



Otázka: The Outline Of The British Literature And Some Representatives

Jazyk: Angličtina

Přidal(a): Khut

1) From Early Beginnings To 18th Century

Anglo-Saxon period (Old English)

8th – first half of 11th century

- The first mention of British literature
- Chronicles, records of battles, religious writing
- **Beowulf** – Germanic legend and heroic poem about a strong warrior Beowulf from Scandinavia who is ordered by the king of the Danes to slay a monster Grendel. Beowulf successfully slays the monster but lately is attacked by its mother. At the end they kill each other.
- **King Alfred the Great: The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle** – a collection of annals which are chronologically describing the history of the Anglo-Saxons and the main events.

Middle Ages (Middle English)

Second half of 11th century – 14th/15th century

- French, Latin, Middle-English dialects
- Norman Conquest of England (1066), Magna Carta (1215), English = the dominant language (13th century), Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), Black Death (1348),

- War of the Roses (1455-1485), innovations of William Caxton – printing (1472)
- Development of English (Old → Middle), heroism, romance, chivalry, impersonality/anonymity
- **John Wycliffe: Bible translation into English** – influenced Master John Huss
- **Geoffrey Chaucer (poet in 14th century): The Canterbury tales** – one of the first major works in literature written in English, a collection of stories about a pilgrimage (30 of them) to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury, Kent., verbal irony, mockery and sarcasm

Renaissance and Humanism

Elizabethan Age/literature (the golden age)

Second half of 16th century

- Drama flourished, the Scientific Movement (the founder – Francis Bacon)
- **Edmund Spenser (poet): The Faerie Queen's** – a poem about the adventures of a number of medieval knights (the legends of Arthur)
- **Walter Raleigh (poet)**
- **William Shakespeare (playwright)**
 - (April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon – April 1616 in Stratford-upon-Avon in England)
 - An English playwright, poet and actor
 - Considered as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's greatest dramatist. Also often called England's national poet or "the Bard".
 - His plays were translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.
 - He has expanded dramatic potential of characterisation, plot, language, and genre (romance had not been viewed as a worthy topic for tragedy until Romeo and Juliet)
 - Influenced novelists such as Thomas Hardy, Herman Melville or Charles Dickens.
 - **Historical plays: King John, Richard II., Henry IV.**
 - **Comedies: All's Well That Ends Well, The Merchant of Venice, Measure for Measure**



- **Tragedies: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet**

Revolution and Restoration, Puritanism (Classicism)

Literature of 17th century (age of prose and reason)

- A shift from an age of faith to an age of reason
- Turbulence in society, religion, the monarchy of this period, civil war
- **John Milton (poet): Paradise Lost** – is about “Man’s first Disobedience toward the God”, biblical story of Adam and Eve, their temptation by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden
- **John Dryden (poet, satirist and playwright): The Medal, All for Love**
- **John Bunyan: Pilgrim’s Progress**

The Enlightenment, Age of Reason/Sensibility

Neoclassical Age (1660-1798)

18th century

- Scientific Revolution (Newton, Galileo), intellectual movement, knowledge, freedom, happiness, believe to create better societies and people, reason, individualism, scepticism
- Dictionary of English language (Samuel Johnson)
- **Alexander Pope (poet and satirist): The Rape of the Lock** – is about a young woman who has a lock of hair stolen by a young man (theft), the word “rape” means to snatch or carry off
- **Jonathan Swift (prose satirist): A Modest Proposal** – a proposal and a savage comment on England’s legal and economic exploitation of Ireland, where the essay proposes to butcher the children of the Irish poor and sell them as a food to wealthy English landlords, so the country’s poverty could improve
- **Daniel Defoe (novelist): Robinson Crusoe** – thanks to it he is considered the father of realism, it is an adventure story about a young man who defies his parent’s wishes and takes to the seas seeking adventure. During his voyage he is



shipwrecked and castaway on a remote tropical island for 28 years. There he meets his new friend Friday, who he is desperately trying to survive day-to-day with. At the end they are both saved and sailed back to Europe.

2) From 19th Century Up To Now

Romantic Age (Romanticism)

19th century

- Celebration of nature and the common man, focus on individual experience, an idealization of women, isolation, melancholy, subjectivity, spontaneity [spontinijety], freedom from rules, imagination is superior to reason, expression of personal feelings and emotions
- Industrial Revolution
- **William Wordsworth (poet): Lyrical Ballads** – effortless use of language, comparing nature to everyday life, lyrical rhythm
- **Sir Walter Scott (founder of a historical novel): Ivanhoe** – a story of one of the remaining Anglo-Saxon noble families at a time when the nobility in England was overwhelmingly Norman, protagonist Ivanhoe is out of favour with his father for his allegiance to the Norman king Richard the Lionheart
- **Lord Byron (poet and satirist): Childe Harold's Pilgrimage** – autobiographical poem
- **The satiric realism of Don Juan** – a story about a famous lover and rascal who has made more than a thousand sexual conquest. One day he is trying to seduce a young woman, when her father catches him and challenges him to a duel. In a duel the father of a young woman is killed and Don Juan is then hunted. The story continues when Don Juan pass around the grave of the dead father. When the voice comes out of the grave, Don Juan jokingly invites the voice to a dinner. At the end of the story the voice of the corpse comes to dinner and then Don Juan is dragged off to Hell.
- **Percy Bysshe Shelly: Ode to the West Wind** – a poem about the wind and its power to even change the nature, reform in society, optimism, hope for a better future



Critical Realism (Victorian Age)

Second half of 19th century

- During the reign of Queen Victoria (flourished)
- British working class Movement
- Exposing and criticizing the social darkness and corruption, sympathy towards the poor (the society appeals to help), coming up with some improvement measures to help but not completely solve the whole problem
- Origin of Species (Charles Darwin) – a clash between faith and reason
- **Charles Dickens (novelist): Oliver Twist** – a story about a poor young orphan, who tries to somehow survive the harsh society
- **William Makepeace Thackeray (novelist): The Luck of Barry Lyndon** – historical fiction
- **Charlotte Bronte (novelist): Jane Eyre** – a story about an independent young governess who overcomes hardships while remaining true to her principles, moral realism

Only Victorian Age:

- **Oscar Wilde (novelist): The Picture of Dorian Gray, The Importance of Being Earnest (comedy), The Canterville Ghost (horror)**

Modern Age

First half of 20th century

- WW1, Great Depression, WW2
- Fragmented society (individualism), decline in civilization (degradation in humanity), functioning of mind, Stream of Consciousness (= continuous flow of character's thoughts, feelings, and reactions uninterrupted by objective description), non-linearity in plots, symbolism, experimentation, absurdity
- **T. S. Eliot (poet): Waste Land** – a leader of the Modernist movement in poetry, that poem is about brokenness and loss – WW1 brings social, psychological, and emotional collapse
- **James Joyce (Irish novelist): Ulysses** – experimental use of language, new literary methods, complexity, symbolism, stream of consciousness in Ulysses

- **George Orwell (novelist): Animal Farm** – inspiration from his experiences during the Spanish Civil War, an allegory novel (satirical) about a belief of revolution (a group of farm animals rebelling against their human farmer and hoping to create a society of equality, freedom and happiness among them)
- **Nineteen Eighty-four** – anti-utopian novel, theme: to warn of the dangers of totalitarianism [totalitairinism] (a low ranking member of the party who is frustrated by the omnipresent eyes of the party and its ominous [ómins] ruler)
- **D. H. Lawrence (novelist and poet): Lady Chatterley's Lover, The Rainbow** – the nature of relationships, possibilities for life within an industrial setting
- **B. Shaw (dramatist): Pygmalion** – criticism of whole society, was made in the world famous musical My Fair Lady
- **J. R. R. Tolkien (fantasy novels): The Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit**

Postmodern Age

Second half of 20th century – nowadays

- Irony, scepticism, disorientation, absurdity, theatre of absurd, confessional poetry, angry young men (dissatisfaction with American society)
- **Agatha Christie (detective novelist and playwright): Murder on the Orient Express** – most famous mystery writer
- **Samuel Beckett (playwright): Waiting for Godot** – the Theatre of the Absurd, the play consists of conversations between two protagonists, who are waiting for the arrival of Godot who will never appear
- **John Osborne (playwright): Look Back in Anger** – first of the Angry Young Men
- **J. K. Rowling (novelist): Harry Potter series** – about a wizard and his adventures in school