roundheads won (help from Scotland)
- military leadership of Oliver Cromwell

Commonwealth

- Charles I was executed in 1649
- monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished
- England was declared Commonwealth
- Ireland and Scotland subdued
- the protectorate was created, governed by a House of Commons, Cromwell becomes Lord Protector
- Cromwell dies in 1658
- Charles II returned to England

Metaphysical poets

- 1610-1680
 - intellectual and emotional
 - ordinary speech and scientific concepts
 - themes: love and religion
 - paradox - an apparently self-contradictory statement
 - conceit - deliberately unlikely metaphor
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- John Donne, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan
 - George Herbert (1593-1633) - a parish priest, piety and godliness
 - Henry Vaughan (1622-1695) - spiritual and religious poetry

John Donne

- 1571-1631

- London, Oxford, Cambridge
- Catholic
- private secretary, secret marriage, imprisonment
- Anglican religion, lawyer, priest
- preacher, Dean of St Paul's Cathedral
- Poetry published after his death
- love and religion
- conventional representations of women reversed

Andrew Marvell

- 1621-1678
- Yorkshire, Cambridge
- freedom of worship
- supporter of Oliver Cromwell
- politician and satirist

JOHN MILTON

The Restoration

- Protectorate collapsed in 1658
- the return of the dead King's eldest son
- Charles II returned home in 1660
- moderation, a dozen men were executed
- 1665 bubonic plague, 1666 Fire of London (it lasted 5 days, two thirds of the city destroyed)

A New London

- The architect Christopher Wren rebuilt the city in beauty and grandeur.

Puritanism

- The Restoration was a reaction against Puritanism, yet *Paradise Lost* by John Milton is a Puritan work
- Puritan ethic is Cromwell's ethic
- an attitude which saw the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church as corrupt
- Puritans - return to a purer worship

John Milton

- 1608-1674
- London, Cambridge, a tour around Europe
- wealth of learning, classics
- defender of Puritanism and Cromwell
- blindness
- granted a full pardon
- *Paradise Lost* dictated

Epic elements in *Paradise Lost*

- Primary epics - e.g. the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by Homer, where the hero is part human and part divine, he excels in military prowess.
- Secondary epics - e.g. Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the hero is still a military hero and still has a divine parent, but he can think as well as fight. A more sophisticated hero.
- Tertiary epics - a conflict between the influence of the pagan epic and the scriptural, Christian literature.

Paradise Lost

- published in 1667, the second edition in 1674 reorganized the poem in an epic form of twelve books
- the topic: the fall from the perfect state of a human being into a state of human reality

Milton 's Language

- Latin, Italian and Hebrew influence
- long sentences, vast knowledge of the classics demanded
- blank verse

Paradise Lost

- Renaissance, Protestant, English epic
- Homer, Vergil, Dante, Spenser
- Epic - long narrative poem, elevated style, heroic subject matter

Epic elements

- Iliad, Odyssey by Homer, hero is part human and part divine
- Vergil's Aeneid, sophisticated hero
- a conflict between pagan epic and Christian literature

Paradise Lost

- 1667, 1674, twelve books
- the fall from the perfect state of man into a state of human reality
- Latin, Italian and Hebrew influence
- long sentences, vast knowledge of the classics demanded
- blank verse
- Fall of Satan
- Devil - hero and a villain, energy and evil
- Satan is driven out of Heaven into the great Deep
- Fallen angels in Hell, Chaos
- Satan awakens his legions, they prepare for battle

The Plot of Paradise Lost

- Fall of Satan from heaven
- Satan, the once glorious leader of a rebellion against God, reveals some of the virtues of the human heroic.
- Devil - hero and a villain, embodiment of energy and evil
- Satan is driven out of Heaven into the great Deep
- Fallen angels in Hell, Chaos
- Satan awakens his legions, they prepare for battle

RESTORATION COMEDY

Restoration

- Charles II
- James II, a Roman Catholic
- William of Orange, a Protestant, the Netherlands
- James fled
- Glorious Revolution, sovereign Parliament
- Bill of Rights
- Jacobites in Scotland and Ireland
- both areas were subdued, Glencoe in Scotland, Boyne in Ireland

Restoration theatre

- English theatre, 1660-1700
- 18 years, theatres are closed
- converted tennis courts

Playhouses

- Drury Lane and Dorset Gardens
- United Company
- Spectators - social elite, rich, young, upper-class, London-based, cynical, fashionable
- female actors
- comedies and tragedies
- comedies: wit - verbal brilliance, high and noble birth

Stock characters

- A fop, a dandy - obsessed with appearance
- the young rake - fashionable, well-born
- the country bumpkin
- the pure young heroine
- the immoral young woman
- the sexually frustrated old woman
- the funny servant, the Puritan

Basic themes

- Inheritance and money - the younger son
- marriage - matter of economics, cynical
- morality of the plays - good looks, wit, conventions of the upper-class London life
- William III - middle classes accepted • John Vanbrugh, George Farquhar

William Congreve

- Ireland, law and literature
- the manager of a new theatre
- The Way of the World (1700)

The Way of the World

- The plot very complicated
- Mirabell, Millamant, Lady Wishfort
- impeccable morality
- good characters rewarded, the evil ones punished
- original and excellent characterisation

ENGLISH CLASSICISM

The eighteenth century

- Act of Union 1707, England and Scotland united
- the kingdom of Great Britain
- Queen Anne, George I, Elector of Hanover
- peace and stability
- George I, George II, Robert Walpole (Prime Minister)

Two decades of Conflict

- War with Spain
- Scottish Jacobites, Bonnie Prince Charles
- Treaty of Paris - Canada and India, Florida

Population Growth

- Smallpox vaccine
- improved diet
- more efficient farming practices
- potato
- earlier marriages

Industrialization

- James Watt, the steam engine
- spinning and weaving
- cotton textiles
- iron, coal mines
- workshop of the world

Urbanization

- Factory life
- advantages: regular hours, higher wages
- disadvantages: poor, dangerous working conditions, discipline, less personal, long hours
- London - 600,000 inhabitants in 1701, 950,000 inhabitants in 1801

George III and George IV

- George III suffered apparent delirium, probably caused by the metabolic disorder porphyria
- He was succeeded by his eldest son, George IV.

American War of Independence

- 1783
- lost all its colonies in North America
- William Pitt the Younger - the modern prime ministership, annual budget
- after 1793, 22 years of all-out war

Augustan Age

- Emperor Augustus

- belief in progress, admiration of the classical age
- translators
- Dryden, Pope, Swift

Alexander Pope

- London, Roman Catholic
- tuberculosis and a curved spine
- prolific writer, satire
- scholar and translator

Satire

- Focus on unwelcome factors in life, revealing the true nature of things
- human weakness attacked
- vanity, hypocrisy and affectation
- not always universal

Originality and style

- Decorative artist, artificial, technical brilliance
- 18th century did not place much value on originality
- heroic couplet - end-rhymed iambic pentameters
- epigrammic lines

The Rape of the Lock

- Mock heroic masterpiece
- Lord Petre snipped off a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair, ill feeling among the families
- satirical work, ridiculing the stupidity of those involved

THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

DEFOE, RICHARDSON, SMOLLETT AND FIELDING

The beginnings of a novel

- The Industrial Revolution brought with it also increased wealth and increased standards of literacy.
- Improved printing and communication systems helped distribute books more widely and efficiently - which led to the popularity of the novel.

The eighteenth-century novelists

- Daniel Defoe
- Samuel Richardson
- Henry Fielding

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

- a Nonconformist, or Dissenter, family
- he could not be educated at the University of Oxford or Cambridge, but nevertheless received good education.
- He became a merchant, dealing in many commodities, travelled widely at home and abroad; but misfortune, in one form or another, dogged him continually.
- Defoe went bankrupt often, and it is even thought that he died in hiding from his creditors.
- He served in turn both Tory and Whig; he acted as a secret agent for the Tories and later served the Whigs by "infiltrating" extremist Tory journals and toning them down.

Robinson Crusoe

- published in 1719, based on the true story of one Alexander Selkirk
- it is about a sailor marooned on a desert island for many years. It depicts a man adapting very successfully first to life on his own, and then to life with another, subservient man.

Robinson Crusoe - the style and the plot

- Defoe narrates in a matter-of-fact, almost documentary style. The narrator does comment, but characters are allowed to speak for themselves, and are judged by their actions.
- The plot of the book is relatively disorganised - which is a common feature of the early novel.

Robinson Crusoe - optimism and ethics

- Defoe is an optimist: e.g., while the real Alexander Selkirk was in a semi-savage state when he was rescued, Robinson Crusoe manages to build a small civilisation around him and survives his experience very well.
- the influence of the »Protestant Work Ethic, i.e. the belief that hard work is the answer to all social and moral problems.

Samuel Richardson

- 1689-1761, a son of a London tradesman,
- when 50 and a prosperous printer - he publishes his first work *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740)
 - the epistolary form; a young gentleman, Mr. B, a beautiful fifteen year old maidservant, Pamela – manages to preserve her virtue.

- Pamela – a pure and innocent heroine or a self-satisfied, hypocritical and calculating minx?
- 7 years later by his masterpiece *Clarissa: or, the History of a Young Lady* (1747-48), epistolary form, multiple narrators;
 - Clarissa Harlowe, avoiding loveless marriage, escapes with a handsome libertine, Lovelace, who offers her protection but eventually rapes her.
- immensely popular at the time of the publication.

Tobias Smollett

- 1721-71, a medical doctor born in Scotland.
- picaresque novels;
- *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) the adventures of a family travelling through Britain told in a sentimental manner.

Henry Fielding (1707-1756)

- born of a family that by tradition traced its descent to a branch of the Habsburgs.
- He started his career as a playwright, wrote some 25 plays.
- Walpole's censorship stopped his career
- he became a barrister and a novelist in order to support his family

The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling (1749)

- the most popular of his works
- It is constructed around a romance plot: The hero, whose true identity remains unknown until the denouement, loves the beautiful Sophia Western, and at the end of the book he wins her hand.
- Numerous obstacles have to be overcome before he achieves this.

Tom Jones

- In the course of the action the various sets of characters pursue each other from one part of the country to another, giving Fielding an opportunity to paint an incomparably vivid picture of England in the mid-18th century.
- The novel is marked by deft alternations between humour and romance, and above all the speed and ease of the dialogue.

Tom Jones - The Narrator

- Each major section or Book in the novel is introduced by Fielding
- Fielding partly imposes his own personality on the reader. On the other hand, the authorial presence in the novel is often witty and amusing.

ROMANTICISM

Napoleonic Wars

- At the beginning of the century Great Britain was in war with France.
- Napoleon Bonaparte attempted to invade the Island
- the British naval victory under Horatio Nelson at Trafalgar (1805).

The formation of the United Kingdom

- In 1801 the Act of Union with Ireland was signed
- the separate Irish Parliament is closed and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland is formed.

The Kings

- from 1811, George III was intermittently mad and his son, the future George IV, acted as regent.
- In 1820 George III was succeeded by George IV.

Rioting in 1816, 1817, 1819

- Rapid demobilization after the wars;
- economic depression;
- bad harvests;
- 1819, the Peterloo Massacre (a radical meeting aiming to reform the parliamentary system), brutally dispersed by cavalry.

The age of reforms

- the working hours of women and children were limited
- Slavery was abolished
- In 1829 Robert Peel (Bobby) organizes the first modern police force (bobbies).

Catholic Emancipation

- Catholics and non-Anglican Protestants are given the right to hold government posts and become MPs.

The Romantic Movement

- * starting around 1770
- * in England with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, 1800, 1803) by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- * a reaction against the eighteenth century and the Age of Reason.

Romanticism vs. Classicism

- * the Classical age (the age of Pope and Dryden) adored the ancient civilisations of Greek and Roman times, believed in reason and that the passions should be controlled. It trusted reason, intellect and the head.
- * Romanticism was an open revolt against accepted social conventions and glorified political revolutions,
- * man is considered as an individual and not merely as a member of society. He was seen as

essentially good, but later on often corrupted by civilisation.

* nature was supposed to reveal beauty, basic truths and even the hand of God, the creator or the guiding spirit of the Universe.

* Romantics were open to transcendental experience, they trusted instincts, the emotions and the heart.

“The Noble Savage”

* A Romantic believes that man in his primitive state is in a higher state of purity than civilised, urban man. The savage has an instinctive knowledge of himself and the world which is often superior to that gained by civilised man (e.g. Rene Chateaubriand, *Atala*).

* For the classical thinker the savage is a human being in a savage state who should be civilised. He is a denial of all progress in humanity; he is sad and regrettable and should be brought up the scale of evolution.

Children

* To the Romantic a child is holier and purer than an adult. He is unspoilt by civilization, uncorrupted, and closer to God and the source of his creation than are the adults (cf. Rousseau, *Emile*). Childhood is a state to be envied, cultivated and admired; and children are symbols of the essential goodness of humanity.

* For the classical thinker a child is important only in as much as he will become adult, and a civilized being. A child is valued only for its adult features. He is the raw, unrefined material that can be turned, with time and effort, into the sophisticated and civilized human being, in control of his instincts.

Characteristic attitudes of Romanticism

* a deepened appreciation of the beauties of nature;

* a general exaltation of emotion over reason and of the senses over intellect;

* a turning in upon the self and a heightened examination of human personality and its moods and mental potentialities;

* a preoccupation with the genius, the hero, and the exceptional figure in general, and a focus on his passions and inner struggles;

* a new view of the artist as a supremely individual creator, whose creative spirit is more important than strict adherence to formal rules and traditional procedures;

* an emphasis upon imagination as a gateway to transcendent experience and spiritual truth;

* an obsessive interest in folk culture, national and ethnic cultural origins, and the medieval era;

* a predilection for the exotic, the remote, the mysterious, the weird, the occult, the monstrous, the diseased, and even the satanic

Early Phase

* in English literature: William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Blake.

* In German literature: Friedrich Hölderlin, the early Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Jean Paul, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, A.W. and Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder, and Friedrich

Schelling.

- * In Revolutionary France: the Vicomte de Chateaubriand and Mme de Staël.

The Second Phase of Romanticism

- * the period from about 1805 to the 1830s;
- * marked by cultural nationalism and revived historical appreciation
- * In Britain: Sir Walter Scott, the Brontë sisters, John Keats, Lord Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley (Gothic literature: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*).
- * Victor Hugo, Alfred de Vigny, Alphonse de Lamartine, Alfred de Musset, Stendhal, Prosper Mérimée, Alexandre Dumas, and Théophile Gautier in France; Alessandro Manzoni and Giacomo Leopardi in Italy; Aleksandr Pushkin and Mikhail Lermontov in Russia; and almost all of the important writers in pre-Civil War America.

THE ROMANTIC POETS – BLAKE AND WORDSWORTH

William Blake (1757-1827)

- * one of the most individual poets of any age
- * belongs to no school of poetry.
- * engraver by profession and a well-known eccentric (reading *Paradise Lost* naked).
- * mystical experiences from his early youth and kept talking to angels up to his death.
- * Not famous during his own lifetime, Blake has come to be hailed as a genius in the 20th century.

Songs of Innocence and Experience

Symbolism

- * He wrote in and thorough symbols.
- * He saw humanity as virtuous and innocent but held tyrannically in chains and destroyed by society, the Church and its own ignorance.
- * Innocence is in particular symbolised by children; tyranny by priests, urban industrial landscape or those in authority. The tiger, for example, is used as a symbol of admirable and earth-moving energy.
- * Blake is often called a “prophetic” and “mystic visionary”, i.e. he yearned for a perfect world, and considered human past innocent and future glorious. He condemned the evils of his own world, its attack on human freedom, its denial of basic liberties and the life of the imagination.

William Wordsworth

- * 1770-1850
- * born in the Lake District, the second of five children of a modestly prosperous estate manager.
- * lost his mother when he was 7 and his father when he was 13,
- * Sent off to a grammar school at Hawkshead
- * Cambridge, not interested in academic career.
- * He spent his summer vacation in 1790 in revolutionary France and became an ardent republican sympathizer.
- * Upon taking his Cambridge degree, he returned to France.
- * a passionate attachment to a Frenchwoman. Before their child was born, he had to return to England and was cut off there by the outbreak of war between England and France. He was not to see his daughter Caroline until she was nine.
- * When the French Revolution turned towards tyranny and England declared war on France, Wordsworth suffered mental anguish (he was torn between England and France, the collapse of a revolution that had seemed to noble tormented him, his child and its mother were beyond his reach in France).
- * Guilt
- * he was helped to recovery by his sister Dorothy.

Lyrical Ballads

- * Stimulated by Coleridge and under the healing influences of nature and his sister, Wordsworth began in 1797-98 to compose the short lyrical poems.
- * They appeared in 1798 in a slim, anonymously authored volume entitled *Lyrical Ballads*, which opened with Coleridge's long poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and closed with Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey." All but three of the intervening poems were Wordsworth's. The manifesto and the accompanying poems thus set forth a new style, a new vocabulary, and new subjects for poetry, all of them foreshadowing 20th-century developments.

William Wordsworth

- * In 1802, during the short-lived Peace of Amiens, Wordsworth returned briefly to France, where he met his daughter and made his peace with Annette.
- * He returned to England to marry Mary Hutchinson, a childhood friend, and start an English family, which had grown to three sons and two daughters by 1810.
- * His political views changed: the young Romantic revolutionary turned into the aging Tory humanist.
- * Little of Wordsworth's later verse matches the best of his earlier years.

Issues in Wordsworth's Poetry

- * Simplicity and Style
- * Nature
- * The Sublime Egotist

Simplicity and Style

- * His poetic philosophy is expressed in the various prefaces to his *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), written in the company with Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
- * The main idea: the language and the subject of poetry should move away from the clichés and stylised, elaborate fashion of the eighteenth century and move towards the language of everyday speech and the life of ordinary people.

Nature

- * His poetry shows what happens when the innate power of Nature meets the power of perception of a human mind.
- * More than Nature itself, it is the individual's perception of Nature, its awe, power and capacity to teach what matters most.
- * Nature is a store of truths about human nature, the world and God, but that truth lies inert until a human being conjoins with Nature and draws that truth out.

The Sublime Egotist

- * Keats "egotistical sublime";

- * “sublime” because he was searching for a moment of transcendental insight and perception;
- * “egotistical” because everything he wrote was based directly on his own personal experience and observation of life, or that of his sister.
- * Wordsworth’s poetry is profoundly personal; however, the poet manages to persuade the reader that what he sees has a universal significance.

THE ROMANTIC POETS

COLERIDGE, BYRON, SHELLEY AND KEATS

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)

- * Educated in Cambridge, never took his degree;
- * Encouraged by the French revolution, Coleridge and the poet Robert Southey, set up a community organised according to different, better principles than the society around them;
- * with William Wordsworth - *Lyrical Ballads* (1798);
- * Unhappily married, dependent on opium;
- * In 1804 a post in Malta, journeying across Italy.
- * In 1806 he returned to England, where he separated from his wife.
- * In the Regency period, Coleridge became fashionable (a volume of poems called *Christabel, Kubla Khan, A Vision: The Pains of Sleep* (1816))
- * *Biographia Literaria* (1817), the most important work of Romantic literary criticism - the essential element of literature was a union of emotion and thought that he described as imagination.
- * After 1816 he finds an inner balance in Christianity.
- * "Kubla Khan" (1797, published 1816), opened a new vein of exotic writing and supernaturalism.
- * "Kubla Khan" composed under the influence of laudanum – the poet was interrupted by a visitor when he was writing it.
- * The poem focuses on the nature of human genius (its creativity in time of peace and its destructive force in time of turbulence).
- * "absolute genius" has the creative power of a sun god and subdues all around him to harmony.

Lord George Gordon Byron (1788-1824)

- * born with a clubfoot;
- * When he was 10 he unexpectedly inherited the title and estates of his great-uncle, the 5th Baron Byron;
- * Cambridge where he became a partisan of liberal Whiggism;
- * Although at time strongly attached to boys, throughout his life he also manifested a strong heterosexual drive which often got him into trouble;
- * *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1811) – he is only 18.
- * numerous love affairs, rumours of his bisexuality and incestual relationship with his half-sister - general moral indignation, Byron left England for good in 1816.
- * His greatest poem, *Don Juan*, a satirical and picaresque verse tale about an innocent young man who is pursued by beautiful women.
- * "Byronic hero" – a morose, enigmatic, cultured, bitter figure; a man who may be outwardly devil-may-care but is inside full of dark secrets.
- * Helped the Greeks in their struggle for independence from the Turks; fever, died at Missolonghi in April 1824.

- * His poetry very popular in the 19th century, lost its appeal in the modern era:
- * a heartless, prejudiced, morally dishonest mind lacking a true perception of beauty?
- * spiritual truth could be experienced only through the sensations.
- * His poems are filled with vibrant energy; his stories are also told in an exciting way, manifesting a considerable technical skill.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

- * a son of a rich Sussex aristocrat;
- * Expelled from Oxford in 1810 for writing a text in defence of atheism;
- * he married the sixteen-year-old daughter of a London tavern owner and moved to Dublin;
- * In 1814 Shelley fell in love with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin; they eloped to France in July 1814, taking with them Mary's stepsister Jane (later "Claire") Clairmont.
- * joined Lord Byron at Geneva (*Frankenstein*);
- * His wife committed suicide; he marries Mary;
- * Shelley and his friend Edward Williams sailed to Leghorn to welcome his friend Leigh Hunt; their boat sank.
- * After his death, Mary devoted herself to dissemination of his fame and his works.
- * his short lyrics are regarded the finest examples of English Romantic poetry.
- * Shelley often expresses the idea that humanity is essentially good and that institutions and conventional morality destroy and corrupt mankind.
- * he also manifests his hatred of authority and of any form of tyranny.
- * He saw poets as those who can reform the world through poetry, through their power of creative imagination and the enhanced perception of beauty.
- * Poets should become actual leaders of society and provide an inspiring example by unleashing their creative powers.

John Keats (1795-1821)

- * the son of a livery-stable manager and received relatively little formal education;
- * in the medical profession, worked as a junior house surgeon at different hospitals in London;
- * at 22 he devoted himself entirely to poetry;
- * tuberculosis;
- * he was ordered to spend the winter in a warmer climate, Keats left for Rome, where he died.
- * The year 1819 was crucial for his poetical career – it was during that year that John Keats created all of greatest poetry:
- * The odes (all composed in 1819) focus on the dichotomy of eternal, transcendental ideals and the transience and the ephemeral character of the physical world.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

- * the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" the themes of permanence and transience, of beauty and life are discussed through the description of the figures upon the Greek urn.
- * everything truly beautiful is also ephemeral.
- * the greatest thing life can offer us is found in beauty, therefore the aim of every individual should be to devote one's life to the endless search for it.

THE EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL – SCOTT, AUSTEN AND THE GOTHIC

Jane Austen (1775-1817)

- Jane Austen was born in the Hampshire village of Steventon, where her father, the Reverend George Austen, was rector.
- She remained single all her life.
- she only wrote six novels (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*)
- the comedy of manners of middle-class life, that of country landed gentry in the England of her time
- the topic: a young girl who is either about to be married, or ready for it.
- World events do not impinge on the novels, and a ball at a local country house is more important than a great victory or defeat of Napoleon's.

Her Style

- classical restraint and elegant awareness of the form, skilful use of a dialogue
- a superb satirist, an extremely competent story-teller
- she makes us feel that we know her characters.

The Manners and Morality in Austen's novels

- Behaviour must be controlled, regardless of personal feelings - the people who cannot exercise restraint are condemned
- she does not object to people marrying for love, if there is enough money in the marriage to help love along the way. Marriage should be based on love, genuine understanding - and social suitability.
- she despises everything that is pretentious, arrogant and proud - but also breach of duty and decorum (e.g., when Lydia Bennett elopes scandalously).

Pride and Prejudice

- the clash between Elizabeth Bennet, the intelligent daughter of a country gentleman, and Fitzwilliam aristocratic landowner.
- Darcy is proud of his rank and Elizabeth's inferiority of family;
- Elizabeth's pride is her self-respect and she is prejudiced against Darcy's snobbery.
- Ultimately, they come together in love and self-understanding.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)

- educated at the high school at Edinburgh
- he became an attorney like his father
- He also became a partner in a printing (and later publishing) firm owned by James Ballantyne and his brother John.
- Scott saved the company from bankruptcy, from 1813 onward everything he wrote was done partly in order to pay off the lasting debts he had incurred.
- The corollary - haste in the production of all his later books and compulsive work whose strain shortened his life.

The Historical Novel

- Scott was a born storyteller
- He was a master of virtually new literary form, the historical novel.

- He had deep knowledge of Scottish history and society and depicted the whole range of Scottish society, from beggars and rustics to the middle classes and the professions and on up to the landowning nobility.
- He used the technique of the omniscient narrator and in dialogues regional speech.
- Romantic themes treated in a realistic manner.

Scott's Influence

- His influence on other European and American novelists was immediate and profound
- interest in some of his books declined somewhat in the 20th century.

The English Gothic Novel

- novels published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century which expressed a vivid interest in the supernatural, the weird and the horrible, violence and unbridled passion, usually in a medieval settings.
- The most popular novels of the genre:
 - Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk* (1796)
 - Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818)
 - Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897),
 - Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

Queen Victoria

- In 1837 William IV (10 illegitimate children) was succeeded as monarch by his 18-year-old niece, Victoria.
- She was a religious mother of nine children, devoted to her husband, Prince Albert, and was regarded as the personification of contemporary morals.

Victorian virtues

- a close-knit family life, a sense of public duty, and respectability.
- evangelical religion
- utilitarian notions of efficiency and good business practice.

The age of reforms

- two politicians marked the period: William Ewart Gladstone and Benjamin Disraeli
- Women and children were barred from underground work in mines (1842) and limited to 10-hour working days in factories (1847).

Disraeli vs. Gladstone

Disraeli, greatly preferred by the queen;

- social reforms:
 - trade union legalization
 - slum clearance;
- also concerned with upholding the British Empire in Africa and Asia.

Gladstone saw politics in terms of moral principles;

- He introduced some of the most important Liberal legislation of the 19th century:
 - the creation of a national system of elementary education;
 - the full admission of religious dissenters to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge;
 - a merit-based civil service;
 - the secret ballot.

Irish Famine

- The winter of 1845-1846 marked by a potato blight in Ireland and the consequent Irish Famine.
- The blight returned in the winter of 1846, and the wheat harvest in Great Britain and continental Europe was poor.
- one million people are thought to have died between 1847 and 1851
- An estimated further two to three million immigrated to the United States, many of whom died en route.

Economic boom

- From the late 1840s until the late 1860s, Britain experienced an economic boom.
- The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London symbolized Great Britain's industrial supremacy.

The age of great inventions

- The railway network of 1850 more than doubled during the mid Victorian years, the number of passengers carried each year went up sevenfold.

- the telegraph provided instant long-distance communication
- inexpensive steel was made possible;
- steamship building began in the 1860s.
- The value of British exports tripled,
- overseas capital investments quadrupled.
- Working-class living standards also improved,
- the founding of the Trades Union Congress in 1868.

Late Victorian deflation

- unrest among Irish tenant farmers in the second half of the 19th century
- falling profit margins
- occasional large-scale unemployment
- the United States and Germany overtook Great Britain in the production of steel and other manufactured goods.

Britain Abroad

- Britain, in alliance with France and Turkey, entered the Crimean War (1854-56) against an expansionist Russia.
- In 1858 Britain abolished the rule of the East India Company and made India a crown colony; in 1877 Queen Victoria became Empress of India.

British Empire

- British arrogance about their culture and civilization.
- The British saw themselves as having the duty to spread their culture and civilization around the world.
- British arrogance about their culture and civilization.
- The British saw themselves as having the duty to spread their culture and civilization around the world.

Troubles Abroad

- in 1899 Britain entered the the Boer War which ended with a tarnished British victory in 1902 (concentration camps for the civilian Boer population).

The End of an Age (the Edwardian period: 1901-1910)

- In 1901 Queen Victoria died; she had ruled for 64 years.
- The rule of Victoria's successor, Edward VII, was in sharp contrast to that of his mother: the period was marked by never ending questioning of traditional opinions, institutions, and conventions.

VICTORIAN NOVEL

DICKENS, THACKERAY, THE BRONTËS

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

- * middle class origins;
- * his schooling ended at 15;
- * worked as:
 - * a clerk in a solicitor's office,
 - * a shorthand reporter at the law courts,
 - * a parliamentary and newspaper reporter.
- * In 1836 his *Pickwick Papers* appeared, and Dickens became the most popular author of the day.
- * started editing a monthly magazine, *Bentley's Miscellany*, in which *Oliver Twist* appeared between 1837 and 1839;
- * He became a public figure, praised for his after-dinner speeches, for his amateur acting and his reports in the press;
- * In the 1840s Dickens founded and edited several periodicals;
- * he remained the public's favourite until his sudden death in 1870.

Dickens's Early Novels

- * e.g. *Pickwick Papers*, often display overly sentimental and melodramatic passages that are loosely connected and lack solid structure.
- * As all his early works were published in serial form (just a collection of short stories and anecdotes, rather than complete novels?).
- * *Oliver Twist* stands out; although still containing humorous passages, it is already more focussed on social problems and moral evil.

Dickens's Later Period

- * his later period: he focuses on the social wrongs of contemporary society and finds virtue and human decency most often among the poor, humble and simple. (*David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Hard Times* and *Little Dorrit*).
- * His final novels (the 1860s); his finest achievements: *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend*.

Typical Features

- * attacking social evils and inadequate institutions;
- * topical issues;
- * situated in London;
- * a not very intellectual belief in benevolence, i.e. the conviction that the world would be a better place if people were nicer to each other. In his old age Dickens becomes more pessimistic;
- * Dickens's novels offer a fascinating and detailed description of all the classes forming the British society of his time.

Strong Characterisation

- * strong characterisation – label names (e.g. the Veneerings in *Our Mutual Friend*, emphasizing their superficiality) link the characters to one dominant feature or detail;
- * his characters do not develop and change during the novel and that some of them border on one-dimensional caricatures.

Women and Children

- * ideal of the passive and helpless woman;
- * Children are the pure and innocent representatives of humanity. Other characters are judged by their reaction to them: if you treat them well, this is the sign of your general goodness; if you treat them badly, this shows your deep corruption, and general sinfulness.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

- * born in Calcutta, India;
- * studied at Cambridge, but left for London without taking a degree;
- * considered painting as a profession for a while and went to Paris to study art where he soon lost all his fortune through gambling and bad investments;
- * a correspondent from Paris for his stepfather's newspaper;
- * Thackeray returned to London where he became a journalist.
- * Between 1847 and 1848, he published in monthly parts the novel *Vanity Fair* which brought him fame and prosperity.

Vanity Fair

- * a satirical and sometimes world-weary portrait of the top level of society;
- * two school friends, Amelia Sedley and Becky Sharp;
- * Becky fights her way up through society; she is good-looking, intelligent and ruthless,
- * Amelia is wealthy, well born and passive, the Victorian ideal of a good woman;
- * At the end: Amelia marries the good Colonel Dobbin, and Becky devotes herself to charitable works.

The Brontës

- * Their work expresses violence, passion, and the emotions;
- * they grew up in a remote but cultivated vicarage in Yorkshire;
- * Their novels were strongly influenced by Romanticism, e.g. Gothic plots and Byronic passions.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

- * her first novel, *Jane Eyre* (1847)
- * the governess Jane Eyre marries above her, and the man she loves, however, both parties have to undergo suffering (Rochester, the hero, for example is almost burnt alive)

- * *Jane Eyre* is at one and the same time a Cinderella, rags-to-riches story, a moral tract, and a novel of passion, love and mystery.

Emily Brontë (1818-1848)

- * her only novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847)
- * Emily died from tuberculosis in 1848 at the age of 30.
- * The novel generates its own morality, rising up above conventional morals and making them seem irrelevant to the great love affair that is at its centre.

Wuthering Heights

- * The novel is almost tragic in its scope, dealing in good and evil;
- * it is imbued with an elemental, primitive force (e.g. civilised people are kidnapped, and dealt with violently; a man starves himself to death willingly for the sake of along-dead lover; babies are dropped over banisters; anvils thrown at people; a pet spaniel hanged from a tree by the man who is going to marry the dog's owner; and a character beats his head against the tree in anguish until the blood flows).

THE LATER VICTORIAN NOVEL, VICTORIAN POETS AND THEATRE

The Later Victorian Novel

- * George Eliot
- * Thomas Hardy

George Eliot

- * Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880);
- * stern religious education; kept house for her father until his death in 1849.
- * took private lessons; influenced by the ideas of Ludwig Feuerbach and Auguste Comte, she lost her faith and embraced rationalism and positivist materialism.
- * After the death of her father, she lived with various friends for a while.
- * In 1851 she decided to move to London and work as a free-lance writer and as subeditor of *The Westminster Review*.
- * She fell in love with George Henry Lewes, a married journalist, and lived with him openly as his wife until his death. Encouraged by Lewes, she started writing stories which brought her instant success.
- * When Lewes died in 1878, Evans married her banker John Walter Cross, 19 years her junior, and died the same year.
- * Her reputation has declined lately and rests nowadays on her longer novels: *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), all of them providing close studies of English rural life, her masterpiece *Middlemarch* (1871-1872), a study of the life of a provincial town, and *Daniel Deronda* (1876), contemporary portrayal of a Jewish family.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

- * a son of a stonemason and jobbing builder, grew up in an isolated cottage in Dorset and was educated at local schools.
- * meagre formal education, intensive self study.
- * became apprenticed to an architect and worked as a draftsman in one of the leading architectural offices in London. When he was 32 he devoted himself completely to literature.
- * Between 1870 and 1900 Hardy wrote 14 novels, some of them the finest achievements of the period. But since his works got some brutally hostile reviews, he turned to poetry in the new century.
- * He published a total of 8 collections of poetry which brought him enormous fame at home and worldwide.
- * major prose works: the novels recreating the rural life in his fictional Wessex, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).
- * His novels proved particularly suitable for film and television adaptation.

Victorian Poets

- * Alfred Tennyson

- * Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning
- * Matthew Arnold
- * Gerard Manley Hopkins

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

- * born in Lincolnshire, the son of a rector; educated at Cambridge
- * went to Spain to support the unsuccessful revolution against Ferdinand VII.
- * left Cambridge without taking a degree.
- * In 1850 he happily married and published his elegies for Arthur Hallam, *In Memoriam*. His speculation about death and mortality proved immensely successful with reviewers, the public and the Queen, who appointed him poet laureate in succession to Wordsworth.
- * raised to the peerage in 1884.
- * the leading poet of the Victorian Age in England – the spokesman for the educated middle-class Englishman in every regard, from morality and religion to politics and literary taste - lost its appeal today.
- * Criticism: Tennyson's technical skill often covers up deficiencies in thought. Ideas matter a great deal less than sensations and musical quality in his poetry.

Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning

- * Robert Browning (1812-1889);
- * a slight formal education;
- * He started his literary career by writing plays in verse and long poems (1832-1846);
- * He married Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861), already an established writer and a semi-invalid and lived with her in Italy, mainly in Florence;
- * The most important works of Robert's last years were long narrative or dramatic poems, often dealing with contemporary themes.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)

- * educated at Oxford and worked for 35 years as an Inspector of Schools, travelling all over the country.
- * In 1857 he was elected to the Oxford chair of poetry which he held for 10 years.
- * theoretical approach to translation, arguing for the plainness and nobility in style (*On Translating Homer* (1861)).
- * an extremely important literary, social and religious critic.

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

- * a prosperous middle-class family; educated at Oxford.
- * became a member of the Jesuit order in 1868; served as parish priest in various Jesuit churches in London, Oxford, Liverpool and Glasgow. In 1884 he was appointed professor of Greek literature at University College in Dublin, where he also died.

- * Hopkins' poetry:
- * intense, spiritual, sensual and highly experimental for its time;
- * his language is consciously literary and full of new words, combined in surprising and original ways;
- * No conventional metrical structure;
- * Influenced immensely modern poetry, e.g. T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, W. H. Auden.

Victorian Theatre

- * only two theatres allowed by law in London, Covent Garden and Drury Lane;
- * Their monopoly ended in the middle of the 19th century.
- * early Victorian drama was a popular art form, appealing primarily to an uneducated audience.
- * the influence of two non-English dramatists: the Russian Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), and the Norwegian Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) who in his social drama offered a refreshing new blend of naturalism and symbolism.
- * In the 1890s, some outstanding dramatic innovations were introduced by two Irishmen: Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw.