Mohammed Kheidher University of Biskra
Faculty of letters & Foreign Languages
Department of English Language and Literature

Class: L1   **Module: Literary Text**

Instructor: Dr. BEN ABDERREZAK A.   **2nd semester**

Lecture One: The Old English Period or the Anglo-Saxon Period (450-1066)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

1. Outline the historical and cultural contexts of the Old English period.
2. Identify and analyze key literary works and their prevailing features.
3. Discuss the significance of works such as Beowulf and other Old English poems.

Prerequisites:

Before delving into the Old English period, please consider the following questions:

1. What are the key historical events and cultural influences that shaped Old English literature?
2. What are the unique characteristics of Old English poetry and prose, and how do they reflect the values and beliefs of the Anglo-Saxon people?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial:

Alliteration: The repetition of initial consonant sounds in closely connected words or syllables.

Epic: A long narrative poem celebrating heroic deeds.

Kenning: A metaphorical compound word used in Old English poetry (e.g., "whale-road" for the sea).

Introduction

English literature's history is intertwined with the history of the English people, evolving alongside the nation's social development and marked by religious, political, and scientific shifts. These changes have shaped distinct phases in English literature, each known as an Age or Period, often named after monarchs, prominent writers, or the prevailing spirit of the time. The period designations and durations may vary among historians, and some ages are further subdivided. This lecture adopts a framework adapted from M. H. Abrams (1996):

1. 450-1066: The Old English Period or The Anglo-Saxon Period
2. 1066-1500: The Middle English Period
a) The Anglo-Norman Period (1066-1340)
b) The Age of Chaucer (1340-1400)

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3. 1500-1660: The Renaissance Period
4. Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)
5. Jacobean Age (1603-1625)

1) The Old English Literature (450-1066)

The Anglo-Saxon period, a formative era in English history, commenced in the 5th century with the migration of Germanic tribes—the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons—to the British Isles. These groups, originating from regions in what is now Germany and Denmark, gradually asserted dominance over the existing Celtic population, establishing their own kingdoms and cultural practices. This influx reshaped the linguistic, social, and political landscape of Britain, laying the foundations for what would eventually become England.

During this time, Anglo-Saxon society developed distinct characteristics, including a hierarchical social structure with kings, nobles, and commoners. The Anglo-Saxons were skilled farmers, craftsmen, and warriors, and their culture was deeply rooted in Germanic traditions, including a pagan belief system that later transitioned to Christianity. Key political entities, such as the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, and Kent, emerged and often engaged in conflicts for supremacy, contributing to a dynamic and evolving geopolitical environment.

The Anglo-Saxon period drew to a close in 1066 with the Norman Conquest, a pivotal event that dramatically altered the course of English history. William the Conqueror's victory at the Battle of Hastings marked the end of Anglo-Saxon rule and ushered in a new era under Norman governance. This transition resulted in profound changes in language, law, and social structure, fundamentally transforming England and setting the stage for its medieval future.

2) Influencing Factors of the Literature of this Period

a) The Christianization of pagan tribes
b) The establishment of monasteries in the 7th century, fostering written literature.
c) Alfred the Great's encouragement of education and supervision of The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (871-901)
d) The presence of Anglo-Saxon culture and folklore.

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3) Major Literary Works of the Period

Beowulf is the earliest known English epic. Other significant works include "The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," "The Husband's Message," and "The Wife's Lament," recorded in the Exeter Book. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle represents the earliest English prose.

4) Prevailing Literary Features of the Age

The literary works of this period, particularly Beowulf, exhibit the following thematic and structural features:

1. Most works are anonymous
2. Paganism is dominant, though Christianity is also present
3. A strong belief in Fate is reflected
4. Evil is symbolized by monsters, while good is promoted through heroes
5. Romantic love is absent
6. Attitude towards women is respectful
7. Sea adventures and heroic activities are honored
8. Metaphors are favored over similes
9. Alliteration is a key poetic device, with stressed alliterative syllables
10. Kennings (compound words) are widely used (e.g., "whale-road" for the sea)
11. Verse lines lack a consistent number of syllables, varying from six to fourteen
12. End-rhyme is not typically used

Practice

Create a detailed timeline of the Anglo-Saxon period, including key events, rulers, and cultural developments.

Use a chronological format, marking significant events such as the arrival of the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, the conversion to Christianity, the rise and fall of different kingdoms (e.g., Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex), and the Norman Conquest. Include brief descriptions of each event's significance.

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Reference

- The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A historical record of events in Anglo-Saxon England, compiled and maintained by monks. It provides valuable insights into the political, social, and military history of the period.

- Beowulf: An epic poem that reflects the values, beliefs, and heroic ideals of Anglo-Saxon society. It offers a glimpse into their warrior culture, social structure, and mythological worldview.

- Campbell, James, John, Eric, & Wormald, Patrick. The Anglo-Saxons. Penguin Books, 1991. A comprehensive overview of Anglo-Saxon history, culture, and society, covering political, social, economic, and religious aspects.

- Stenton, Frank. Anglo-Saxon England. Oxford University Press, 1943. A classic study of the Anglo-Saxon period, providing detailed analysis of political institutions, social structures, and cultural developments.

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Lecture Two: The Middle English Period (1066-1500)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

- Outline the historical and cultural contexts of the Middle English period.
- Identify and analyze key literary works and their prevailing features.
- Discuss the significance of authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer and other Middle English writers.

Prerequisites

Before delving into the Middle English period, please consider the following questions:

- What were the key historical events and cultural shifts that shaped Middle English literature?
- How did the Norman Conquest impact the English language and literature?
- What are the defining characteristics of Middle English literature, and how do they reflect the values and beliefs of the people of this era?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial

- **Chivalry:** A code of conduct associated with medieval knighthood, emphasizing honor, courtesy, and service.
- **Romance:** A narrative genre characterized by idealized settings, heroic characters, and themes of love and adventure.
- **Satire:** The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices.

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Introduction

English literature mirrors the social, religious, political, and scientific changes in English society. Each period, often named after monarchs or dominant literary figures, reflects the era's spirit. This lecture focuses on the Middle English Period (1066-1500), a transformative era marked by the Norman Conquest and the rise of English as a literary language.

The framework for understanding English literature includes:

- 450-1066: The Old English Period
- 1066-1500: The Middle English Period
- The Anglo-Norman Period (1066-1340)
- The Age of Chaucer (1340-1400)
- 1500-1660: The Renaissance Period

1. The Middle English Period (1066-1500)

The Middle English Period began with the Norman Conquest in 1066 and concluded at the end of the 15th century. This era is divided into two sub-periods: the Anglo-Norman Period (1066-1340) and the Age of Chaucer (1340-1400). The early part of the Middle Ages is sometimes referred to as the Dark Ages due to limited historical documentation.

2. Influencing Factors of the Literature of this Period

Several significant events and cultural shifts influenced the literature of the Middle English Period:

1) **Establishment of the English Parliament (1295):** This marked a step towards a more structured governance system.
2) **The Crusades (11th-13th centuries):** These religious wars between Christians and Muslims exposed Europeans to new cultures and ideas.
3) **Magna Carta (1215):** This charter limited the power of the monarch, asserting certain rights for the English people.
4) **English as the Language of Law (1362):** The declaration of English as the language of law and courts elevated its status over French in British institutions.

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5) **Decline of the Norman Feudal System:** This followed the Black Death (1348-1349), which led to significant social and economic changes.

6) **John Wycliffe's Reformation:** Wycliffe initiated reforms within the English Church, challenging its authority.

7) **Establishment of the Printing Press (1476):** William Caxton's printing press facilitated the wider dissemination of literature and knowledge.

8) **The Renaissance:** The influx of Christian scholars into Europe, including Britain, led to a revival of classical knowledge, fostering interests in patriotism, adventure, and humanism.

3. Major Authors and Their Works

Several authors left an indelible mark on the Middle English Period:

- John Wycliffe (1324-1384): Known as the "father of English prose," he translated the Bible from Latin to English, significantly impacting the accessibility of religious texts.

- John Gower (1325-1408): Notable for writing Confessio Amantis, a long poem that explores themes of love and morality.

- Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400): Arguably the most important writer of the period, Chaucer penned Troilus and Criseyde and the renowned Canterbury Tales, which offers a vivid depiction of medieval society.

- William Langland (1332-1386): Authored Piers Plowman, a notable allegorical poem addressing social and religious issues.

- Sir Thomas Malory (1485): Wrote Morte Darthur, considered the first prose romance in English, retelling the Arthurian legends.

4. The Literary Characteristics

- The Middle English Period saw significant shifts in literary styles and themes:

- Poetry as the Main Genre: Poetry continued to be a dominant form of literary expression.

- Emergence of English Prose: Prose writing in English gained a stronger foothold.

- Standardization of English: The English language evolved, reaching a more standardized form.

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- Development of Drama: Drama emerged in forms such as "Mystery Plays," "Morality Plays," and "Interludes."

- Influence of Italian Authors: Writers were influenced by Italian authors like Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

- Dominant Themes: Love, chivalry, and religion were central literary subjects.

- Rise of Romance: The spirit of romance became a defining characteristic, contrasting with the Old English period.

- Introduction of Pentameter: The use of pentameter (ten syllables per line) began to appear in poetry.

- Use of End-Rhyme: End-rhyme was introduced as a common poetic device.

- Shift in Poetic Style: Stressed alliteration declined, while humor, irony, and satire gained prominence.

Practice

Research and compare the social structures depicted in Beowulf (Old English) and The Canterbury Tales (Middle English). How did these literary works reflect the evolving societal norms and values of their respective periods.

References

- Gordon Hall Gerould, Saints' Legends. An examination of the narratives surrounding saints, reflecting the religious sentiments of the Middle Ages.

- John Wycliffe, The Bible. Translated from Latin to English, Wycliffe's Bible made religious texts more accessible and influenced the development of English prose.

- J.A. Burrow, Medieval Writers and Their Work. A study of medieval literary figures and their contributions, providing context for understanding their works.

- Walter W. Skeat, ed., The Vision of William Concerning Piers Plowman. An edition of Langland's allegorical poem, offering insights into the social and religious issues of the time.

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Lecture Three: The Renaissance Period (1500-1660)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

- Outline the historical and cultural contexts of the Renaissance Period, particularly the Elizabethan Age.
- Identify and analyze key literary works and their prevailing features during the Elizabethan Era.
- Discuss the significance of major authors such as William Shakespeare and Edmund Spenser.

Prerequisites

Before delving into the Renaissance Period, please consider the following questions:

- What were the key historical events and cultural shifts that marked the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance?
- How did the Renaissance spirit influence the literature and arts of the Elizabethan Age?
- What are the defining characteristics of Elizabethan literature, and how do they reflect the values and beliefs of the time?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial

- **Humanism:** A philosophical stance that emphasizes the potential and agency of human beings, focusing on reason and empirical evidence.
- **Renaissance:** A period in European history marking the transition from the Middle Ages to modernity, characterized by a revival of interest in classical art and literature.
- **Secularism:** The principle of separation of the state from religious institutions.

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Introduction

The Renaissance, which began in 1453, significantly impacted English life and literature after 1500. The Renaissance Period, spanning from the early 16th century to the Restoration in 1660, is characterized by the spirit of rebirth and innovation that defined its literature. This 160-year period is divided into four sub-periods, named after their respective political rulers: the Elizabethan Age (1558-1603), the Jacobean Age (1603-1625), the Caroline Age (1625-1649), and the Commonwealth Period (1649-1660). This lecture focuses on the Elizabethan Age, a pivotal era within the broader Renaissance Period.

1. Elizabethan Age (1558-1603)

Named after Queen Elizabeth I, who reigned from 1558 to 1603, this era is often celebrated as the Golden Age of English literature. The Elizabethan Age saw a flourishing of arts and culture, driven by political stability and economic prosperity. This period produced some of the most iconic works in the English language, marking a high point in English literary history.

2. Influencing Factors of the Literature

Several factors contributed to the literary flourishing of the Elizabethan Age:

- Political Stability: Queen Elizabeth I's accession ended royal problems and political unrest, leading to national prosperity through religious and social stability.

- Religious Reformation: This inspired religious open-mindedness and secularism, fostering a more diverse intellectual environment.

- Anglicanism: Introduced by Elizabeth I to resolve religious conflicts between Protestants and Catholics, Anglicanism brought stability and prosperity to England.

- Land Discoveries: The land discoveries of the previous decades brought unprecedented wealth and resources.

- Renaissance Ideals: The Renaissance, with its emphasis on classical Greek and Roman wisdom, strongly influenced England. Scholars like Erasmus and John Colet promoted humanism and Renaissance ideals, fostering intellectual and artistic growth.

- Nationalism: A strong sense of nationalism pervaded English society.

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- Prevailing Ideals: Factors such as humanism, liberal religious views, scientific curiosity, social contentment, intellectual progress, and boundless enthusiasm further enriched literary creations.

3. Major Authors and Their Works

The Elizabethan Age was marked by a constellation of talented writers:

- Thomas More (1478-1535): Authored Utopia (1516), a seminal work of political philosophy written in Latin, envisioning an ideal society.

- Norton (1532-1584) and Sackville (1536-1608): Collaborated on Gorboduc (1562), the first English tragedy.

- Edmund Spenser (1552-1599): Known as "the poet of poets," Spenser wrote The Faerie Queen (1590) and The Shepherd's Calendar (1579), influencing many subsequent English poets with his artistry.

- Nicholas Udall: Penned Ralph Roister Doister (1553), the first English comedy.

- Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586): Known for An Apology for Poetry (1595), a critical treatise, and Arcadia (1590), which laid the groundwork for the English novel.

- John Lyly (1554-1606): One of the "University Wits," known for works such as Campaspe (1584), Sapho and Phao (1584), Midas (1589), and Euphues (1579).

- Thomas Kyd (1557-1595): Another of the "University Wits," notable for The Spanish Tragedy (1585).

- Robert Greene (1558-1592): A "University Wit," known for Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay (1589) and James IV (1591).

- George Peele (1558-1598): Another "University Wit," wrote David and Bethsabe (1599) and Arraignment of Paris (1584).

- Francis Bacon (1561-1626): Known as a natural philosopher, Bacon authored Essays (1597).

- Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593): A "University Wit," famous for Tamburlaine the Great Parts I & II (1587-1588), The Jew of Malta (1589), Edward II (1591), and Doctor Faustus (1592).

- William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Arguably the greatest English dramatist, celebrated for his profound understanding of human psychology, wrote 37 plays and 154 sonnets, including Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and A Midsummer Night's Dream.

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- Thomas Nashe (1567-1601): A "University Wit" known for The Unfortunate Traveller (1594).

- Ben Jonson (1573-1637): A neoclassicist, known for plays such as Every Man out of His Humour (1600) and Every Man in His Humour (1601), adhering to classical dramatic rules.

- Beaumont (1584-1616) and Fletcher (1579-1625): Collaborated on Philaster (1611), A King and No King (1611), and The Maid's Tragedy (1610).

4. Prevailing Literary Features

The Elizabethan Age was characterized by:

- Artistic Genius: An extraordinary display of artistic talent across various literary forms.

- Dramatic and Poetic Innovation: Novelty in dramatic and poetic forms and techniques.

- Renaissance Influence: The Renaissance spirit served as the pivotal influence, largely inspired by Italian, French, and Spanish Renaissance literature.

- Romantic Enthusiasm: A style marked by romantic enthusiasm.

- Male Dominance: The dominance of writings produced by men from all social classes.

- Literary Excellence: An age of fine poetry, incomparable drama, and fine prose.

- Shift in Perspective: A shift from emphasizing fate to emphasizing free will.

- Language Development: The development of the English language to a stable and standardized form.

- Character Diversity: A range from Platonic idealism or pleasant romance to coarse realism.

- Pursuit of the Extraordinary: A pursuit of the remote, the wonderful, and the beautiful.

- Romanticism: A unique form of romanticism that foreshadowed the Romantic Age of 1798.

- Literary Criticism: The emergence of literary criticism due to the increase of analytic spirit among intellectuals.

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Practice

Compare and contrast the themes and styles of Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus and William Shakespeare's Hamlet. How do these plays reflect the intellectual and cultural currents of the Elizabethan Age?

References

- E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage. A comprehensive overview of the theaters, actors, and dramatic practices of the Elizabethan era.
- Stephen Greenblatt, Renaissance Self-Fashioning. An exploration of how individuals constructed their identities during the Renaissance, influencing literary representations.
- C.S. Lewis, English Literature in the Sixteenth Century. A critical analysis of the major literary works and trends of the period.
- Paul Whitfield White, Theatre and Reformation. An examination of the relationship between religious reform and the development of English theater during the Renaissance.

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Lecture Four: The Renaissance Period (1500-1660)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

- Outline the historical and cultural contexts of the Jacobean Age within the broader Renaissance Period.
- Identify and analyze key literary works and their prevailing features during the Jacobean Era.
- Discuss the significance of major authors such as William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and John Donne in the Jacobean Age.

Prerequisites

Before delving into the Jacobean Age, please consider the following questions:

- How did the reign of James I differ from that of Elizabeth I, and what impact did these differences have on literature and culture?
- What were the major religious and political tensions of the Jacobean Age, and how were these reflected in the literature of the time?
- How did the literary styles and themes of the Jacobean Age evolve from those of the Elizabethan Era?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial

- Metaphysical Poetry: A style of poetry that explores abstract and philosophical concepts through complex metaphors and intellectual wit.
- Puritanism: A religious reform movement within the Church of England that sought to purify it of perceived Roman Catholic practices.
- Realism: The attribute of accepting the facts of life and favoring practicality and literal truth

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Introduction

Following the Elizabethan Age, the Renaissance Period continued with the Jacobean Age (1603-1625), named after James I, who ruled England after Elizabeth's death. While the Renaissance spirit persisted, the Jacobean era brought its own distinct influences and literary characteristics. Some historians also identify a "Puritan Age" (1620-1660) within this period, noting Puritanism's growing influence on English life and literature.

1. Jacobean Age (1603-1625)

The Jacobean Age, named after James I (from the Latin "Jacobus"), spans from 1603 to 1625. While some consider the last five years of this period as part of the Puritan Age (1620-1660), the era is generally defined by James I's reign and its distinctive cultural and literary trends.

2. The Important Facts which Influenced the Literature of this Period

Several key factors influenced the literature of the Jacobean Age:

- Expansion of Colonial Territories: Continued expansion of English colonies, impacting trade and cultural exchange

- Religious Conflict: Resurgence of religious conflict, with Protestants divided into Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Puritans

- Renaissance Influence: Continued influence of the Renaissance, albeit with evolving expressions

- Union of Scotland and England: Scotland was brought under the rule of the King of England, leading to political and cultural integration.

- 3) Major Writers of the Period and Their Major Works

- The Jacobean Age featured both established and emerging literary talents:

- William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Though primarily known as an Elizabethan playwright, Shakespeare wrote twelve significant plays during the Jacobean Age, including Measure for Measure (1604), Othello (1604), Macbeth (1605), King Lear (1605), and The Tempest (1611). Despite composing these plays in the Jacobean Age, he is typically regarded as an Elizabethan playwright, and the period from 1590-1616 is often termed the Shakespearean Age.

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- Ben Jonson (1573-1637): Having started his career in the Elizabethan Period, Jonson wrote well-known plays such as Volpone (1605), The Silent Woman (1609), and The Alchemist (1610).

- Francis Bacon (1561-1626): Continued writing and published Advancement of Learning (1605) and Novum Orgum (1620). New essays were added to the edition of his Essays (1625).

- John Webster (1580-1625): Known for his dark and intense tragedies, including The White Devil (1612) and The Duchess of Malfi (1614).

- Cyril Tourneur (1575-1626): Authored The Revenger's Tragedy (1600) and The Atheist's Tragedy (1611).

- John Donne (1572-1631) and George Herbert (1593-1633): These metaphysical poets began writing during this period, known for their intellectual and complex verse.

3. Prevailing Literary Features of the Age

The Jacobean Age exhibited distinct literary characteristics:

- Decline of Elizabethan Verse: The grace and felicity of Elizabethan verse began to diminish.
- Shift from Idealism to Realism: The Platonic idealism of the Elizabethan era waned, with a greater emphasis on realism.
- Continued Renaissance Influence: The spirit of the Renaissance remained a primary influence.
- Drama as the Dominant Genre: Drama continued to dominate the literary scene.
- Classical Rules Maintained: Ben Jonson and others maintained the classical rules of drama.
- Poetic Innovation: Poetry took new and surprising directions, particularly with the rise of metaphysical poetry.
- Decadence of Art: A sense of decadence began to emerge, with increased vulgarity in some works.
- Development of English Language: The English language continued to develop.
- Emergence of Satire: Satirical art began to gain prominence.

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Practice

Analyze John Webster's The Duchess of Malfi as a representation of Jacobean tragedy. How does it reflect the era's concerns with power, corruption, and morality?

References

- David Norbrook, Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance. Explores the intersection of poetic expression and political dynamics during the Renaissance.
- Jonathan Dollimore, Radical Tragedy. Examines the subversive elements in Renaissance tragedy, challenging traditional interpretations.
- Lisa Jardine, Reading Shakespeare Historically. Offers a historical perspective on Shakespeare's works, considering their cultural and political contexts.
- Margot Heinemann, Puritanism and Theatre. Discusses the complex relationship between Puritanism and theatrical culture in the period.

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Lecture Five: The English Novel (part one)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

- Define the novel as a literary genre and trace its historical evolution.
- Identify the key factors that contributed to the rise of the novel in the 18th century.
- Discuss the characteristics of early novels and their representation of real-life characters and plots.

Prerequisites

Before delving into the English novel, please consider the following questions:

- What are the key differences between a novel and other forms of narrative literature, such as short stories or romances?
- How did the social and cultural changes of the 18th century influence the development of the novel?
- Who were some of the early pioneers of the novel, and what innovations did they bring to the genre?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial

- **Genre:** A category of artistic composition, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.
- **Narrative:** A spoken or written account of connected events; a story.
- **Prose:** Written or spoken language in its ordinary form, without metrical structure.

Introduction

The novel, as a distinct literary genre, has evolved significantly over time. While the term "novel" once referred to short stories like those in Boccaccio's Decameron, it has come to denote a more complex and lengthy fictitious prose narrative that portrays characters and

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actions representative of real life. Although it is now the most widely read literary genre, the novel is relatively new, with its rise occurring primarily in the 18th century.

1. Historical Background of the Novel

Initially, until the 17th century, the word "Novel" described short stories akin to those written by Boccaccio in his Decameron (1313-1375). By 1700, its definition evolved, as described in The Oxford Dictionary, to a "fictitious prose narrative of substantial length in which characters and actions are representative of real-life and are portrayed in a plot of a certain complexity." Modern novels are longer, more realistic, and more intricate than the Italian novellas of Boccaccio's time. By the 18th century, novel reading had become a popular pastime, especially among upper-class women, offering an escape into satisfying dreams.

2. Novel Defined

Defining the novel precisely is challenging due to its varied structures and purposes throughout its development. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines the novel as "a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity." This definition emphasizes 'prose,' denoting everyday language without poetic rhythm.

The length of a novel distinguishes it from short stories, although some shorter novels are termed 'novellas'. The word "novel" is derived from the Latin "Novellus," the Italian "novella," and the French "Nouvelle," all meaning "a small new thing." Boccaccio popularized novella collections with his Decameron in the 14th century. By the 18th century, the term "novel" evolved to mean "prose narrative of considerable length."

3. Rise of the Novel

Literary critics generally consider the 18th century as the period in which the novel was born and developed. Writers of the 18th century, building on the works of predecessors such as Bunyan, Chaucer, Malory, Cervantes, and Boccaccio, experimented and established the novel as a distinct literary form. A rise in literacy, the Industrial Revolution, the growth of the middle class, and the establishment of libraries created favorable conditions for the novel's rise.

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In this new literary form, stories shifted from romance to realistic portrayals of middle-class pragmatism and morality. Alexander Pope's dictum, "The proper study of mankind is men," influenced the study of human character. 18th-century novels explored human characters, with novelists creating realistic characters, unlike the giants and superhuman figures in romances.

4. Factors that Influenced the Rise of the Novel

Several factors contributed to the rise of the novel:

- Industrial Revolution: The development of industries provided people with more leisure time, which they used for reading novels.
- Printing Press: The printing press made books more affordable, expanding readership beyond the aristocracy to those with lower salaries.
- Availability of Newspapers and Magazines: Increased reading habits led people to read novels, some of which were serialized in magazines. The Industrial Revolution facilitated the rise of the middle class, who sought reading material about their everyday experiences, encouraging authors like Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding to write realistic prose fiction.
- Decline of Romance and Drama: Romances, once popular among the aristocracy, lost readership due to their unrealistic and uninteresting stories. Theaters were closed during Cromwell's rule in the 17th century, reducing the appeal of drama.
- Rise of the Middle Class: The Industrial Revolution led to a larger, wealthier middle class, who sought literature suited to their tastes. Women readers increased as high-status women engaged in reading.
- Mobile Libraries: Mobile libraries provided easy access to books, particularly benefiting women by delivering books to homes.

Practice

Discuss how the rise of the middle class in the 18th century influenced the themes and characters in early English novels.

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References

- Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel. A seminal study exploring the social, economic, and philosophical factors that contributed to the development of the novel in the 18th century.

- Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740. An in-depth analysis of the cultural and intellectual contexts that shaped the early novel.

- John Richetti, The English Novel in History, 1700-1780. Examines the historical forces that influenced the novel during its formative period.

- Margaret Anne Doody, The True Story of the Novel. A comprehensive account of the novel's history, tracing its roots back to ancient Greece and Rome.

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Class: L1   Module: Literary Text

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Lecture Six: The English Novel (Part Two)

Tutorial Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, students will be able to:

- Identify and define various types of novels within English literature.

- Provide examples of each novel type, citing key authors and works.

- Understand the distinguishing characteristics and historical context of each novel type.

Prerequisites

Before exploring the types of novels, please consider the following questions:

- What are the key elements that define a novel, such as plot, character, and setting?

- How do different types of novels reflect different social, cultural, and historical contexts?

- What are some of the most well-known examples of each type of novel, and what makes them significant?

Terminology Used in This Tutorial

- Genre: A category of artistic composition, characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter.

- Protagonist: The main character in a literary work.

- Satire: The use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices.

Introduction

The English novel encompasses various types, each with distinct characteristics and historical contexts. These types reflect different narrative styles, themes, and cultural influences. This lecture will define and exemplify several key types of novels within English literature, drawing from M.H. Abrams's classifications.

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1. Types of Novels

The English novel includes several distinct types, each with unique characteristics. Here are some of the key types:

1.1) Picaresque Novel

Definition: Originating in Spain, the picaresque novel (from the Spanish "pícaro," meaning "rogue") features a wandering hero who experiences a series of loosely connected adventures

Characteristics: This type is episodic, realistic, and often satirical. It typically follows the adventures of a roguish protagonist as they travel to different places.

Examples:

- Don Quixote (1605) by Cervantes (Spanish origin)
- The Unfortunate Traveller by Thomas Nashe

1.2) Epistolary Novel

Definition: An epistolary novel is told through a series of letters exchanged between characters (from the word "epistle," meaning letter)

Characteristics: The narrative unfolds through the correspondence of the main characters, providing insight into their thoughts and relationships.

Examples:

- Pamela or Virtue Rewarded (1740) by Samuel Richardson.
- Clarissa Harlowe (1748) by Samuel Richardson.
- Sir Charles Grandison (1753) by Samuel Richardson.

1.3) Domestic Novel

Definition: A domestic novel focuses on the social and daily lives of its characters.

Characteristics: These novels often depict the everyday experiences and relationships within a particular social setting.

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Examples:

- Works by Fanny Burney (early examples)
- Novels by Jane Austen (renowned for her domestic novels)

1.4) Gothic Novel

Definition: The Gothic novel, also known as the "Novel of Terror," emerged in the late 18th century. The term "Gothic" initially referred to Germanic tribes and then to the medieval period.

Characteristics: These novels are characterized by elements of the supernatural, terror, mystery, and often feature dark and scenic settings.

Examples:

The Castle of Otranto (1764) by Horace Walpole.

Wuthering Heights (1847) by Emily Brontë (employs gothic elements).

1.5) Historical Novel

Definition: A historical novel is a fictional narrative set in the past, aiming to depict historical events and periods with artistic imagination.

Characteristics: These novels blend historical accuracy with fictional storytelling, providing insight into past eras.

Examples:

- Novels by Sir Walter Scott (considered the pioneer of the historical novel)
- Rob Roy (1817) by Sir Walter Scott
- Ivanhoe (1820) by Sir Walter Scott

1.6) The Comic Novel

Definition: Comic novels place characters in absurd situations, often with a negative vision of life.

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Characteristics: Absurdity and strangeness are emphasized, and the novels can be both brutal and humorous.

Examples:

- The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (1759) by Laurence Sterne.
- The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748) by Tobias Smollett.

Practice

Compare and contrast the characteristics of the picaresque novel and the historical novel. How do these types of novels reflect different aspects of human experience?

References

- M.H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms. A comprehensive reference book defining and explaining various literary terms and genres.
- Ernest A. Baker, The History of the English Novel. A multi-volume study tracing the development of the English novel from its origins to the 20th century.
- Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism. An influential work of literary theory that explores the archetypes and structures underlying different literary genres.
- David Daiches, The Novel and the Modern World. Examines the evolution of the novel in the context of modern social and intellectual changes.