DR. ABDULMAJID HUSSEIN COLLEGE OF TEACHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Survey of African and World Literature (Enla 363)

Compiled by

Mulu Desta Ashene

Editor

Gezahegn Fekadu

Reviewer

Ibrahin Bashir

Dr.AHCTE

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I. Overview of the course

Survey of African and World literature is designed for Degree program student-teachers are trained to receive degrees in teaching English in Primary and Middle Level Schools. It is a consecutive review of African and the World Literature. The African Literature gives due concerns to the pre- colonial to post-colonial eras. It is intended to inform the learners, through the study of illustrative works, with such major factors or influences as oral literature, Islam, Missionary activities, Colonialism, Negritude and post-independent themes /issues.

Similarly, the Survey of the world literature part is intended to acquaint students with the necessary knowledge of the world literature, the various historical developments, the different literary periods and the works of literary icons all through the literary periods. It familiarizes the learners with the literary genres from the early and the most ancient times to the modern and the postmodern periods in the literary history.

The course amuses issues in the development of African and the World Literature through surveying different literary texts in English; reading, analyzing and interpreting selected texts in respective to linguistic, historical and sociological viewpoints. It engages students in examining the preoccupations of, mainly, major African writers and current trends and issues in the form and content of post-independence African writings to mention just a few. Moreover, the philosophical dimensions of the literary works along with their multiple social, cultural and political functions would be examined to learn about the world's literary history. It is also aimed at study the cultural artifacts of the world's philosophical attachments as they become meaningful for the learners in the study of literature.

II. How to use this module

Dear students, you are advised to first to try the brainstorming exercises and compare your answers with the notes that follow the questions. The module is compiled so as to be user friendly and to help you follow some of the activities by yourself. There are also checklists and/or self-test activities and summaries at the end of each unit. Then you are expected to evaluate your unit performance by using the checklists given (and answer keys in some cases). The summaries are also important to have a brief comprehension of the details discussed, and therefore they can be used wisely one day before you take tests.

III. Minimum Learning Competencies of the course

Dear students when you complete studying this course, you will able to:

- List historical background of African literature;
- Explain what African literature entails;
- Distinguish the different types of African oral literature;
- Discuss issues on colonial and post – independent African literature ;
- Identify the necessary knowledge of the world literature, the various historical developments, the different literary periods and the works of literary icons all through the literary periods;
- Recognize the literary genres from the early and the most ancient times to the modern and the postmodern periods in the literary history.

Unit One: Introduction

Dear students, this unit presents the introductory part of African literature, and this introduction is followed by definitions of African literature suggested by different scholars. Besides this, the nature of African literature is also a part of this unit. Generally, this course provides essential knowledge on the concepts of African literature by providing the basic language ideas and discussing the general nature of literature. Literacy is best taught by teachers and best achieved by students when there is a strong connection with the associated language features.

Activity 1.1. Before you proceed on to reading the whole introductions please try to answer the following questions and write your answers in a piece of paper so that you can compare your answers and the information in the note.

---

1. How many countries are there in the content of Africa?

   _____

2. Can you also guess the number of languages spoken in the continent?

   _____

3. What do you think of cultural state of Africans? Is it possible to say there are more cultural similarities or differences in the continent?

   _____

4. Howe many nations languages?

   _____

Africa is the second largest continent in the world and there are more than fifty nations and several hundred languages and ethnic groups in African. Despite many cultural similarities across the continent and a virtually global history of

imperialism and neocolonialism, there are many African experiences and many verbal expressions of them. Although they are part of ancient to the continent, much of both verbal artistic traditions and literary works of African are largely unknown and ignored by people who are outside Africa. Yet, a fraction of the verbal arts in Africa seem to be recognized among the vast productions of African language-literature and oral traditions.

Africa is a very diverse continent and this diversity is articulated in its physical geography and climate; in its plurality of cultures, traditions, beliefs, values, religions, and artistic expressions; in its many modes of economic production, distribution, and consumption; in its diverse social and political structures and practices. All these are reflected in its literature on one way or another.

Unit Objectives: When you complete this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain what the meaning of African literature.
- Describe the nature of African literature
- The Importance of African Literature in Language

1.1. What is African Literature?

Africa has a long and fascinating past manifested in the social, economic, political and religious developments and the ways in which these affect its people. The history passed through the millennia of the Stone Age, the rise and decline of states and societies in the ancient and medieval times, the more recent centuries of European intervention and post-colonial developments.

Africa is a home to diversity of people, language and environment. It is the continent that has gone through dramatic and massive historical and political changes. These changes are, for the most part, manipulated by external forces, mainly the imperialists. In this regard, there are great differences between pre-

colonial and post-colonial Africa in terms of geography, politics, social structure, manners and style of life and economy.

Activity 1.1.1: Now you have learnt some points about African continent and some pieces of information about Africa. Now try to answer the following questions before you read. Please do not skip this activity.

---

1. You learn the definition of literature in the course fundamentals of literature. Using this knowledge how would you define African literature?

   _____

2. What elements (words, phrases) do you expect to be included in defining African literature?

   _____

3. What category of literature (oral, written) do you think is central to the literature in Africa? Why? Why not?

   _____

4. Which African countries do you think are the prominent nations to have documented their literary works in written form?

   _____

5. Which languages are the languages that the African used to document their written literature before colonization?

   _____

There is no one definitions for the term African Literature. It is defined and described in different ways. Here are some examples of the views reflected in the attempt to define it:

African literature is a tool for a literate African arrogation of the essence of his cultural heritages or an assertion of the excellence of a black culture on a white dominated world as was the case with Negritude poetry. [Zell & silver (1972)

A political document of protest against the assumptions of colonialism as it relates to the world of the black man. [European critics]

African literature represents a mere appendage of British or French literature since most African writers write chiefly in the tongue of their colonial masters, thus the brand Anglophone and Francophone African literature. [Colonial extremists]

Writing done in any language by Africans themselves and by others of whatever skin color who share with Africans the experience of having been shaped mentally and spiritually by Africa rather than anywhere else in the world (Nadine Gordamir, 1973)

The term should cover literature in which an African setting is authentically handled or experiences which originated in Africa are integral. (Congress for cultural freedom, Freetown, 1963)

One can't cram African literature into a small, neat definition. I don't see African literature as one unit but as a group of associated units, in fact the sum total of all the national and ethnic literatures of Africa. (Chinua Achebe)

Operational Definition: The literature which has grown out of the ruptures created within Africa's history as a result of the arbitrary divisions of the continent into spheres of political domination by the metropolitan powers. However, when this definition is examined critically, "it unfortunately marginalizes the bulk of African oral treasures, North African writings and Ethiopian Literature at large" (Melakneh, 2005: 27).

The description forwarded in https://www.britannica.com/ can be taken as highly relevant issue concerning the definition of African literature. Hence as it is stated:

African literature is the body of traditional oral and written literatures in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European languages. Traditional written literature, which is limited to a smaller

geographic area than is oral literature, is most characteristic of those sub-Saharan cultures that have participated in the cultures of the Mediterranean. In particular, there are written literatures in both Hausa and Arabic, created by the scholars of what is now northern Nigeria, and the Somali people have produced a traditional written literature. There are also works written in Geʿez (Ethiopic) and Amharic, two of the languages of Ethiopia…

From the above definition it can be understood that:

- African literature is both traditional oral and written literature that are linked to Asia, Europe.
- The geographical scope of its written form of literature is smaller than the coverage of its oral literature;
- Written literary forms are found in Hausa, Arabic, and Ge'ez (and Amharic).

According to the same source, the relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular between oral and modern written literatures is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution. Modern African literatures were born in the educational systems imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from Europe rather than existing African traditions. But the African oral traditions exerted their own influence on these.

In general, since Africa has a very old oral and written literary tradition which exists in both secular and religious forms. The ancient evidences for this from Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa, to mention just a few explain this truth. But the world was unaware of this literary resource of rages, and it is only recently that African literature started to be appreciated. There is, however, a very narrow approach of defining modern African literature even now. It is associated only with colonial experience marginalizing the rich oral, North African and Ethiopian literature. Language, writer's identity and colonial experience are the major factors being considered in giving such a narrow meaning.

1.2. Nature of African Literature?

Dear students, it is good that so far you have grasped a lot about the meaning of African Literature from the definitions.

Activity1.2. Now attempts the following activity before you read the details of the nature of African literature.

---

1. What do you think are the characteristic features of African literature?

   _____

2. What are the main factors that contributed to the heterogeneous nature of African literature?

   _____

3. Do you think that foreigners positively or negatively affected African literature? Why? Why not?

   _____

African literature is characterized by its oral tradition, folktales, other narratives, including the African novel. But basically, African literature as we can observes is more of oral literature which is rich in folktales, myths, riddles, and proverbs, and it seems now that there is agreement in general that African literature comprises both oral and written works of the continent, composed in either African languages or foreign ones, developing distinctive styles.

African literature is also characterized by ethno linguistic and religions diversity in the continent. Let alone Africa, in Ethiopia there are different ethnic groups and over eighty languages. Each of these has their oral traditions that depict their social values. Besides these, different religions (such as Christianity and Islam) have had paramount contributions to African literature.

Moreover, external influence, colonization, trade and commerce, etc., have also influenced on the existed traditional values of Africa. With this respect African

literature, in general, can be divided into three basic categories: pre-colonial literature, colonial literature and post-colonial literature. Many examples of pre-colonial African literature can be found in Ethiopia, where there is a substantial literature written in Ge'ez which goes back to the fourth century AD. The best-known Ethiopian literary work in this tradition is the KebraNegast ("Book of Kings") and many others.

Before European colonialism and the introduction of European languages to Africa, there were bards and storytellers, scribes, poets, and writers in languages such as Kiswahili and Amharic. Many of those traditions adapt and live on in various appearances today, and the African writers draw on these indigenous oral and written traditions as well as those of Europe, the Americas, and Asia. This means the writers make a very extensive use of oral literature (proverbs, stories, riddles, etc.) in their written poems, short stories, novels and dramas. If you read the novels of Chinua Achebe, for instance, you will definitely realize this. Because of the interlock of these two co-existing traditions, African literature may really be best described as **Literature**.

Understanding of African literature has changed tremendously in the last twenty years, because of several important developments: the ever-increasing numbers of women writers, greater awareness of written and oral production in national languages of African nations, and greater critical attention to factors such as the politics of publishing and African literature's multiple audiences. These developments coincide with and have, in fact, helped produce a general shift in midcentury that the moment of acceleration of contemporary African literature can be situated.

African narrative and poetry, in the era immediately preceding and following formal declarations of independence, were born, for the most part, in protest

against history and myths constructed in conjunction with the colonial enterprise. Writers struggled to correct false images, to rewrite fictionally and poetically the history of pre-colonial and colonial Africa, and to affirm African.

1.3. The Importance of African Literature in Language Teaching

Literature can be studied for three main purposes. In language class we can use literature as:

A). Authentic Material: Authentic is an extension of a true material that may already be widely used in the classroom (time-tables, menus leaflets etc.).

Example: using language for basic 'survival' skills,

1- How much is a cup of tea?

2- What time is the next bus to Deghabour please?

Such activities, when integrated with traditional stories, for instance, can enriches the language already obtained by the language learner. Hence, it would be said that literature develops fluency, vocabulary and a wider understanding of how language is 'really' used by a native speaker.

B). Cultural Enrichment: Literature offers the language learner a route into developing an understanding of the culture where that language is spoken. Although fiction, literature, though often indirectly or subtly, gives information about daily life, the social custom, the structure of that society as well as the 'real' views of the people. It offers a historical documentation that can provide links to modern society and illustrate the changes in the country of the language being studied. Literature is used to complement other materials (newspapers, radio programmers etc.) to give the learner an insight into the culture of the author.

C). Language Enrichment: Whereas the use of literature in the classroom increases the learners receptive vocabulary and develops a more active form of knowledge, it needs to be noted that most of the language used in literary works especially the classics are not typical of the language used in daily life, nor can it offer an invaluable supplement to other lexical (words) or syntactical (structure) of the language. Extensive reading of long texts develops the students' ability to make inferences from linguistic clues and to deduce meaning from context. This in turn leads to activities which prompt written and oral practice.

D). Personal Involvement: Literature is helpful in the language classroom because it encourages personal involvement. Most of the language learning process concentrates on the rule-based system. Literature can also increase motivation because the student becomes less entangles in how the individual words and phrases are formed and more focused on the events and style of the text. Literature invites the reader/student to have an opinion and therefore the student's interest in the language needed to express their views is heightened. This results in the student having a genuine desire to have an increased understanding of the language in order to communicate effectively, at a number of different levels in a variety of situations.

1.4. Summary

Due to ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical, geographical, and other factors not stated here, the term African literature may not be taken as a homogenous entity. Instead, each of these factors have had laid their shadows on the massive oral and written literature of Africa, and this can be revealed in different forms in different

parts and different eras of the continent in. Possibly, as a result different people described African literature differently.

1.5. Self-Study Questions for Unit One

I-state the following true or false

1. Nowadays, much of both traditions and modern literary works of African are largely known to the world.
2. Although Africa is a highly heterogenous continent, its literary heritages are more of homogenous.
3. The changes that Africans went through are highly affected by external forces and so is the literature of Africa.
4. The most accepted definition of African literature is that it is A political document of protest against the assumptions of colonialism as it relates to the world of the black man.
5. The geographical scope of African written literature is smaller than the coverage of its oral literature.

II. **Choose the best answer for the following questions from the given alternatives**

6. Which African country/countries is/are typical examples that they have written and oral literature in social, religious, etc. aspects.
   a. Ethiopia and Egypt
   b. Ethiopia and South Africa
   c. Egypt and South Africa
   d. all
7. Which of the following has not affected African literature?
   a. colonization
   b. trade and commerce,
   c. foreign invasion
   d. cultural heritage
8. Why is it said that African literature has changed tremendously in the last twenty years? It is because of the…

a. ever-increasing numbers of women writers,
b. greater awareness of written and oral production in African languages
c. high level critical attention given to different thematic literary works
d. all the above

9. What is the role of literature in language teaching?
    a. It encourages personal involvement
    b. It helps to have communicative competence
    c. It enriches vocabular
    d. All of the above
    e. None of the above
10. ***African literature is not a homogenous entity*** mean that African literature _____.
    a. can be revealed in different forms in different parts
    b. can exist in different eras of the continent in
    c. different people described African literature differently
    d. All the above
    e. None of the above

1.6. Checklist

Now check that how much you are confident by filling the following table.

Self-evaluation criteria- Now I can:	Yes	No	Comments on your answers
1. Explain what the meaning of African literature is.	___	___	
2. Describe the nature of African literature	___	___	
3. Explain the factors affected African literature.	___	___	

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Unit Two- Classification of African Literature

2.1. Introduction

Evidences show that a significant portion of early written African literature is that written by Africans outside of Africa who lived in Europe and American countries. And many of them went there for study purposes and most of them trained in foreign universities as well. This includes not only the literature written by the millions of Africans taken to the new world as slaves, but also that written by the hundreds of African youths whom Europeans sent from the continent every year to study in England, France, Portugal, Italy, Holland and Germany from the 1400s on. While the genre of the slave narrative has been widely explored by literary scholars, this later type of the writing done by free Africans in Europe has received less attention, perhaps because much of it was not written in English. For instance, a rich but almost entirely unexplored body of early written African literature is African scholarship in Latin for European universities.

Africa had many indigenous scripts, including hieroglyphs and hieratic, both developed in Egypt around five thousand years ago to represent the ancient Egyptian language. Egyptians then invented Demotic, which was related to Hieratic, and Coptic, which was related to Greek and used to represent an African language. Nubians used all the Egyptian scripts, but also invented their own, Meroitic, to represent the African languages of Meroitic and Old Nubian. Meanwhile in North Africa and the Sahel, Africans invented the Libyco-Berber scripts to represent a variety of Berber languages, while East Africans invented Ethiopic (or Geez) to represent the African language of Geez. In the medieval period, Africans in East, West, and North Africa used the Arabic script, but in the early modern period, Africans invented Ajami, which is related to the Arabic script, for their East and West African languages.

It is only in the twentieth century that the Roman alphabet came to be used widely in Africa. By the late eighteenth century, Africans also invented the secret ideographic writing system of Nsibidi. That Nsibidi was "discovered" by Europeans only in the twentieth century suggests that other unknown African scripts may have been used during the early modern period. It is also worthwhile to mention Adinkra, a pictographic script invented by 1817 in what is now Ghana, and Vai, an alphabet invented in Liberia in the 1830s. In the twentieth century, Africans invented over a dozen scripts, but only a few are still used.

Although there might be various ways of categorizing African literature, in this unit you will be leaning geographical, historical and linguistic classification of African literature.

Objectives of the unit: When you complete learning this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify how the African literature is categorized geographically,
- List down the geographical cauterization of African literature
- Exemplify literary works of African literature according their geographical categories.
- Discuss the characteristic features of African literature according to a given classification.

2.2. Geographical Classification

Activity 2.1.*Dear students, please, answer the following questions before you read the note about the geographical classification of African literature.*

1. What do you think are the broader direction-based categories of African literature?

2. Can you also guess which countries would be included in each classification? Give at list two examples for each.

_____

3. What external influence would you expect in each classification?

_____

4. What kind of well-known literary works can we get in each classification?

_____

In exploring the literary history of the African continent, we would find it as the diverse and multifaceted as the landscape itself. This means that African literature is not a uniformly set entity, rather is seen in a respect of enormous collection of narratives across the continent. With this regard we may categorize the African literature in to Northern African, Western African, Central Africa, Eastern African, and Southern African literatures as follows.

2.2.1. Northern African Literature

Activity 2.1.1. *Answer the following questions before you read the about North African literature*

1. Which countries do you think are the North African countries which would be categorized in this group?

   _____

2. Which African and foreign language do you think are the widely used languages in their respective category?

   _____

North African literature developed from different traditions and experiences of the countries that make up North Africa. From the linguistic, religious and cultural standpoint. The literature of North Africa is made up of works from the three Maghrebian countries; Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as the

literature from Egypt, Libya and Sudan. These countries share a common ethnic, cultural, linguistic and Islamic identity that has significantly distinguished them from the rest of Africa.

As it is with the rest of the continent, European colonization, particularly French occupation of the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, has had great influence on North African literature.

Many of the North African writers have published works under different genres. They have had to put up with censorship, imprisonments and death threats from government and religious fundamentalists and some writers have also been killed.

The writings from North Africa have been considerably influenced culturally, politically and in terms of language of expression by Berber oral traditions of pre-Arab inhabitants, as well as Arabic civilization, and contact with Europe.

While some of the non-English North African literary works are available in English translations, they mostly consist of writings in Arabic and French. The thematic preoccupations of the North African writer include cultural identity, colonialism, European misrepresentation, hybridization, poor leadership, the quest for societal and individual freedom, political corruption, oppression, etc.

This region's literature flows from a wellspring of Arabic influences, interweaving indigenous Berber traditions. Notable are the literature of Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Sudan.

2.2.2. Western African Literature

Activity 2.2. 2. *Answer the following questions before you read the about North African literature*

1. Which countries do you think are the West African countries which would be categorized in this group?

   _____

2. What African and foreign linguistic, cultural and political influences can put their stains in the literature of the region?

   _____

This region pulses with the rhythm of oral tradition. Griots in countries like Senegal, Mali, and Gambia pass down vibrant stories and epics. In countries like Nigeria and Ghana, English-language literature thrives, thanks to icons like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka.

The roots of English-language literature in West Africa may be traced to the formation of various cultures in reaction to external contacts during successive overlapping historical periods. The literary traditions of the region have been shaped by these interlocking cultural histories, just as the cultural identities of the region are products of its many-layered history. These cultural strata have had such a strong influence, and writers borrow so freely across cultures that it is not always possible to determine the essential African element from the aggressive or the syncretic product. Each of the major literatures is the product, not of any one tradition – not even of one as dominant as English colonial culture – but of live traditions that are always available to creative writers even when they are inactive: as Wole Soyinka puts it, “the past exists now” (1988: 19).

The dominance of English as a linguistic medium has tended to obscure this fact. Only the colonial connections of the culture are implied in categories like “Common wealth literature” – where the literature is seen as an extension of the English tradition, or “postcolonial literature” as a product of European cultural imperialism to which it is a counter discourse.

The exclusion of indigenous traditions is inherent in such language-based classifications of Europhone African literatures. The continuing influence of the different traditions is an essential part of the literary history.

2.2.3. Eastern African Literature

The Horn is a choir of voices, with literature in languages like Geez, Amharic, Somali, and Swahili, as well as English. The beauty of African literature lies not only in its geographical diversity but also in its variety of themes and styles, languages, and dialects, all connected by a common thread of rich tradition and transformative change. It's a journey worth embarking on, one story at a time.

People better understand literary work when it is reaches to readers and literary critics at different scopes of recognition. With this regard, a list of some major writers and trends are identified. The known writers such as the Kenyan novelists Grace Ogot and Ngugiwa Thiong'o, Ugandan poet and essayist Taban Lo Liyong, Ethiopian playwright and poet Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin, Tanzanian novelist and diplomat Peter Palangyo, Ethiopian novelist Berhane Mariam Sahle-Sellassie, and the novelist M. G. Vassanji, who portrays the Indian diaspora in Africa, Europe, and North America. Some other writers mentioned include Nurrudin Farah (Somali), Yusuf Dawood (Kenyan), and Goretti Kyomuhendo (Ugandan), and those who write in Swahili, such as K. W. Wamitila and Ken Walibora (Kenyan), and Ebrahim Hussein.

One of the East African literature categories is the Ethiopian literature. Ethiopian literature falls into three broad categories: classical literature, including historical narratives, heroic poetry, and works of philosophical reflection cast in an imaginative mode; romantic and political literature in Amharic, and, since the Second World War, the new literature in English. The classical literature is expressed in Ge’ez, a Semitic language that is also the oldest written language in

Africa, with its unique orthography going back nearly two thousand years. The Holy Bible and all other Christian texts have been translated into Ge'ez, which survives today as the language of the Ethiopian clergy; in this respect, it has a status similar to Latin in the western world. Ordinary Ethiopians neither spoke nor wrote in Ge'ez. Therefore, the texts written in that language did not seep into the soul of the people, and did not produce a national literary culture. The classical literary texts, hymns, and songs circulate today only among the priestly class and highly specialized students and teachers of Ge'ez. This is part of the reason that the modern Ethiopian state which emerged in the late nineteenth century had to forge a new language aimed at producing a popular national culture through the medium of Amharic.

2.2.4. Central African Literature

Though often overshadowed by the coasts, Central African Region holds a treasure of literature in French and indigenous languages, reflecting a unique blend of local and global influences.

The earliest books in English relating to Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are David Livingstone's (1813–73) Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (1857) and Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and Its Tributaries (1865). Although on both expeditions he entered present-day Zimbabwe only briefly, Livingstone's books serve to introduce the literature of the region.

2.2.5. Southern African Literature

This region's literature is a robust of different literature. Its stories, often in English and Afrikaans, are deeply rooted in the soil of social transformation, tackling themes of apartheid and post-apartheid realities.

Christopher Heywood summarized the history of South African Literature is categorized into five literary traditions in the: Khoisan, Nguni–Sotho, Afrikaans, English, and Indian. According to him the literature is explored in the setting of crises leading to the formation of modern South Africa, notably the rise and fall of Emperor Shaka's Zulu kingdom, the Colenso crisis, industrialization, the colonial and post-colonial wars of 1899, 1914, and 1939, and the dissolution of apartheid society. In Heywood's magisterial study, South African literature emerges as among the great literatures of the modern world

As to Michael Chapman the literary history in the southern African region is best based on a comparative method which, while respecting differences of language, race and social circumstance, seeks cultural interchange including translations of experience across linguistic and ethnic borders. He also wrote that Southern African Literatures is a major study of the work of writers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, written at a time of crucial change in the subcontinent. It covers a wide range of work from the storytelling of stone-age Bushmen to modern writing by renowned figures encompassing traditional, popular and elite writing; literature in translation; and case studies based on topical issues.

When talking about South African literature, we cannot ignore anti-apartheid literature. Apartheid, which in the Afrikaans language means "apart-mess" or "separateness," was the system of racial discrimination and white political domination adopted by the South African National Party when it came to power in 1948. Historically, apartheid had emerged from policies of racial segregation which had been practiced since the first Europeans—the Dutch, followed by the British—settled in South Africa in the seventeenth century. This was a type of colonialism rule called settlers rule. The native black people were denied their

rights by these settlers. What the apartheid system did, of course, was ensuring the political and economic supremacy of the white minority, which comprised less than twenty percent of South Africa's total population in 1948 and less than thirteen percent of the population in 1994, the year that Nelson Mandela was elected president of South Africa and apartheid was finally abolished. The apartheid system deployed a series of laws to keep non-white people disenfranchised, poor, uneducated, and separate. Although the apartheid government was quick to suppress any opposition, resistance to apartheid within South Africa was ongoing. A number of political groups, opposed apartheid using a variety of tactics—both nonviolent and violent—that resulted in activists being severely punished by the government.

Among the opponents, writers have presented great challenges to this system. Anti-apartheid writers such as Nadine Gordimer, André Brink, Mary Benson, Richard Rive, Bessie Head, Peter Abrahams, Dan Jacobson, C. J. Driver, and J. M. Coetzee had their works banned in South Africa. Many writers, such as Rive, Alex La Guma, Dennis Brutus, Breyten Breytenbach, and D. M. Zwelonke were imprisoned on Robben Island for their writing and political activities. Many other writers of anti-apartheid literature, particularly Black and mixed-race writers such as Rive, Abrahams, La Guma, Head, Arthur Nortje, Lewis Nkosi, and Ezekiel Es'kia Mphahlale were exiled or went into self-exile to escape political oppression, as did some white South Africans, such as Breytenbach, Brink, and Athol Fugard. Prior to the official establishment of the apartheid regime, South African writers such as Olive Schreiner and Sol Plaatje decried the injustice of racial segregation and unfair economic policies that were in effect before the South African National Party institutionalized such practices. Although anti-apartheid literature is multi-faceted and addresses many aspects of human experience, generally speaking there have been two major traditions—the white, liberal tradition begun by Schreiner

and continued, in varying degrees, by Alan Paton, Gordimer, and Coetzee, and a more radicalized, protest tradition that originated in the Black townships, out of which came the fiction of Abrahams, Rive, and LaGuma, and the poetry of Mphahlele, Mongane Wally Serote, and Oswald Mtshali.

2.3. Historical Classification of African Literature

It is noted even by some European and American writers that early written African literature is that written by Africans on the African continent in African languages, sometimes in African scripts. The African languages with the largest bodies of extant texts are Geez, Kiswahili, Hausa, Amharic, and Somali, too.

At least historic chapters are clearly marked out in the evolutionary growth of African literature. These are: pre-colonial literature, colonial literature and post-colonial literature.

2.3.1. Early Pre-history

According to historians and ancient archaeological findings Africa is 'the supportive of human kind'. This is true since the 1950's, at which scientific research in the Savannah grasslands and woodlands of southern, eastern and northern Africa proved this proposition. Yet, because of European notions of racial superiority many of them have found it difficult to accept that even their own most ancient ancestors had originally come from Africa. The recovery and examinations of ancient bones, fossils and stone tools and other artifacts indicate that Africa is the origin not only of human kind but also of many important technological innovations.

Africa, therefore, is the oldest continent. Most of it consists of ancient rocks which have changed little in structure since they first took shape some 200 million years ago. Still larger than the Africa of today that most ancient continent has been

named Gondwanaland. Huge fragments then break away from Gondwanaland and became India, Australia and South America. This is the Explanation of the theory known as 'continental drift'. Thus, Africa is the source even for the physical foundation for the other continents. Whether or not this theory is right, Africa can certainly claim to be the birth place of mankind and the source of ancient civilizations. It is from this continent that people all over the world evolved and spread through out

2.3.2. Pre-colonial literature

African literatures written before the twentieth century are substantial. Whatever limits can be imagined—in terms of geography, genre, language, audience, era—these literatures exceed them. Many examples of pre-colonial African written literature can be found in Ethiopia, where there is a substantial literature written in Ge'ez which goes back to the fourth century AD. The best-known Ethiopian literary work in this tradition is the Kebra-Negast ("Book of Kings").

One popular form of traditional tale is the "trickster" story, in which a small animal uses its wits to survive when faced by larger creatures. Some of these tales are Anansi, a spider in the folklore of the Ashanti people of Ghana;Ijàpá, a tortoise in Yoruba folklore of Nigeria; and Sungura, from central and East African folklore.

Other works in written form appear in the Sahel regions of West Africa and on the Swahili coast. From Timbuktu, historians say that there are about 300,000 manuscripts in many libraries and private collections, most of them written in Arabic and some in the native languages (Fula and Songhai). Much of this work was produced at the University of Timbuktu. In Islamic times, North Africans like IbnKhaldun had great distinction within Arabic literature. The universities of Fes and Cairo, in turn, had great amounts of literature.

Before the twentieth century, disproving the myths about the negative outlooks against pre-colonial African literature, this is what scholars put forward:

- Africans wrote not just in Europe, but also on the African continent;
- They wrote not just in European languages, but in African languages;
- They wrote not just for European consumption, but for their own consumption;
- They wrote not just in northern Africa, but in sub-Saharan Africa;
- They wrote not just orally, but textually;
- They wrote not just historical or religious texts, but poetry and epic and autobiography; and
- They wrote not just in the nineteenth century, but in the eighteenth century and long, long before.

2.3.3. Colonial literature of Africa

During the period of colonization, the African works best known in the West are slave narratives, such as OlaudahEquiano's The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (1789). In 1911, Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (also known as Ekra-Agiman) of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) published what the first African novel is written in English, Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation. Although the book moves between fiction and political pamphletarism, it marks a watershed moment in African literature.

During this period, the first African plays written in English began to emerge. Herbert Isaac Ernest Dhlomo, from South Africa, published 'The Girl Who Killed to Save: Nongqawuse the Liberator, in 1935, maybe the first English-language African play. In 1962, Ngũgĩwa Thiong'o, from Kenya, wrote the first East African drama, The Black Hermit. Among the first pieces of African literature to receive an international critical acclaim was Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe.

2.3.4. Post-colonial literature

Post-colonial literature has been an extraordinarily influential institution in post-colonial Africa, and African writers have been prominent in the struggles to build modern democratic societies on the ruins of the colonial state and against the brutalities of the many dictatorial post-independence regimes of the continent.
A great number of African writers have had their works banned by these regimes, many have been jailed for long terms, and not a few have been killed or hounded into involuntary exile. (Among the prominent African writers who have suffered detention or been forced into exile are Mongo Beti, Breyten Breytenbach, Dennis Brutus, Nurrudin Farah, Bessie Head, Festus lyayi, Abdelatif Laabi, Jack Mapanje, MicereMugo, Keorapetse Kgositsile, Mainawa Kinyati, Ngugiwa Thiong'o, Nawal El Saadawi, and Wole Soyinka.) The South African apartheid state, Idi Amin's Uganda, Kamuzu Banda's Malawi, and Daniel arap Moi's Kenya have been the most repressive for the arts and the life of the imagination, but literature has also been embattled in the most "benevolent" or paternalistic regimes, like those of Houphet Boigny's COted'Ivoire (=Ivory Cost), Kenneth Kaunda's Zambia, and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe.

Literature in postcolonial Africa is thus deeply political, just as it had been in colonial Africa. This calls for a careful explanation, one that transcends the narrow conception of the relationship of politics and literature represented in its extreme form by Stendhal's famous remark that politics in a novel is like a pistol shot in a concert hall.

Post-colonial literature is a trend in literary development that deals in general with anti-colonial contents. The literature in this category is meant to debunk the fragility of colonial system. This literature could also deal with the neo-colonial

tendency of America. The post-colonial literature is targeted at fighting against the colonial legacy left here in Africa. The major themes in post-colonial literature include, the condition of the English language in African literature, revealing the residual effect of colonialism even after it is removed, the revival of lost culture and the immorality and illogicality of the white settlers. The post-colonial literature is pre-occupied with these and other themes.

Certainly, the politics of literary expression in Africa includes forms like protest, agitprop, satirical sketches in street theater performances, prison notes and journals (often smuggled out while the writer is still incarcerated), pamphlets and manifestoes, all of which have been used to defy post-independence African dictatorial regimes.

However, beyond these "instant" forms of political literature—which, we must never forget, often require great courage—some of the finest writings of postcolonial African literature involve a sophisticated testamentary tradition that taps the deepest democratic aspirations of the continent and its peoples.

Surely, this connects African writing with some of this century's great literature from around the world.' In the most powerful of these works, the voices of postcolonial African literature mingle with those of other writers of this century who have made of literature the nemesis of state terrorism and a light in dark times, from Bertolt Brecht to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, from Primo Levi to Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

The finest of these writings belong to the great body of political literature of this century whose provenance lies in the confrontation of gifted imaginations with the most monstrous political systems of the century: European fascism, the Stalinist gulag, the mythical world of the ferocity and corruption of the Latin American

military strongman, the caudillo. This gives us a simultaneously depressing and exhilarating dialectic: great political writing, it seems, always requires unspeakable crimes and barbarities; but at the same time, let evil be so awesome that it seems to spring from the very depths of nature and history, it will always meet, through great writing, a resistance that calls forth the spirit of all the victims of present and past crimes and injustices against humanity.

Thus, to the surpassing evil of the Voerwoods and Bothas, the Idi Amins and the Mobutus, the Nguemas and the Bandas, the most powerful literary imaginations of the continent have responded with momentous works imbued with the spirit of the human will to freedom. And only an appreciation of this explains the otherwise baffling point that although so much of the greatest works of postcolonial African writing is so profoundly pessimistic, even melancholic, much of it is also, to borrow the title of one of Neruda's volumes of poetry, "fully empowered," full of verbal vigor, innovative narrative, brilliantly original forms and techniques.

A few examples might serve to illustrate this point. In Wole Soyinka's Madmen and Specialists, evil and genocide are on the loose, creeds, families, and nations are broken up, and even the individual psyche is penetrated and colonized by this omnipresent evil.

Ngugi's Devil on the Cross is a literary primer on the cruelties of neocolonialism. The text, however, comprises a stunning melange of Aesopian fables, poetic songs and chants, dramatic inserts, Kikuyu proverbs and legends, savage Swiftian satirical cartoons, and incorporations of biblical materials. Bessie Head's acclaimed novel A Question of Power is suffused by the gloom of the writer's discovery, upon her arrival as an exile in Botswana from South Africa, that black Africans inflict on one another the kind of cruelties and degradation that whites inflict on blacks in her apartheid homeland.

However, the writing moves back and forth between expressionist refraction of the protagonist's descent into schizophrenia and madness, philosophical disquisitions on gender and the institutional determinations of the moral and spiritual guidance of humanity and society, and a diary-like detailing of work on the collective self-help projects in the village in which the novel is set. In these works, and others like Marechera's Black Sunlight, Fugard's The Island, Coetzee's Waiting for the Barbarians, and Armah's Fragments, thematic pessimism is leavened by the force and originality of the rendering, and this becomes in itself a metaphor of indomitable will against apartheid and the neocolonial nightmares to the north.

Hence, it seems general accepted that towards the end of World War I and independence, African literature presented themes such as liberation, independence, and, among the French-controlled territories, négritude. One of the leaders of the négritude movement, the poet and President of Senegal Léopold Sédar Senghor, published in 1948 the first anthology of African French-language poetry, Anthologie de la nouvelle poésienègre et malgache de langue française ("Anthology of the New Black and Malagasy Poetry in the French Language"), with a preface written by Jean-Paul Sartre. Many writers were censured for casting aside his artistic responsibilities in order to participate actively in warfare.

With liberation and literacy since most of the African nations gained their independence and, consequently, their literature grew in number, quality and recognition. Since then, many African works and writers began to appear in Western academic curricula and in collections of poetry and short stories compiled at the end of the 20th century. African writers, for international purposes, began to write both in European languages and in traditional African languages.

The themes of contemporary African literature, according to many important literary critics, are:

- The clash between past and present,
- Tradition and modernity,
- Indigenous and foreign,
- Individualism and community,
- Socialism and capitalism,
- Development and self-reliance and,
- Finally, between "Africanity" and humanity.

Other themes include social problems, such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries and the rights and roles of women. In 1986, Wole Soyinka became the first post-independence African writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature. Previously, Algerian-born Albert Camus had been awarded the 1957 prize.

2.4. Linguistic Classification African Literature

You have been made aware that oral tradition has a vital position in the history of African literature. Many African traditional societies depended on orality both for communication and for record keeping. For example, historians of Africa, among other ways of dealing with this issue, treat languages as archives and apply what is sometimes called the "words and things" approach.

Traditional African literature is more of oral. Except a few (except in the Eastern, northern and in some other parts which had their own pre-colonial) most African literature is written in foreign scripts, namely the Latin or the modification it.

Nearly all African languages have been classified into four language families, namely: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afro-asiatic, and Khoisan. The Malagasy language of Madagascar is an exception, in that it was brought west across the

Indian Ocean to that island from the East Indies early in the first millennium CE. Malagasy as well as several languages with an Indo-European origin, such as Afrikaans, Krio, and Nigerian Pidgin English, are not part of this discussion. Thus we routinely divide African literature by region (West Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Central Africa, southern Africa, each of which is more or less distinctive environmentally and historically), by ethnicity (the Mande, for example, live across the region now divided by the states of Guinea, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali), or by nationality (a heritage of nineteenth-century European literary practice, whose merit in the African context is sometimes debated, and which privileges the force of national history and identity as opposed to ethnic or "African" determinants).

African literature is also often categorized by language of expression (Anglophone, francophone, Hausa, Swahili, etc.) or genre (poetry, proverb, narrative, drama, essay), or some combination of these. The field may also be examined in terms of themes or generations. These many approaches suggest not only the diversity and complexity of life on the African continent but also the stuff of which literature is made: language, aesthetic and literary traditions, culture and history, sociopolitical reality.

2.4.1. The Afro-Asiatic languages

These languages, also called Hamito-Semitic, cover all of northern Africa, almost all of the eastern Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia); some languages of the Cushitic branch are spoken as far south as Tanzania. In addition, the Semitic branch includes languages which at present or in former times included almost the entire Middle East.

Afro-Asiatic is generally analyzed as consisting of five about equally differentiated divisions: Berber, ancient Egyptian, Semitic, Cushitic and Chadic. West Cushitic,

a group including Kaffa and other languages in south-western Ethiopia, in fact constitute a sixth branch for which the nameOmotic and Ari-Banna have been proposed. The Berber branch of Afro-Asiatic has less internal differentiation than any other branch of Afro-Asiatic except Egyptian. Its main division seems to be between the language of the various Tuareg groups in the Sahara and the Berber proper of North Africa and Mauritania. It is probable that the extinct language of the Guancheof the Canary Islands was affiliated with Berber. In addition, mention should be mad of the existence of Old Libyan inscriptions which are imperfectly understood but possibly represent an earlier form of Berber.

A second branch of Afro-Asiatic, the Egyptian, is documented in the earlier period by hieroglyphic inscriptions, hieratic papyri and in the latest period also by documents in the demotic script. All these scripts represent the same spoken language. In the Christian period this language continued to be spoken and developed an extensive literature written in an alphabet adapted from the Greek.

In this later or Coptic form there were a number of literary dialects of which Bohairic still survives in liturgical use in the Coptic Church. After the Arab conquest of Egypt, the ancient Egyptian language gradually lost ground and became extinct as a spoken language probably in the seventeenth century.

The Semitic branch of Afro-Asiatic has far more internal differentiation than either Berber or Egyptian. It is usually assumed that the most fundamental division within Semitic is between East Semitic and West Semitic. The former is represented only by the long extinct Akkadian written in cuneiform. It has two basic regional dialects, southern (Babylonian) and northern (Assyrian).

West Semitic is in turn divided into North-West Semitic and South-West Semitic. The former of these includes Canaanite (Hebrew, Moabite, Phoenician and, probably, Ugaritic) and Aramaic. Of these only Hebrew, revived as a spoken

language within the past century as the language of Israel, and a Tew dialects of Aramaic still survive. The modern forms in Aramaic represent survivals of West Aramaic in the Antiliban of Syria, and East Aramaic chiefly in northern Iraq.

South-East Semitic likewise has two divisions, northern and southern. The northern branch contains most of the dialects of the Arabian Peninsula and their modern descendants, dominant in a vast area embracing North Africa, the Middle East and parts of the Sudan (i.e. Arabic proper).

The southern division consists on the one hand of South Arabic and on the other of the Semitic languages of Ethiopia. South Arabic is known in its earlier form from Minean, Sabena and Qatabanian inscriptions and in its contemporary form of Mehri and Shahri in south Arabia and Soqotri, the language of the island of Soqotra in the Indian Ocean.

The Ethiopian Semitic languages divide into a northern group (Tigrinya, Tigre and Ge'ez or classical Ethiopie) and a southern group (Amharic, Gurage, Argobba, Gafat and Harari).

The fourth group of Afro-Asiatic languages, the Cushitic, contains a large number of languages which fall into five strongly differentiated branches, the Northern, Central, Eastern, Southern and Western.

Northern Cushitic consists essentially of a single language, that of the Beja.

The Central Cushitic languages are sometimes called the Agau languages. They were probably once spoken over a continuous area but their former speakers have largely adopted Ethiopian Semitic languages. The Falasha, or Ethiopian Jews, formerly spoke an Agau language. The Central Cushitic languages include a northern group (Bilin, Khamir, Qemant) and Awiya in the south.

Eastern Cushitic includes the two Cushitic languages with the largest number of speakers, Somali and Oromo. The Eastern Cushitic languages fall into the following groups: (i) Afar, Saho; (2) Somali, Baiso, Rendille, Boni; Oromo, Conso, Gidole, Arbore, Warazi, Tsamai, Geleba, Mogogodo; (4) Sidamo, Alaba, Darasa, Hadiya, Kambatta, Burji. Of these the last or 'Sidamo-Burji' is probably to be grouped as a single branch against the three others. The Southern Cushitic languages are spoken in Tanzania. They included Burungi, Goroa, Alawa, Ngomvia (Asu), Sanye and Mbugu . This southern group is linguistically closest to Eastern Cushitic and is quite possibly to be classified as merely a sub-group of the latter. One Southern Cushitic language, Mbugu, has been extensively influenced by Bantu both grammatically and lexically so that some investigators consider it to be a mixed language. The Western Cushitic languages are extremely divergent from the other languages traditionally considered to be Cushitic. At the very least Cushitic would fall into two groups, Western versus the remainder. As noted earlier, Fleming has proposed that it be considered a separate sixth branch of Afro-Asiatic. The Western Cushitic languages may be divided into two groups, Ari-Banna (for Ari, the term Bako was used in the earlier literature) and the remainder. These in turn may be grouped as follows: (1) Maji, Nao, Sheko; (2) Janjero; (3) Kaffa, Mocha, Shinasha, Southern Mao; (4) Gimira; (5) the Ometogroup includingChara, Male, Basketo, the Wolayta cluster, Zaysse and Koyra-Gidicho.

The last branch of Afro-Asiatic to be considered is Chadic. It includes Hausa, the most widely spoken language in West Africa, and perhaps as many as a hundred other languages spoken by much smaller populations. In Greenberg (1963b) the Chadic languages were divided into nine sub-groups as follows: (1) (a) Hausa Gwandara, (b) Bede-Ngizim, (c) (i) Warjawa (northern Bauchi) group, (ii) Barawa (southern Bauchi) group, (d) (i) Bolewa group, (ii) Angas group, (iii) Ron group; (2) Kotoko group; (3) BataMargi; (4) (a) Musgoi group, (b) Marakam group; (5)

Gidder; (6) MandaraGamergu; (7) Musgu ; (8) Masa-Bana group; (9) Eastern Chadic, (a) Somrai group, (b) Gabere group, (c) Sokoro group, (d) Modgel, (e) Tuburi, (f) Mub i group. Newma n and M a have suggested that of the above sub-families (3) and (6) are particularly close to each other and likewise (1) and (9). For the former of the groupings the name Biu-Mandara is proposed and for the latter Plateau-Sahel.30 Nothing is asserted by them regarding the other subgroups.

2.4.2. Niger-Kordofanian

This family has two branches, very unequal in numbers of speakers and geographical extent. The first, Niger-Congo, covers a very considerable portion of sub-Saharan Africa including almost all of West Africa and parts of the central and eastern Sudan, and its Bantu sub-branch occupies most of central, East and southern Africa. Kordofanian, the other branch of Niger-Kordofanian, is confined to a limited area in the Kordofan region of Sudan.

The basic division with Niger-Congo is that between the Mande languages and the rest. In addition to lacking many of the most common lexical items found in the rest of Niger-Congo, Mande has no convincing traces of the noun classification generally found both in Kordofanian and in the remainder of Niger-Congo. There are, of course, many individual languages in Niger-Congo which have lost this system. Because of this divergence of the Mande language, Mukarovsky has proposed that Mand e is really a branch of Nilo-Saharan, the other large family of Negro African languages, but the well-known expert on Mande languages, William E. Weimers, disagrees. Within Mand e it is now universally agreed that the division between Mande-tan and Mande-fu based on the word for 'ten' first proposed by Delafosse is invalid.32 Th e Mand e languages ma y be classified as follows:

(A) **Northern-Western Division:**

(1) Northern including Susu-Yalunka, Soninke, Hwela-Numu, Ligbi, Vai-Kono, Khasonke and ManinkaBambara-Dyula;

(2) South-western: Mende-Bandi, Loko, Loma ,Kpelle.

(B) **Southern-Eastern Division:**

(1) Southern: Mano, Dan, Tura, Mwa ,Nwa , Gan, Guro;

(2) Eastern: Samo, Bisa, Busa. A single language Sya (Bobo-fing) remains unassigned. It is clearly Mande but it should perhaps be considered the earliest offshoot within the stock so that genetically it represents one of two branches, the other being Mand e proper.

The remaining Niger-Congo languages are classified in Greenberg (1963c) into five branches: (1) West Atlantic; (2) Gur; (3) Kwa; (4) BenueCongo; (5) Adamawa-Eastern. However, of these groups (2), (3) and (4) are particularly close and form a kind of nuclear group within which in particular the boundary between Benue-Congo and Kw a is not clear.

The West Atlantic languages, a term introduced by Westermann in 1928 and substantially identical in its membership with the Senegalo-Guinéen of Delafosse and subsequent French investigators, falls into two clearly marked groups, a northern and a southern.

The classification of West Atlantic is then as follows:

(A) **Northern Branch**:

(1) (a) Fula, Serer, (b) Wolof; (2) Non group; (3) Dyola, Manjak, Balante; (4) (a) Tenda, Basari, Bedik, Konyagi, (b) Biafada, Pajade, (c) Kobiana, Banhum, (d) Nalu;

(B) Southern Branch:

(1) Sua (Kunante); (2) (a) Temne - Baga, (b) Sherbro-Krim, Kisi, (c) Gola; (3) Limba; (C) Bijago.

Another major grouping within Niger-Congo is Gur. An alternative name is Voltaic, a designation which is particularly commo n in the French literature. Th e most recent suggestions regarding sub classification within Gur is that of Bendor-Samuel which is followed here in outline. It is noted that the great majority of languages which have been considered to be Gur belong to one very large sub-group called Central Gur by BendorSamuel.

This corresponds to the Mossi-Grunshi group of earlier investigations. Central Gur may be divided into three sub-groups: (1) More-Gurma; (2) Grusi group; (3) Tamari.

The remaining sub-groups of Gur are: (1) Bargu (Bariba); (2) Lobiri; (3) Bwamu ; (4) Kulango; (5) KirmaTyurama; (6) Win ; (7) Senufo group; (8) Seme; (9) Dogon. Even granted the validity of a Kw a group as distinct from Benue-Congo, as mentioned earlier, there are two sub-groups, Kru in the extreme west and Ijo in the extreme east, whose assignment to Kw a ma y be considered doubtful. With these reservations the basic sub-groupings of Kw a are as follows, stated in approximately west to east order: (1) Kru languages; (2) Western Kw a which includes the Ewe-Fö, the Akan-Guang (now sometimes called Volta-Camoe), Gä-Adangme and the so-called Togo Remnant languages; (3) Yoruba, Igala; (4) Nup e group; (5) Edo group; (6) Idoma group; (7) Ibo; (8) Ijo. Benue-Congo is essentially the same sub-group of Niger-Congo which was called Benue-Cross or Semi-Bantu by Westermann, with the addition of Bantu within the Bantoid subdivision.

There are four basic divisions within Benue-Congo: (1) Plateau languages; (2) Jukunoid; (3) Cross River, containing as its largest language community Efik-Ibibio; (4) Bantoid, consisting of Bantu, Tiv and a number of smaller languages in

the middle Benue area. A number of languages in Nigeria formerly considered Semi-Bantu in the broad sense are now generally agreed to be Bantu. Included here are the Bamileke, Ekoi and Jarawa groups.

The most fundamental division within Bantu itself ma y be between such languages and Bantu in its conventional acceptation. Within Bantu in this latter sense the basic division appears to be the other major Negro-African language stock is Nilo-Saharan.

In general it is spoken north and east of the Niger-Congo languages and is predominant in the upper Nile valley and the eastern parts of the Sahara and Sudan. It has however a western outlier in Songhay of the Niger valley. It has one very large branch, Chari-Nile, containing the majority of the languages of the entire family.

In essentially west to east order, the branches of Nilo-Saharan are as follows: (1) Songhay; (2) Saharan, (a) Kanuri-Kanembu, (b) Teda-Daza, (c) Zaghawa, Berti; (3) Maban ; (4) Furian; (5) Chari-Nile (see between Eastern and Western Bantu. For finer sub-groupings the division by Guthrie into zones indicated by letters, but variously modified by different specialists, is current.

The assignment of the Bantu grouping as a whole to a sub-group of Benue-Congo, itself a branch of the large Niger-Congo family has been one of the most controversial aspects of Greenberg's classification. Guthrie in particular espoused the notion that Bantu is genetically independent and that the extensive resemblances to Bantu found in the other Niger-Congo languages is the result of Bantu influences on a fundamentally different group of languages. He has argued on this basis that the original Bantu point of origin is the 'nuclear' area of southern Shaba. Greenberg places it in the middle Benue valley in Nigeria because the most

closely related languages of the Bantoid sub-group of Benue-Congo are spoken there.

The final grouping within Niger-Congo is the Adamawa-Eastern branch. TheAdamaw a group consists of many relatively small language communities, among whom the Chamba and Mbum may be mentioned as examples. The Eastern branch contains a number of languages of major importance, for example, Gbeya in the Central African Republic and Zande.

In contrast to the vast Niger-Congo family just discussed, the other branch of Niger-Kordofanian, namely the Kordofanian languages, contains no language of major importance and shares the Korodofan hills with various languages of the Nilo-Saharan stock. It ma y be divided into five highly differentiated sub-groups of which one (the Tumtum group) is the most divergent of all. These sub-groups are: (i) Koalib; (2) Tegali; (3) Talodi; (4) Katla; (5) Tumtum (also called Kadugli-Krongo).

2.4.3. The Nilo-Saharan family

The other major Negro-African language stock is Nilo-Saharan. In general, it is spoken north and east of the Niger-Congo languages and is predominant in the upper Nile valley and the eastern parts of the Sahara and Sudan. It has however a western outlier in Songhay of the Niger valley. It has one very large branch, Chari-Nile, containing the majority of the languages of the entire family. In essentially west to east order, the branches of Nilo-Saharan are as follows: (1) Songhay; (2) Saharan, (a) Kanuri-Kanembu, (b) Teda-Daza, (c) Zaghawa, Berti; (3) Maban ; (4) Furian; (5) Chari-Nile (6) Coman (Koma , Ganza, Uduk , Guie, Gumuz and Mao). The Chari-Nile languages include two major groups, Eastern Sudanic and Central Sudanic, and two individual languages, Berta and Kunama.

Eastern Sudanic is the largest single unit within Nilo-Saharan. It contains the following ten sub-groups: (i) Nubian, (a) Nile Nubian, (b) Kordofan Nubian, (c) Midob, (d) Birked; (2) Murle-Didinga groups; (3) Barea; (4) Ingassana (Tabi); (5) Nyima-Afitti; (6) Temein, Teis-um-Danab; (7) Merarit group; (8) Dagu (Dajo group); (9) Nilotic divided into (a) Western Nilotic: Burun, Lu o group and Dinka-Nuer, (b) Eastern Nilotic: (i) Bari group, (ii) Karamojong, Teso, Turkana, Masai; (c) Southern Nilotic: Nandi, Suk, Tatoga; (10) Nyangiya, Teuso (Ik). Considerable controversy exists concerning the classification of two subgroups of Nilotic, namely Eastern and Southern.

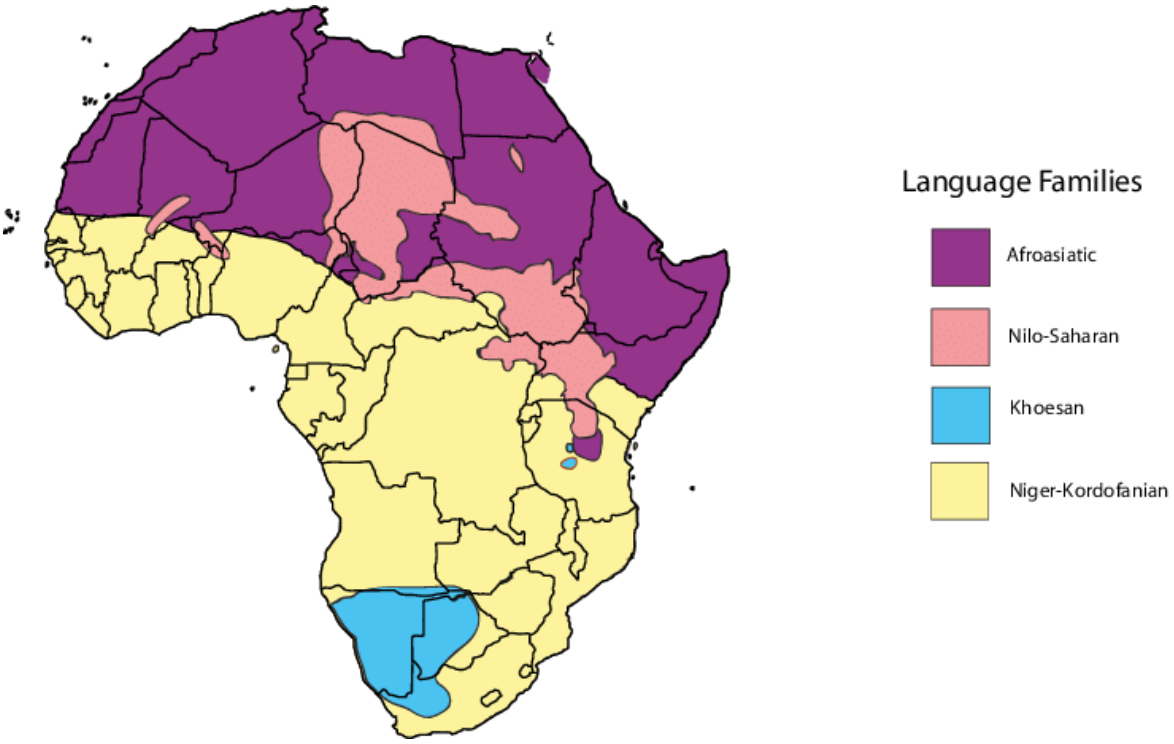
2.4.4. The Khoisan family

All of the Khoisan languages have click sounds and the majority of their speakers belong to the physically distinctive San type. The bulk of the Khoisan languages are spoken in southern Africa. However, there are two small populations much farther north in Tanzania, the Hatsa and Sandawe, with languages differing considerably both from each other and from those of South Africa.

Accordingly, the family is divided into three branches: (1) Hatsa; (2) Sandawe; (3) South African Khoisan. South African Khoisan consists of three groups of languages: (1) Northern, containing the Northern San languages of the Auen and Kung; (2) Central Khoisan, divided into two groups, (A) Hiechware, (B) Naron, Khoi-Khoi; (3) Southern San, the internally most differentiated group with a considerable number of individual San languages.

The Marina language, which has come to dominate the languages of African origin spoken in some regions of the island of Madagascar, is not included in the foregoing classification. Its status as an Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian) language has never been disputed. Its closest relative within Austronesian is probably the Maanyan language of Borneo.

Finally, mention should be made of European and Indian languages of recent importation which in some cases are now spoken by populations born in Africa. English, besides being spoken in South Africa and Zimbabwe, is the language of the descendants of the American blacks who founded Liberia and is also spoken in creolized form (Krio) in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Afrikaans, closely related to Dutch, is spoken in South Africa. There is a substantial French, Spanish and Italian population in North Africa. A creolized form of Portuguese is the first language of some thousands of speakers in Guinea and elsewhere. Finally, some languages native to India are spoken in East Africa. These include both Aryan and Dravidian languages, most importantly Gujarati.



Source: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Sameer-Soi/publication/44575687/figure/fig1/AS:601684388626437@1520464145328/Map-of-Africa-colored-by-the-language-family-spoken-in-each-region-adapted-from-ref.png

2.5. Summary

The African continent is home to many different peoples and cultural practices, political and physical geographies, local and non-local languages, there may be different ways to classify literature written by Africans. Hence, you have tried to read different categories of African literature and was divided by geographical regions (e.g. East African literature), history (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial) linguistically or based on ethnicity (the Mande, who live across Guinea, Senegal, etc.), nationality, or language expressions (Anglophone, Francophone, etc.) and by genre (poetry, proverb, etc.

2.6. Self Study Questions

State the following either as true or false

1. French occupation of the Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, has had great influence on North African literature.
2. The geographical categorization of African literature can be put as Northern African, Western African, Central Africa, Eastern African, and Southern African.
3. African literature is almost entirely unexplored but larger portion of the early written African literature is produces for African universities.
4. West African literature is influenced by Anglophone literature.
5. Ngugiwa Thiong'o and Tsegaye Gabre-Medhin are examples of Central African writers.

Choose the best answer for the following questions

6. Anti-apartheid literature is literature of _____Africa
    a. Northern
    b. Southern
    c. Eastern
    d. Eastern

7. The best-known Ethiopian literary work in this tradition, the Kebra-Negast or "Book of Kings" refers to _____African literature in history.
    a. colonial
    b. precolonial
    c. post colonial
    d. early pre-history
8. Literature in colonial and postcolonial Africa is highly motivated by _____ themes.
    a. political
    b. cultural
    c. natural/realistic
    d. romantic
9. Who was the first post-independence African writer to win the Nobel Prize in literature?
    a. Wole Soyinka
    b. Sédar Senghor
    c. Tsegaye Gebremedhin
    d. Chinua Achebe
10. Which one of the following is <u>not true</u> about the negative outlooks against pre-colonial African literature?
    a. Africans wrote on the African continent.
    b. African wrote in African languages.
    c. African wrote in European languages
    d. African wrote for European audience.

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Unit 3. Pre-Colonial African Literature

3.1. Introduction

In the previous units you learnt that Africa passed through the millennia of the Stone Age, the rise and decline of states and societies in the ancient and medieval times, the more recent centuries of European intervention and post-colonial developments. Moreover, you have been made aware that as historical evidences showed Africa is the home of the first human being, and this is true since the 1950's, at which scientific research in the Savannah grasslands and woodlands of southern, eastern and northern Africa proved this proposition. However, due to European notions racial superiority many of them have found it difficult to accept this and many other facts of Africa. In this unit you will be made more familiar with Oral traditions of Africa, Ritual drama, and Oral Poetry of African.

Unit objectives: when you complete learning this unit you will be able to:

- Define oral traditions of Africa
- Explain African ritual drama
- Give some of the characteristic features of African ritual drama
- Define the meaning of folktale
- Explain the significance of folktale for Africans

3.2. The Oral Tradition

Activity 3.2. 1. *Before you read the notes about Oral tradition of Africa, take a piece of paper and try to answer the following questions. When you finish reading the notes compare your answers with the contents of the note.*

1. What does oral tradition mean to you?

   _____

   _____

2. Do you think that oral tradition has been important for the Africans? How?

   _____

   _____

Oral tradition may be defined as the first and still most widespread mode of human communication. It refers to a dynamic and highly diverse oral-aural medium for evolving, storing, and transmitting knowledge, art, and ideas. It is typically contrasted with literacy, with which it can and does interact in myriad ways.

Oral literature is stories that have been passed down to us over years by real people being told, not by written. The characters in folk often start out as poor or unlucky people. They are ordinary people who have extraordinary adventure to win good lack, or greedy, great people who get their punishment in the end.

In different parts of this module you have also had the opportunity to read about African oral literature, and you know oral literature incorporates past events embedded in proverbs, riddles, tales, taboos and superstitions, legends, and myths. In many cases African oral literature was performative (i.e. it was often performed in front of the audience) having usually mythological and historical themes. You might have also been aware that performance, tone, riddles, and proverbs were key components of oral African literature. These elements were manipulated by the orator to produce certain effects on their audience.

The performer also often had visual aids during their performance. As the performer was usually face-to-face with the public, they were able to perform in specific ways by using mimicry, gestures, and expressions to produce an impact on their audience. They could also portray a certain image by dressing up as a specific character.

Oral African literature was versatile and communal. Performers could at times even introduce pieces of their older stories into their new stories or create completely new content and structures in their stories.

In the pre-colonial African societies, oral literature occupied a pristine position as the only form of literature. It was valued as one of the major means by which the preliterate societies educated, instructed, and socialized the younger generation. African oral literature as indigenous literature projects the societies' image and gives a clear picture of African values as it reflects and refracts the African worldview.

Ritual Drama-is a drama of music, masking and dance. It relies on mime and symbolism.

Folktale- traditional stories transferred from generation to generation through words of mouth

Poetry -Oral poetry is another genre of oral tradition that is chanted, sung and performed. As an aspect of oral tradition, it is performed to provide entertainment, give information and create form through which the African man adopts process and worship of gods.

3.2.1. Ritual Drama

Activity 3.2. 2. *The following questions are important if you answer them because they will activate your mind so that you can understand better about ritual drama. When you finish reading the notes compare your answers with the contents of the note.*

---

1. What ritual?

_____

2. What ritual drama?

_____

_____

3. When and where do you think the traditional African perform ritual dramas?

_____

_____

4. Could you think of the possible sources of indigenous drama?

_____

_____

5. What sort of indigenous drama do you think is common in Africa?

_____

_____

Now read the following notes carefully:

Ritual is the performance of ceremonial acts prescribed by tradition or by sacerdotal decree, such as priests. It is a specific, observable mode of behaviour exhibited by all known societies. It is thus possible to view ritual as a way of defining or describing humans. **Ritual Drama is a drama of music, masking and dance. It relies on mime and symbolism.**

Africa has a well-established tradition of religious and political drama long before colonialism. This performance reached its zenith during festivals marked by dramatic re-enactment of myths and rituals.

Generally, there are three known sources of African indigenous drama:

1. Legendary and mythological stories that are played out as performing folk arts. This involves the dramatization of African creation myths, allegories, moralities and folk stories. E.g. Dance of the forest (WoleSoyinks)
2. Adapting plays from other cultures into the African context- E.g. The Gods are Not to Blame (Ola Rotimi) -This is based on Oedipus the king.
3. African History- This has to do with the recreation of the colonial and post-colonial past documented in history.- E.g. Trial of DedanKimathi -This play is based on the Mau Mau Movement.

3.2.2. The nature of Ritual Performances

In many ritual performances, the performer—high priest/-ess—has as audience only the imagined supernatural being whose intervention is being elicited. This is also the case in many religious prayers. Similarly, when an individual about to leave his house dresses up at a corner of his room with a consciousness of the public and an intention to impress, behavior is heightened and thereby implicate performance. There is a presence of an audience, but an imagined and not a live one. His imagined audience may be reified as they step out of the home and begin to attract admirers.

An indispensable part of any festival in Africa is its dramatic performances. A festival contains rituals and 'drama', reformers are esteemed. They are the guardians of community values: sometimes satirizing those who go against them, sometimes acting out historical events, often identifying with ancestors or with the spirits and always full of proverbial sayings.

There are evidences that there is lack of clearcut distinction in the traditional societies between ritual and a dramatic performance. Sometimes ritualistic elements are kept to heighten the aesthetic appeal of the performance. It is desirable at this point to look at the traditional societies in Africa. In traditional

societies men were directly involved in procuring the means of subsistence by hunting or cultivating. For them some control over the environment was an urgent need.

In Egypt, ritual dramas were evidently performed in the temene of temple complexes. Sacred lakes were incorporated into the performances. Inscriptions tell of a lake at Edfou at which a ritual drama, the *Triumph of Horus* (1300–1200 B.C.E.), was performed. There were no specific seating structures, so it seems that the audience watched from the edges of the lake. Nor did spectators have seats at dramas for various gods where performances seem to have taken place in the forecourts of the temples.

3.3.3. Folktale

The traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth. The Elements of African Folklore is story or legend that is passed down orally from one generation to the next and becomes part of a community's tradition.

African Folktales often explain why nature is the way nature is. They often have some important moral to learn within the story. The oral fictional tale is practically universal both in time and place. Certain peoples tell very simple stories and others tales of great complexity, but the basic pattern of tale-teller and audience is found everywhere and as far back as can be learned. Differing from legend or tradition, which is usually believed, the oral fictional tale gives the storyteller absolute freedom as to credibility so long as he stays within the limits of local taboos and tells tales that please.

A folktale travels with great ease from one storyteller to another. Since a particular story is characterized by its basic pattern and by narrative motifs rather than by its verbal form, it passes language boundaries without difficulty. The spread of a folktale is determined rather by large culture areas, such as North American Indian, Eurasian, Central and Southern African, Oceanic, or South American. And with recent increasing human mobility many tales, especially of Eurasian origin, have disregarded even these culture boundaries and have gone with new settlers to other continents.

Q. Think of some folktales and ponder over the purposes they are meant to achieve for their societies?

_____

_____

As you may know from your own culture, Africa is very rich in folktales. Such short prose narratives of unknown authorship live with African societies being transmitted orally to shape personal and communal lives. Most African folktales have animal characters though they may appear through human characters as well.

Activity: Read the following African Folktale and examine its themes.

Activity: Here under are two Ethiopian folktales told through animal and human characters respectively. Please read them carefully and analyze the moral messages they are intended to deliver.

_____

_____

_____

A. The Talkative Tortoise

A long time ago, there was a tortoise living near a village. She always went to the nearby spring and told stories to women who went to the stream to fetch water. Due to this, women used to quarrel with their husbands for their delays in the stream listening to her stories.

One day, while the tortoise was waiting for the coming of women, two birds perched at the bank of the stream to drink water.

The tortoise approached the birds and said, “Good morning gentle birds! You know, you are lucky to fly to anywhere you like. You could visit places you’ve never seen before. But, poor me, I can’t fly. I can’t even escape from creeping or walking enemies who may kill me. I try to hide myself in my shell but they stone me, Oh, poor me!”

She then went on saying, “I wish I could fly like you one day and die afterwards. Would you mind flying me?”

The birds felt sorry for the poor tortoise Thus, they held a short meeting to decide on her request and all agreed to fly her.

One of the birds brought a rope. He then warned the tortoise: “You should hold the middle of the rope with your mouth. We hold the ends and will fly you. You should never open your mouth for talk.”

The tortoise gladly accepted the offer and started flying.

Then, the village children noticed her in the sky and one of them said, “Oh, look at the talkative tortoise flying with birds! I am sure she will fall soon.”

The tortoise heard the boy and responded: “do you think I am a fool to talk now?” She immediately lost her grip, fell down and died.”

B. The Infidelity

A husband and wife used to live peacefully. The husband was one-eyed.

As time went on, the wife started an extra-affair with another man. When her husband went out for work, the paramour used to visit her.

One day, when they were making love, the husband arrived suddenly. When he knocked at the door, the wife instructed the paramour to hide himself in the roof.

She then went to the door to open it for her husband rubbing her eyes as though she was asleep.

After saying good afternoon, he asked if his wife started to sleep at that hour of the day. She responded that she was sick and that was why she slept at such an unusual time. When he sat, she brought water and washed his feet.

Having done that, she covered her husband's only eye with her hands and asked him if he saw anything.

That time the paramour started to climb down knowing she was giving him a sign for safe escape. Unfortunately, he fell on the floor near her husband. The wife quickly reacted saying, "cousin, why hurry? You could have met him later". She then introduced him to her husband. The paramour got a smile from the husband.

Now, do the following based on the two folktales:

1. What are the human vices discouraged by the tales?

   _____

   _____

2. With what are women associated with according to the tales?

_____

_____

3. Do you think the society has positive attitude toward women?

_____

_____

4. Was it the right time to wash the feet of her husband at mid-day?

_____

_____

5. What lessons could couples draw from the tales for a happy marital life?

_____

_____

You should know that there are countless folktales that revolve around children, women, adults and other members of communities with the ultimate purpose of upholding virtues and trivializing vices. You could get such tales from every society of every African country. This should not be a surprise because the tales do, after all, revolve around common values.

Now, find tow tales, one from Ethiopia and another from any of the other African countries, and find out the virtues they appreciate or the vices they condemn.

_____

_____

Stories are meant not only to teach about vices and virtues. Africans also have a rich stock of myths, i.e. stories that give explanations of natural occurrences. Through their myths, they explain why the world is as it is and things happen as they do.

The following tale from Ghana explains why the turtle has a hard shell to wear:

Mr. Leopard had a drum so great and admirable. Yet no animal hoped to own it as they feared the Leopard. Only the sky god had the ambition to own it. One day, it so happened that the sky god's mother died and he started preparations for her funeral. He wanted the drum to make the ceremony more colorful and asked many animals if they could bring the drum for him. Elephant, antelope, and many animals went turn by turn only to be chased away by the leopard. At last, turtle said she could be the drum only to receive the mockery of the other animals. "If big animals such as the lion couldn't succeed, how on earth could you, turtle?" This was the question they asked. When she insisted, however, the sky god agreed and turtle went to leopard. "Are you also the god's messenger?" the leopard asked when he saw her. She explained to him that she came to check if his drum is greater than god's because god has made one into which he could enter. Angrily, the leopard tried to enter to prove he can also get in. As he puts himself in through a lot of labor, turtle tied him with a rope. She then slowly dragged him to the sky. The animals felt jealous due to turtle's achievement.

Turtle felt that they may kill her. So, she asked god to give her a hard shell to wear. God gave her one and never is she seen without wearing it.

There are similar mythological explanations available. For instance, there is a myth as to why Ethiopians have a moderate complexion which is neither white nor black. Please ask any resourceful person and see how Ethiopians explain their complexion.

_____

_____

_____

_____

African American folk tales

Do you know anything about African American Oral literature?

_____

_____

_____

Please note the following:

1. The rich tradition of story-telling that existed in Africa was taken with the slaves to the Americas and it became the basis for story telling in the new world.
2. The law forbade that slaves could not learn to read and write. Therefore, their cultures had to be shared and preserved by word of mouth.
3. The art of story – telling that has evolved has evolved the literature that was to come after emancipation and continues to influence literature today.

Here is one example for you. Please note that the English is Afro-American. What kind of Story is it?

_____

_____

C. How the Snake Got Poison

Well, when God made de snake he put him in de bushes to ornament de ground. But things didn't suit de snake so one day he got on de ladder and went up to see god.

"Good mawnin', God."

"How do you do, Snake?"

“Ah ain’t so many, god, you put me down there on my belly in de dust and everything trods upon me and kills off my generations. Ah ain’t got no kind of protection at all.”

God looked off towards immensity and thought about de subject for a while, then he said, “Ah didn’t mean for nothing’ to be stompin’ you snakes lak dat. You got to have some kind of a protection. Here, take dis poison and put it in yo’ mouf and when they tromps on you, protect yo’ self.”

So de snake took de poison in his mouf and went on back.

So after a while all de other varmints went up to God.

“Good evenin’, god.”
“How you makin‘ it, varmints?”
“God, please do somethin’ bpitdat snake. He’s layin’ in de bushes there wid poison in his mouf and he’s striking’ everytingdat shakes de bush. He’s killin’ up our generations. Weseskeered to walk de earth.”

So God sent for de snake and tole him:

“Snake, when Ah give you dat poison, Ah didn’t mean for you to be hittin’ and killin’ everything dat shake de bush. I give you dat poison and tole you to protect yo’self when they tramples on you. But you killin’ everything dat moves. Ah didn’t mean for you to do dat.”

De snake say, “Lawd, you know Ah’m down here in de dust. Ah ain’t got no claws to fight wid, and Ah ain’t got no feets to git me out de way. All Ah kin see is feetscomin to trample me. Ah can’t tel who my enemy is and who is my friend. You gimme dis protection in my mouf and Ah uses it.”

God thought it over for a while then he says:

“Well, snake, I don’t want yo’ generations all stoped out and I don’t want you killin everything else dat moves. Here take dis bell and tie it to yo’ tail. When you hear feetscomin’ you ring yo’ bell and if it’s yo’ friend, he’ll be keerful. If it’s yo’ enemy, it’s you and him.”

So dat’s how de snake got his poison and dat’s how come he got rattles.

Biddy, biddy, bend my story is end. Turn loose de rooster and hold de hen.

A Few Facts/Characteristics about African folktales

- Unlike Western fairy tales, African folktales rarely end with 'happily ever after'.
- In Africa, folktales, myths, legends and even tongue twisters are often told around the fire.
- Animals in the stories sometimes take on human characteristics, such as greed or jealousy, to teach a lesson or moral.
- Some of the same folktales can also be found in North and South America, as well as the West Indies, as people in slavery kept folktales from their home alive.

3.2.4. Oral Poetry

It is noticeable that African literature was dominated by folkloristic elements. Poems of appreciation to their kings, as it have been justified in Egypt, Ethiopia and the pre-apartheid South Africa, were the salient features of oral literature. The language medium of these elements, for example, may be of vernacular (Swahili, Hausa, Amharic), Anglophone in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa or Francophone as it is the case in West and Central Africa countries or Arabic as it is justified in the northern part of Africa.

In African societies almost all communal activities are accompanied by song and dance. In most societies there are songs for every stage and occasion of a person's life, from the cradle to the grave. Some examples are marriage songs, work songs, war songs, praise songs, funeral songs, etc.

Activity 3.2.4: Answer the following questions before you read the following.

1. What situations would you mention about when oral poetry would have been used in the African tadeonal societies?

   _____

2. In what kind of condition do you think was the following oral poem used?

   _____

Bunyoro lullaby

Ha! That mother who takes her food alone
Ha! That mother before she has eaten
Ha! That mother she says, "Lull the baby for me."
Ha! That mother, when she has finished eating,
Ha! That mother she says, "Give the child to me!"

The about example is called **lullaby**. Lullabies are songs sung principally to put the baby to sleep. They are sung in the soft tune. They employ simple language; one that children can easily identify with. I hope you might have experienced such kind of poetry /songs/ in your culture too.

There are many situations that oral poems were used in African traditional societies. One common example of such is a wedding song. Though many wedding songs capture the joy associated with wedding ceremonies, many songs may express sorrow at the thought of leaving the familiar home for an uncertain future. Other wedding songs sing praises to the bride, the groom and their parents.

Example Wedding song (from Kenya)

It is hard,

Aloo,

It’s hard to leave your home

To go to another.

It’s hard to call another

Your mother.

Father was educated, at Korotis

And is a clerk

I have seen the clerk.

I have seen the clerk.

Mama was educated at “Chipyesi) (GBS: Girls Boarding School)

And is a nurse,

Mama wanted Mama wanted her child to be a Nurse

Weed the garden of fruits

Weed mama’s garden of fruits

That they continue to yield.

Aloo! Haa!

Haa!

Activity: Answer the questions below based on the wedding poem above

1. Who are mentioned the poem?

_____

2. Who is the singer of the song and what feelings did you recognize?

_____

3. What is the status of the family according to the poem?

_____

CHILDREN'S PLAY SONGS

These are songs performed by children at play. The following song is sung by two groups of children (marked A and B respectively) in turns. The children join their hands to form the circle and swing their hands as they sing.

A: Watatawatiriri our house is excellent

B: Watatawatiriri it cannot bet better than ours

A: WatatawaTiriri What is yours made of?

B: Watatawatiririoursismadeofstone

A:Watatawatiririoursismadeoftimber

B: Watatawatiriri give us one person

A: Watatawatiriri whom do you like to have?

B: Watatawatiriri we would like Kariuki

A: WatatawatiririKariuki why don't you go?

At this point the boy named Kariuki moves from his group and joins the other group the other team begins the song again and by the end of the session the two groups would have exchanged many of their members.

SATIRICALSONGS these are songs that criticize human folly. They aim at castigating those who do not live up to the expectations of the society and also to discourage the rest from engaging in similar activities or behavior. In most cases such songs make use of hyperbole aimed at emphasizing on the wrong done. Look at the following as an example.

THE LAZY MAN

When the cock crows,

The lazy man smacks his lips and says:

So it is daylight again, is it?

And before he even stretches himself,

Before he even yawns
The farmers has reached the farm,
The water carriers have arrived at the river,
The spinners are spinning their cotton,
The weaver works on his cloth
And the fire blazes in the blacksmith's hut
The lazy one knows where the soup is sweet
He goes from house to house. If there is no sacrifice today,
His breast bone will stick out!
But when he sees the yam,
He starts to unbutton his shirt,
He moves close to the celebrant.
Yet his troubles are not few.
When his wives reach puberty,
Rich men will help him marry them.
(Nigeria)

3.2.4.1. Fundamental Features of African Oral Poetry

As opposed to narratives, which are prose, song and recitation are verse. They demand that the composers should arrange their words in such a way that they should sound perfect especially in terms of rhythm and melody. These together with the meaning of the words enable the poet or the singer to express his/her feelings with the strongest impact possible.

African traditional poetry has the following fundamental features

- It is transmitted through oral means

- Actualized in performance
- It is realized in any of the three modes –speech, chant and song.

In addition, audience participation is an integral aspect of the performance.

Besides this African oral poetry can be classified on the basis of the criteria of content, theme, structure, function and mode of delivery.

African oral poetry is a communal property because of the contributions of various artists over time although a poet/composer must have composed it at a point in time.

Poets were attached to the courts of powerful kings, to the retinues of nobles or lesser chiefs, and to all those who had pretensions to honor and thus to poetic celebration in their society. One can mention the elaborate praise poems of the Zulu or Sotho in southern Africa, the poems of the official singers of the ruler of Bornu, the royal praises of the Hausa emirs, the eulogies addressed to rulers in the various kingdoms of the Congo, and many others. In all these areas the ruling monarchs and their ancestors were glorified in poems, and real and ideal deeds were attributed to them in lofty and effusive language.

Look at the following poem about Zulu king. The poets glorify the swiftness and completeness of his victory over the enemy:

Faster-than-the-sun-before-it-has-risen!

When it rose the blood of men had already been shed.

The Bush, 'the Buck-catcher', caught the men of Sekwayo's.

He made men swim who had forgotten how,

Yes! Even in the pools…

The tobacco fields rotted even to pulp!

The wrapping-mats were finished at Banganomo;

At (the kraal) of Kuvukuneni,

At that at Mdiweni, even Vimbemsheni's,

At that at Bukledeni,

At that at Panyekweni

These are also songs sung during funeral ceremonies. They are called DIRGES. They are sung during the actual burial and during remembrances or other post-burial ceremonies. Dirges reveal the community's attitude towards death. They also serve to console the bereaved, sing praises to the deceased and as a lamentation towards death for taking away loved ones. Look at the following example poem *(Prayer before the Dead Body)* and try to imagine the emotional contents of the poem.

Prayer before the dead body

The gates of the underworld are closed.

Closed are the gates.

The spirits of the dead are thronging together

Like swarming mosquitoes in the evening,
Like swarming mosquitoes.
Likes warms of mosquitoes dancing in the evening,
When the night has turned black, entirely black,
When the sun has sunk, has sunk below,
When the night has turned black
The mosquitoes are swarming
Like whirling leaves
Dead leaves in the wind.
Dead leaves in the wind,
They wait for him who will come
For him who will come and will say:
"Come" to the one and "go" to the other
And God will be with his children.
And God will be with his children.

(Namibia)

3.3. Summary

African oral traditions are the primary means through which Africans communicate their overall cultural heritage from generation to generation. Most of this oral tradition is in different form such as folktale, ritual drama, and oral poetry. These genres often have different characteristic features and conveyed numerous themes.

3.4. Self-study Question

I. State the following as True/False

1. African oral literature is static and unchanging over time.

2. African oral literature plays a crucial role in transmitting cultural values and norms.
3. African oral literature is only found in written form.
4. African oral literature is passed down from generation to generation through spoken word.

II- Choose the best answer for the following

---

5. What is a key characteristic of African oral literature?
    a. Digital media c. Orality
    b. Visual presentation d. Written format
6. Which of the following is NOT a type of African oral literature?
    a. Folktale c. Novel
    b. Riddle d. Legend
7. What is a common form of African oral literature that involves storytelling through music and dance?
    a. Proverb c. Myth
    b. Epic d. Fable

III- Give detailed answers for the following

---

8. Discuss the role of oral literature in preserving cultural heritage in African societies.
9. How does African oral literature contribute to the sense of community within African societies?
10. Explain the significance of oral poetry in African oral literature and provide examples.

3.5. Self-Assessment

I am confident that I can:

- ✓ Define oral traditions of Africa and give some examples
- ✓ Explain African ritual drama and its characteristic features
- ✓ Give some of the characteristic features of African ritual drama
- ✓ Define the meaning of folktale
- ✓ Explain the significance of folktale for Africans
- ✓ Give examples of oral poetry in Africa.

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Unit 4. Colonial African Literature

4.1. Introduction

Europeans colonized Africa from the late 19th century until the middle to later 20th century. After the colonial powers seized the continent they not only exploited the natural resources but also severely mistreated the community in different parts of the continent. This unit tries to explain the feelings the victimized part of the community as depicted by the authors of African literary works.

Unit Objectives: When you complete learning this unit you will be able to:

- Define the Harlem Renascence in terms of New Negro Movement.
- Explain Negritude and its literary contributions to Africa.
- Read and appreciate some colonial time literary works.
- Explain the meaning of Colonial Evil in different social, political, economic, etc. contexts.

4.2. The Harlem Renascence and its Literary Contributions

4.2.1. What Is the Harlem Renaissance?

Activity What do you know about the role of black diasporas in African literature?

_____

_____

The Harlem Renaissance, also known as the New Negro Movement, was a literary, artistic, cultural, intellectual movement that began in Harlem, New York after World War I and ended around 1935 during the Great Depression. In the decades immediately following World War I, huge numbers of African Americans migrated to the industrial North from the economically depressed and agrarian South. In cities such as Chicago, Washington, DC, and New York City, the recently

migrated sought and found (to some degree) new opportunities, both economic and artistic. African Americans were encouraged to celebrate their heritage and to become "The New Negro," a term coined in 1925 by sociologist and critic Alain Leroy Locke in his influential book of the same name. The movement raised significant issues affecting the lives of African Americans through various forms of literature, art, music, drama, painting, sculpture, movies, and protests. Voices of protest and ideological promotion of civil rights for African Americans inspired and created institutions and leaders who served as mentors to aspiring writers. Although the center of the Harlem Renaissance began in Harlem, New York, its influence spread throughout the nation and beyond and included philosophers, artists, writers, musicians, sculptors, movie makers and institutions that "attempted to assert…a dissociation of sensibility from that enforced by the American culture and its institutions." Generally, the legacy of the Harlem Renaissance opened doors and deeply influenced the generations of African American writers that followed.

4.3. Negritude and its literary contributions

Negritude was both a literary and ideological movement led by French-speaking black writers and intellectuals. The movement is marked by its rejection of European colonization and its role in the African Diasporas, pride in "blackness" and traditional African values and culture, mixed with an undercurrent of Marxist ideals. This movement, which influenced Africans as well as Blacks around the world, specifically rejects the political, social and moral domination of theWest. Its founders (or *les troispères*), AiméCésaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, and Léon-GontranDamas, met while studying in Paris in 1931 and began to publish the first journal devoted to Negritude, *L'Étudiant noir* (*The Black Student*), in 1934. The founders of Negritude were in part inspired by their encounters with members of the Harlem Renaissance, many of whom were living in France at the time to escape

racism and segregation in the United States. Amongst the most influential of those were Langston Hughes and Richard Wright.

The term "Negritude" was coined by Césaire in his *Cahier dun retour au pays natal* (1939) and it means, in his words, "the simple recognition of the fact that one is black, the acceptance of this fact and of our destiny as blacks, of our history and culture." Even in its beginnings Negritude was truly an international movement-drawing inspiration from the flowering of African-American culture brought about by the writers and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance while asserting its place in the canon of French literature, glorifying the traditions of the African continent, and attracting participants in the colonized countries of the Caribbean, North Africa, and Latin America.

The literature of Negritude includes the writings of black intellectuals who affirm black personality and redefine the collective experience of blacks. A preoccupation with the black experience and a passionate praise of the black race provides a common base for the imaginative expression in association with romantic myth of Africa.

The movement's sympathizers included French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Roumain, founder of the Haitian Communist Party. The movement would later find a major critic in Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian playwright and poet, who believed that a deliberate and outspoken pride in their color placed black people continually on the defensive, saying notably "Un tigernessproclâme pas satigritude, ilsautesursaproie," or "A tiger doesn't proclaim its tigerness; it jumps on its prey." Negritude has remained an influential movement throughout the rest of the twentieth century to the present day.

African Negritude Poems

We have seen the thematic manias of female poets of Africa in section 2.2. You have also introduced to the essence of Negritude Movement, its proponents with its ultimate goals that intended to achieve in chapter one. In this section, we are going to assess exemplary poems of the negritude pressure group written by Senghor and Damas.

Activity: *Read the following poem written by Senghor and answer the questions that follow.*

---

1. What do the red, black, white-and-black masks represent in the poem?

_____

_____

2.What kind of role does the speaker play? What does he want the world to be like?

_____

_____

3. What do the words 'they' and 'we' in the last consecutive lines refer?

_____

_____

4. What is the theme of the poem? What is wished to happen?

_____

_____

Prayer to the Masks

Masks! O Masks!
Black mask red mask you white-and-black masks,
Masks at the four points the Spirit breathes from,
I salute you in silence!

And not you last, lion-headed Ancestor,
You guard this place from any woman's laughter, any fading smile,
Distilling this eternal air in which I breathe my Forebears.
Basks of maskless faces, stripped of every dimple as of every wrinkle,
You who have arranged this portrait, this face of mine bent above this altar of white paper
In your image, hear me!
Now dies the Africa of empires—the dying of a pitiable princess
And Europe's too, to whom we're linked by the umbilicus.
Fix your immutable eyes on your subjugated children,
Who relinquish their lives as the poor their last garments.
May we answer present at the world's rebirth,
Like the yeast white flour needs.
For who would teach rhythm to a dead world of cannons and machines?
Who would give the shout of joy at dawn to wake the dead and orphaned?
Tell me, who would restore the memory of life to men whose hopes are disemboweled?
They call us men of cotton, coffee, oil.
They call us men of death.
We are men of dance, whose feet take on new strength from stamping the hard ground.

(Senghor, 1989)

Activity: *The second 'Negritude' poem belongs to Damas. Read one of his poems and respond to the questions that follow.*

---

1. Discuss the style of the poem by citing references.

_____

_____

2. What is the theme of the poem?

_____

_____

3. What is the atmosphere of the poem?

_____

_____

4. What does ‘How many of ME MEMEave died’ imply?

_____

_____

"They Came That Night":

How many of ME MEME

Have died

SINCE THEN

Since they came that night when the

Tom

Tom

Rolled

From

Rhythm

To rhythm

The frenzy

Of eyes

The frenzy

Of hands

The frenzy

Of statue feet

(Damas)

Now compare your answer with following note.

Senghor's poem 'Prayer to the Masks' underscores the importance of tolerance among white and black people and preaches the oneness of mankind. It articulates the handing over of rich wealth of the old generation to their children by avoiding discrimination, hatred and stigma. Leaving some kind of constructive legacy to generation is echoed in the poem as the omnipresent demanding reason of humans by letting aside devaluation and hatred. Similarly, Damas' poetry is marked by disjointed rhythms, plain language, and vivid images. Some of the stylistic devices often employed in his poetry include alliteration, repetition and enumeration. An example of Damas's writing which illustrates some of these characteristics is the above excerpt from "They Came That Night": Damas's work is significantly influenced by the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance, the ideas of French surrealism, and the rhythms and tunes of African American blues and jazz. Themes that have spanned Damas's writing include the divided self, exile and return, racial identification and solidarity, and to some extent, love.

4.4. Literatures mirror to colonial evils

Colonialism is attributed to the harsh, severe and brutal exploitation of the people and land being colonized. It is also related to its historical and cultural denigration, oppression, suppression, economic exploitation and deprivation, literary prejudice and linguistic interference on the side of the colonized. Due to this it is commonly perceived as an evil.

For example fromMasihur (2020) abstract thefollowing extract from the article entitled, *The Colonial Evils Depicted in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness*, the following is worth stating as follows.

Written in the colonial context, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness is a potential exploration of the nature of colonial evils and hypocrisy. Set in an atmosphere of

gloomy darkness dominated by criminality towards humanity…Three distinct forms of evil are prominently found in the novella: the base, primitive instincts like lust and greed associated with individual take the shape of evil in some characters; the banality of ordinary mankind whose willful silence and assumed denial helps the evil to grow; and the colonial European hypocrisy and trading secrets shows its evil aspects in Congo. Although Heart of Darkness has highlighted more the primitive and base evil, the other colonial evils have been depicted in its ugly shape through the images, metaphor and phrases in the novella. Going through these colonial evils this article would like to contribute to broader understanding of inclusive humanism.

In his conclusion Masihur (2020) remarked that Heart of Darkness successfully deals with several forms of evils relating to colonialism and Conrad's presentation of a trip to colonial world unmasks and bares open the camouflage of colonialism. The dark mysterious atmosphere hovering in the novel is none other than the construction of evils. Personal evil tendencies took a wild turn in a colonial setting. The banal complicity very complacently employs silence and willful denial to grow the branches of evil in the ordinary human heart. Civilizational superiority and western notion of progress and enlightenment have also been questioned showcasing the battering and crumbling structure of humanism in a colonial perspective. The failure to maintain basic moral standard is very much incompatible with so called "white man's burden"4. Conrad's Inclusive humanism expects to unearth such constructions of evils to have a broader understanding. By participating in the process of discovery of colonial reality, its hypocrisy and treatment of the native people Heart of Darkness is necessarily a novel depicting/ representing different facets of colonial evil.

However, according to Purwarnoand Suhendi (2017) in Achebe's Things Fall Apart colonial influences do not seem to have been taken totally evil.

Chinua Achebe in Things Fall Apart depicts the impacts of Great Britain‟s colonialism to the Igbo people from the perspective of an observer as well as a critic. He has tried his best to maintain his objective and honest stance in the novel. He avoids giving the Igbo any unnecessary sympathy, painting some of their irrational beliefs and follies, such as human sacrifice, the abandonment of infant twins and the bodies inflicted with some strange illness to Evil Forest, mutilation of the ogbanje, etc. He as an original Igbo vividly presents the richness and potentialities of the Igbo society, but at the same time he is not uncritical of the limitations of his society where he belongs to.

According to UN Human rights the effects of **harms of colonialism lasted longer**—it was present both history and in the present time, too. It has led to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, and that Africans and people of African descent, and people of Asian descent and indigenous peoples were victims of colonialism and continue to be victims of its consequences. Some of its effects are, for example:

- The legacies of colonialism continue to shape the global economy, and that the modes of extraction, production and consumption were at the heart of the ecological crisis.
- The negative impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples had resulted in systemic racism, poverty, economic inequity, violence, overincarceration, poor health, dispossession of traditional lands and territories, criminalization of indigenous human rights defenders, loss of language and culture, and violence.
- The colonial transfer of wealth and racial oppression had created a legacy of social, economic, cultural and political exclusion the effects of which had been felt for generations, and were still felt today.

4.5. Summary

It is discussed that the rebirth of Colonial African literature was outside African in Harlem. The Harlem renaissance and the negritude movement altogether contributed significant developments to Colonial African literature. African writers in different forms have also revealed the dark image of the colonial time and this was expressed in harsh terms as “Colonial Evils”.

4.6. Self-Study Questions

I. State the following as True/False

1. African literature has global relevance, offering insights into universal themes such as love, conflict, and human experiences.
2. African literature is written in various languages, including indigenous African languages, French, Portuguese, and Arabic.
3. The Harlem Renaissance was a period of artistic and intellectual flourishing in Harlem, New York.

II- Choose the best answer for the following

4. Who is considered the father of African literature?
    a. Ben Okri
    b. Chinua Achebe
    c. Wole Soyinka
    d. Ngugi wa Thiong'o
5. Which language was commonly used in Negritude literature?
    a. English
    b. Portuguese
    c. French
    d. Spanish
6. What is Negritude?
    a. A political party in Africa
    b. A type of dance in South America
    c. A cooking technique in the Caribbean

d. A literary and ideological movement emphasizing African identity

7. What is a common theme in Colonial African literature?
    a. Struggle for independence
    b. Fashion trends
    c. Modern technology
    d. Culinary traditions

III- Give detailed answers for the following

---

8. Discuss the influence of African Literature on western literary traditions.
9. Explain the significance of Negritude in the context of decolonization.
10. How does Negritude challenge Eurocentric views in literature?

4.7. Self-Assessment

I feel confident that I can_____

1. Define the Harlem Renascence in terms of New Negro Movement.
2. Explain Negritude and its literary contributions to Africa.
3. Explain the meaning of Colonial Evils in terms of social, political, economic, and other facts during colonial Africa.

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Unit 5. Survey of World Literature

5.1. Introduction

Survey of world literature focuses on western literature and this unlike previous units it includes more sub-units ranging from classical age literature to modern English literature. In each subunit the history and/or works of selected contributors are included. Hence, as students are advised to carefully go through each part in order to grasp ideas on what world literature was.

Unit Objectives: When you complete learning this unit you will be able to:

- Identify the classical age literature
- Explain about the prominent icons of the classical age literature questions
- Explain the main themes of the medieval period literature
- Identify the role of the church in the development of literature?
- List icons who contributed in the development of literature?
- Define what renaissance in literature mean
- Identify which genres of literature Shakespeare was known for
- Identify the main concerns of neoclassical literature
- Explain the philosophies of Dryden, Alexander Pope and Johnson in the three ages of neoclassical periods?
- Clarify the emphasis of literature in the Romantic period
- State the distinct characteristics of romantic literature
- List literary icons of the period along with their works
- Explain what the modern and postmodern literature mean
- Illustrate different characteristics of modern and post literature

5.2. Classical literature: (1200 BC-455 AD)

Activity Questions: *Answer the following questions before you read the note about Greek classical literature*

1. Which countries are famously known in classical literature?
2. List some prominent icons from the classical age literature along with their philosophy?

As in case of Africa literature any ancient literature was mainly oral. As you know oral literature is a term generally applied to spoken literary traditions such as folk tales, legends, musical theater, riddles, life histories, plays, proverbs, epic poems, historical recitations and the like.

Unlike written literary genres, oral literature is conveyed or passed down to future generations by word of mouth, typically through memorization and recitation. It is considered a verbal art form.

Classic, Classical, and Classicism, terms describing the style, historical period, or quality of a work of art, literature, or music; the terms originally were associated with the aesthetic achievements of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations.

Classic: A term used primarily to denote and characterize a type and style or period of creative work. Strictly speaking, a classic is any ancient Greek or Roman literary work of the first or highest quality— for example, the works of the Greek dramatist Sophocles and the Roman poet Virgil. In a broad sense, the term classic is applied to anything accepted either as a model of excellence or as a work of enduring cultural relevance and value.

Classical: In the strictest sense, this is a term used to characterize the art, literature, and aesthetics created by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Broadly

speaking, the term classical may be used to characterize any style or period of creative work distinguished by qualities that are mainly suggestive of, or derived from, classical Greek or Roman art, literature, and aesthetics.

Classism: The imitation or use primarily of the style and aesthetic principles of ancient Greek and Roman classical art and literature; in modern times, it also refers to the adoption of such principles in music. The most important periods during which classicism was the prevailing movement in Western thought and creative art were the Renaissance, the late 17th and early 18th centuries, especially in England and France and the late 18th and 19th centuries.

5.2.1. The Greek Classical literature

Greek Literature encompasses literature of the Greek peoples from about the 8th century BC to the present. This literature developed as a national expression with little outside influence until the Hellenistic Age (4th to 1st century BC), and it had a formative effect upon all succeeding European literature. The early inhabitants of Greece, the people of the Aegean and Mycenaean civilizations, possessed an oral literature largely composed of songs concerning wars, harvests, and funerary rites.

5.2.2. Literary Giants of the Classical Period

I. Homer

Homer is the author of the Iliad and Odyssey, the two major epics that have survived from Greek antiquity. Nothing is known of Homer as an individual, and in fact it is a matter of controversy whether a single person can be said to have created both the Iliad and Odyssey. Linguistic and historical evidence, however, suggests that the poems were composed in the Greek settlements on the west coast of Asia Minor sometime in the 8th century BC. The Homeric epics were

disseminated by the recitations of professional poets who, in succeeding generations, made alterations in the originals, substituting contemporary phrases for recently obsolete ones. Besides the Iliad and Odyssey, the so-called Homeric Hymns, a series of relatively short poems celebrating the various gods, have also been attributed traditionally to Homer because their style resembles that of the epics. In a direct way Homer was the parent of all succeeding Greek literature. Drama, historiography, and even philosophy all show the mark of the issues, comic and tragic, raised in the epics and of the techniques Homer used to approach them. For the later epic poets of Western literature, Homer was the greatest influence (even when, as in the case of Italian poet Dante Alighieri, thepoets did not know the works of Homer directly). But for his most successful followers, curiously enough, his work was as much a critical and comic target as a model.

II. Socrates (469-399 BC)

Socrates was a Greek philosopher whose way of life, character, and thought exerted a profound influence on ancient and modern philosophy. Although Socrates himself wrote nothing, he is portrayed in conversation in compositions by a small circle of his admirers, the most important of whom was his student Plato.

In Plato’s dialogues, Socrates appears as a man of great insight, integrity, self-mastery, and argumentative skill. Socrates' contribution to philosophy was essentially ethical in character. Belief in a purely objective understanding of such concepts as justice, love, and virtue, and the self-knowledge that he inculcated, were the basis of his teachings. He believed that all vice is the result of ignorance, and that no person is willingly bad; correspondingly, virtue is knowledge, and those who know the right will act rightly. His logic placed particular emphasis on rational argument and the quest for general definitions, as evidenced in the writings of his younger contemporary and pupil, Plato, and of Plato's pupil, Aristotle.

Through the writings of these philosophers, Socrates profoundly affected the entire subsequent course of Western speculative thought. Although a patriot and a man of deep religious conviction, Socrates was nonetheless regarded with suspicion by many of his contemporaries, who disliked his attitude toward the Athenian state and the established religion. He was charged in 399 BC with neglecting the gods of the state and introducing new divinities, a reference to the daemonion, or mystical inner voice, to which Socrates often referred. He was also charged with corrupting the morals of the young, leading them away from the principles of democracy.

III. Plato (470– 399 BCE)

Plato was the most famous student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. He is best known as the author of philosophical works of unparalleled influence.

Plato is both famous and infamous for his theory of forms. Just what the theory is, and whether it was ever viable, are matters of extreme controversy. To readers who approach Plato in English, the relationship between forms and sensible particulars, called in translation "participation," seems purposely mysterious. Moreover, the claim that the sensible realm is not fully real, andthat it contrasts in this respect with the "pure being" of the forms, is perplexing. A satisfactory interpretation of the theory must rely on both historical knowledge and philosophical imagination.

Successful development of the theory of forms depended upon the development of a distinction between two kinds of predication. Plato held that a sentence making a predication about a sensible particular, "A is B," must be understood as stating that the particular in question, A, displays a certain property, B. There are ordinary predications about the forms, which also state that the forms in question display properties. Crucially, however, there is a special kind of predication that can be used to express a form's nature. Since Plato envisaged that these natures could be given in terms of genus-species trees, a special predication about a form, "A is B,"

is true if B appears above A in its correct tree as a differentia or genus. Equivalently, “A is B” has the force that being a B is (part of) what it is to be an A.

This special predication is closely approximated in modern classifications of animals and plants according to a biological taxonomy. “The wolf is a canis,” for example, states that “wolf appears below “canis” in a genus-species classification of the animals, or equivalently that being a canis is part of what it is to be a wolf (Canis lupus).

The ordinary predication “Socrates is just” is true, because the individual in question displays the property of being just. Understood as a special predication, however, the assertion is false, because it is false that being just is part of what it is to be Socrates (there is no such thing as what it is to be Socrates). “Man is a vertebrate,” understood as an ordinary predication, is false, since the form Man does not have a backbone. But when treated as a special predication it is true, since part of what it is to be a human is to be a vertebrate. Self-predication sentences are now revealed as trivial but true: “the Beautiful is beautiful” asserts only that being beautiful is (part of) what it is to be beautiful. In general one must be careful not to assume that Plato’s self-predication sentences involve ordinary predication, which would in many cases involve problematic self-exemplification issues.

Plato had an essentially antagonistic view of art and the artist, although he approved of certain religious and moralistic kinds of art. Again, his approach is related to his theory of Forms. A beautiful flower, for example, is a copy or imitation of the universal Forms “floweriness” and “beauty.” The physical flower is one step removed from reality, that is, the Forms. A picture ofthe flower is, therefore, two steps removed from reality. This also meant that the artist is two steps removed from knowledge, and, indeed, Plato’s frequent criticism of the

artists is that they lack genuine knowledge of what they are doing. Artistic creation, Plato observed, seems to be rooted in a kind of inspired madness.

III. Aristotle (1384-1322 BC)

Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist, was one of the greatest intellectual figures of Western history. He was the author of a philosophical and scientific system that became the framework and vehicle for both Christian Scholasticism and medieval Islamic philosophy. Even after the intellectual revolutions of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment, Aristotelian concepts remained embedded in Western thinking.

Aristotle rightly claimed to be the founder of logic. His chief works in this field are the Categories, the **De interpretation**, and **the Prior Analytics,** which deal respectively with words, propositions, and syllogisms. The syllogism, a central method of inference, can be illustrated by familiar examples such as the following:

Every Greek is human.
Every human is mortal.
Therefore, Every Greek is mortal

Aristotle discusses the various forms that syllogisms can take and identifies which forms constitute reliable inferences. The example above contains three "propositions," the third of which Aristotle calls the "conclusion." The other two propositions may be called "premises", though Aristotle does not consistently use any particular technical term to distinguish them.

Although Aristotle's system makes room for forms, they differ significantly from forms as Plato conceived them. For Aristotle, the form of a particular thing is not separate from the thing itself—any form is the form of something. In Aristotle's

physics, form is always paired with matter, and the paradigm examples of forms are those of material substances.

When a thing comes into being, neither its matter nor its form is created. But the fact that the forms of things are not created does not mean that they must exist independently of matter, outside space and time, as Plato maintained. The bronze sphere derives its shape not from an ideal Sphere but from its maker, who introduces form into the appropriate matter in the process of his work. Likewise, Socrates' humanity derives not from an ideal Human but from his parents, who introduce form into the appropriate matter when they conceive him.

In his theory of knowledge, Aristotle rejected the Platonic doctrine that knowledge is innate and insisted that it can be acquired only by generalization from experience. He interpreted art as a means of pleasure and intellectual enlightenment rather than an instrument of moral education. His analysis of Greek tragedy has served as a model of literary criticism.

5.3. Medieval Literature (455-1485 AD)

Activity Questions: *Read and try to answer the following questions as pre-learning questions*

1. What were the main concerns of the medieval age literature?
2. How did the church influence literature in the age?
3. Who are the most important writers of this age?

5.3.1. Literature in Medieval Period

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, Old English was suppressed in records and official venues in favor of the Norman French language. However, the English language survived among the conquered Anglo-Saxons. The peasant classes spoke

only English, and the Normans who spread out into the countryside to take over estates soon learned English of necessity. By the 14th century, English reemerged as the dominant language but in a form very different from Anglo-Saxon Old English. Writers of the 13th and 14th centuries described the co-existence of Norman French and the emerging English now known as Middle English.

5.3.2. The Church and Literature

The most important philosophical influence of the middle Ages was the Church, which dominated life and literature. In medieval Britain, “the Church” referred to the Roman Catholic Church. Although works such as Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales reveal an exuberant, and often bawdy, sense of humor in the Middle Ages, people also seemed to have a pervasive sense of the brevity of human life and the transitory nature of life on earth.

Outbreaks of the plague, known as the Black Death, affected both the everyday lives and the philosophy of the Middle Ages. During that time, it was believed that human activity is notautonomous. Men are incapable to act as individuals- all men belonged to the Catholic Church, which expected them to believe and follow what it taught. The destiny of mankind was in the hands of the Divine. Men were dependent creatures, unable to exist without God. It was believed that Man is finite, he is made of dust and to dust he shall return. The sole purpose of life was to please God. Religion was the pivot of society and mankind was relegated in the background. England moved within the narrow shell of Scholastic philosophy. Churches and monasteries were the schools. They were operated by the clergy. The schools were dreary and cold, and physical activity was severely repressed. Few men could read and write. The Church authorities were the most learned people. They had access to all kinds of information.

In addition to religion, a second philosophical influence on medieval thought and literature was chivalry, the code of conduct that bound and defined a knight's behavior. The ideals of chivalry form the basis of the familiar Arthurian legends, the stories of King Arthur and his Knights. Because the Church and the concept of chivalry were dominant factors in the philosophy of the Middle Ages, these two ideas figure prominently in medieval literature.

Religious literature Religious literature appeared in several genres:

- **Devotional books**: books of hours [collections of prayers and devotionals, often illuminated]
- **Sermons**
- **Psalters** [books containing psalms and other devotional material, often illuminated]
- **Missals** [books containing the prayers and other texts read during the celebration of mass throughout the year]
- **Breviaries** [books containing prayers and instructions for celebrating mass]
- **Hagiographies** [stories of the lives of saints]
- Medieval drama

5.4. The Medieval Drama: Mystery and Morality Plays

5.4.1 Mystery Plays

Mystery plays depict events from the Bible. Often, mystery plays were performed as cycle plays, a sequence of plays portraying all the major events of the Bible, from the fall of Satan to the last judgment. Some play cycles were performed by guilds, each guild taking one event to dramatize.One of the most famous of the play cycles, the York mystery plays, is still performed in the English city of York.

Records from the Chester cycle, also still performed, list which guilds were involved and which plays each guild presented. In a few places, such as York, the cycles were performed on pageant wagons that moved on a pre-determined route through the city.

By staying in the same place, the audience could see each individual play as the wagon stopped and the actors performed before moving on to perform again at the next station.

5.4.2 Morality Plays

Morality plays are intended to teach a moral lesson. These plays often employ allegory, the use of characters or events in a literary work to represent abstract ideas or concepts. Morality plays, particularly those which are allegorical, depict representative characters in moral dilemmas with both the good and the evil parts of their character struggling for dominance.

Similar to mystery plays, morality plays did not act out events from the Bible but instead portrayed characters much like the members of the audience who watched the play. From the characters' difficulties, the audience could learn the moral lessons the Church wished to instill in its followers. One of the most well-known of extant morality plays is Everyman. In this morality play, God sends Death to tell Everyman that his time on earth has come to an end.

5.5. Chivalric Literature

In Britain, chivalric literature, particularly the legends of King Arthur and his Knights, flowered in the medieval romance, a narrative, in either prose or poetry, presenting a knight and his adventures. The word romance originally indicated languages that derived from Latin (the Roman language) and is not related to modern usage of the word to signify romantic love. Instead a medieval romance

presents a knight in a series of adventures (a quest) featuring battles, supernatural elements, repeated events, and standardized characters.

5.6. Literary Giants in the Medieval Era

5.6.1 Geoffrey Chaucer (1343?-1400)

Chaucer is one of the greatest English poets, whose masterpiece, The Canterbury Tales, was one of the most important influences on the development of English literature

The Tales is a collection of stories set within a framing story of a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral, the shrine of Saint Thomas à Becket. The poet joins a band of pilgrims, vividly described in the General Prologue, who assemble at the Tabard Inn outside London for the journey to Canterbury. Ranging in status from a Knight to a humble Plowman, they are a microcosm of 14th-century English society.

The Host proposes a storytelling contest to pass the time; each of the 30 or so pilgrims (the exact number is unclear) is to tell four tales on the round trip. Chaucer completed less than a quarter of this plan. The work contains 22 verse tales (two unfinished) and two long prose tales; a few are thought to be pieces written earlier by Chaucer. **The Canterbury Tales,** composed of more than 18,000 lines of poetry, is made up of separate blocks of one or more tales with links introducing and joining stories within a block.

The tales represent nearly every variety of medieval stories at its best. The special genius of Chaucer's work, however, lies in the dramatic interaction between the tales and the framing story. Chaucer greatly increased the prestige of English as a literary language and extended the range of its poetic vocabulary and meters. He was the first English poet to use the seven-line stanza in iambic pentameter known

as rhyme royal and the couplet later called heroic. Chaucer uses several types of tales typical in the Middle Ages.

A. Medieval Romance: In medieval drama, the plot is about knights and their adventures and often has supernatural elements. The characters are standardized (the same types of characters appearing in many stories: the chivalrous knight; the beautiful lady; the mysterious old hag). Repeated events with religious significances can be seen.

Examples of medieval romances in The Canterbury Tales: "The Knight's Tale," "The Wife of Bath's Tale" (an Arthurian romance)

B. Fabliau: a humorous, bawdy tale, often including satire of foolish Characters Examples of fabliaux in The Canterbury Tales: "The Miller's Tale," "The Reeve's Tale," "The Summoner's Tale"

C. Exemplum: a moral tale, often used to illustrate a point in a sermon Examples of exempla in The Canterbury Tales: "The Clerk's Tale," "The Pardoner's Tale," "The Monk's Tale"

D. Saint's legend: a story depicting the life and martyr's death of a saint Examples of saints' legends in The Canterbury Tales: "The Prioress's Tale," "The Second Nun's Tale"

5.6.2.Dante Alighieri (1265-1321

Dante was an Italian poet and one of the supreme figures of world literature, who was admired for the depth of his spiritual vision and for the range of his intellectual accomplishment. Dante's first important literary work was **La vita nuova.**

It is composed of sonnets and canzoni (love poems) woven together with a prose commentary. The work narrates the course of Dante's love for Beatrice (his former beloved), his premonition of her death in a dream, her actual death, and his ultimate resolve to write a work that would be a worthy monument to her memory. It transcends the Provencal tradition in that it not only describes the poet's love in terms of a lofty idealism but suggests a spiritual significance in the object of his adoration. La vita nuova, in its sustained intensity of feeling, is one of the greatest verse sequences in European literature.

Dante's epic masterpiece, The Divine Comedy, was probably begun about 1307; it was completed shortly before his death. The work is an allegorical narrative, in verse of great precision and dramatic force, of the poet's imaginary journey through hell, purgatory, and heaven. Each character in The Divine Comedy is symbolic of a particular fault or virtue, either religious or political; and the punishment or rewards meted out to the characters further illustrate the larger meaning of their actions in the universal scheme.

5.6.3. Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75),

Boccaccio, an Italian writer and humanist, was one of the great authors of all time. Boccaccio's most important work is **Il Decamerone** (Ten Days' Work), which was begun in 1348 and completed in 1353; it was first translated into English, as The **Decameron**, in 1620. This collection of 100 witty, high-spirited stories is set within a framework. The **Decameron** is the first and finest prose masterpiece of the Italian Renaissance. It is notable for the richness andvariety of the tales, which alternate between tragedy and earthy humor, for the brilliance of the craftsmanship, and for its penetrating character analysis.

Boccaccio's other writings include three works thought to be inspired by his love for **Maria d'Aquino:** his first long prose romance **Ilfilocolo** (circa 1336),

L'amorosaFiammetta (Amorous Fiammetta, 1343-44), both stories of rejected lovers; and **Il corbaccio** (The Old Crow, c. 1354). His **Ilfilostrato** (c. 1338) and **Teseida** (1340-41) are poems in ottavarima, a verse form he brought to perfection. He also wrote a life of Dante, with a commentary on The Divine Comedy, and a number of scholarly, scientific, and poetic works in Latin.

5.7. The Renaissance Period (1485-1660 AD)

Brainstorming Activity Questions

1. What does it mean by Renaissance in relation to literature?
2. Which genre of literature did Shakespeare produced; list some of his works in genre?

5.7.1. Literature in the Renaissance Period

Renaissance- "rebirth" is the name commonly applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is usually said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued, both in Italy and other countries of Western Europe, through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this period the European arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded in any age.

The idea of rebirth originated in the belief that Europeans had rediscovered the superiority of Greek and Roman culture after many centuries of what they considered intellectual and cultural decline. The preceding era, which began with the collapse of the Roman Empire around the 5thcentury, became known as the Middle Ages to indicate its position between the classical and modern world.

Scholars now recognize that there was considerable cultural activity during the Middle Ages, as well as some interest in classical literature. A number of

characteristics of Renaissance art and society had their origins in the Middle Ages. Many scholars claim that much of the cultural dynamism of the Renaissance also had its roots in medieval times and that changes were progressive rather than abrupt. Nevertheless, the Renaissance represents a change in focus and emphasis from the Middle Ages, with enough unique qualities to justify considering it as aseparate period of history. The result was to open out the sense of the vastness of the historical past, as well as to enlarge immensely the stock of ideas, materials, literary forms, and styles available to Renaissance writers.

Rediscovery of literature and art, curiosity and objectivity, i.e. (intense interest in the visible world and in the knowledge derived from concrete sensory experience and focus on the morality of human actions than abstract discussions of religious issues) and individualism (focus on the unique talents and potential of the individuals) were some of the characteristics of the renaissance period.

5.7.2. Literary Giants in the Renaissance Period

5.7.2.1. William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

William Shakespeare, an English playwright and poet, recognized in much of the world as the greatest of all dramatists. Hundreds of editions of his plays have been published, including translations in all major languages. Scholars have written thousands of books and articles about his plots, characters, themes, and language. He is the most widely quoted author in history, and his plays have probably been performed more times than those of any other dramatist. There is no simple explanation for Shakespeare's unrivaled popularity, but he remains our greatest entertainer and perhaps our most profound thinker. He had a remarkable knowledge of human behavior, which he was able to communicate through his portrayal of a wide variety of characters. He was able to enter fully into the point of view of each of his characters and to create vivid dramatic situations in which to

explore human motivations and behavior. His mastery of poetic language and of the techniques of drama enabled him to combine these multiple viewpoints, human motives, and actions to produce a uniquely compelling theatrical experience. A. Comedies of Shakespeare Shakespeare's comedies celebrate human social life even as they expose human folly. By means that are sometimes humiliating, even painful, characters learn greater wisdom and emerge with a clearer view of reality. Some of his early comedies can be regarded as light farces in that their humor depends mainly upon complications of plot, minor foibles of the characters, and elements of physical comedy such as slapstick.

I. Early Comedies: Shakespeare remained busy writing comedies during his early years in London, until about 1595. These comedies reflect in their gaiety and exuberant language the lively and self-confident tone of the English nation after 1588. The comedies in this group include The Comedy of Errors, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Taming of the Shrew, and Love's Labour's Lost.

II. Middle Comedies: Although very different in tone, A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Merchant of Venice from the mid-1590s provide evidence of Shakespeare's growing mastery of the comic form and his willingness to explore and test its dramatic possibilities. A Midsummer Night's Dream represents Shakespeare's first outstanding success in the field of romantic comedy.

III. **Matured Comedies:** The romantic plays *Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, The Merry Wives of Windsor, and Twelfth Night* are often characterized as joyous comedies because of their generally happy mood and sympathetic characters. Written around 1599 and 1600, they represent Shakespeare's triumph in the field of high comedy. These

mature comedies revolve around beautiful, intelligent, and strong-minded heroines, a type anticipated by the quick-witted heiress Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. Nothing quite like these plays appears in earlier English drama, and Shakespeare never wrote anything like them in later years. They present a contrast to the satiric comedy that was coming into fashion at the time, and many critics believe they demonstrate not only Shakespeare's mastery of his art but also his congenial temperament in the sympathy he reveals toward his characters.

IV. Problem Comedies: Three plays All's Well That Ends Well, Troilus and Cressida, and Measure for Measure written soon after the mature comedies are usually called by modern critics "problem plays," a term first coined for them in 1896. The problem comedies touch on complex and often unpleasant themes and contain characters whose moral flaws are graver and more difficult to change than the shortcomings of the characters in the farces or the joyous comedies. Little of the light-hearted humor of the earlier comedies, nor the easy satisfactions of their endings, appear in these plays. They are, however, emotionally rich and dramatically exciting, and have become increasingly successful on stage and stimulating to readers.

B. Shakespeare's Tragedies

Shakespeare's tragedies are among the most powerful studies of human nature in all literature and appropriately stand as the greatest achievements of his dramatic artistry. Attention understandably has focused on his unforgettable tragic characters, such as *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth.*

Yet the plays also explore and extend the very nature of tragedy itself by discovering within it a structure that derives meaning precisely from its refusal to offer consolation or compensation for the suffering it traces.

I. Early Tragedies: Shakespeare wrote his first tragedies in 1594 and 1595. But he left the field of tragedy untouched for at least five years after finishing *Romeo and Juliet,* probably in 1595, and turned to comedy and history plays. *Julius Caesar,* written about 1599, served as a link between the history plays and the mature tragedies that followed.

II. Matured Tragedies: The tragedies Shakespeare wrote after 1600 are considered the most profound of his works and constitute the pillars upon which his literary reputation rests. Some scholars have tied the darkening of his dramatic imagination in this period to the death of his father in 1601. But in the absence of any compelling biographical information to support this theory, it remains only a speculation. For whatever reason, sometime around 1600 Shakespeare began work on a series of plays that in their power and profundity are arguably unmatched in the achievement of any other writer. These tragedies include *Hamlet, Othello, king Lear, Antonv* and *Cleopatra, Macbeth* and the like.

C. Later Plays

Toward the end of his career, Shakespeare created several experimental plays that have become known as tragicomedies or romances. These plays differ considerably from Shakespeare's earlier comedies, being more radical in their dramatic art and showing greater concern with reconciliation among generations. Yet like the earlier comedies the tragicomedies end happily with reunions or renewal. Typically, virtue is sorely tested in the tragicomedies, but almost miraculously succeeds.

Through the intervention of magic and art—or their emotional equivalent, compassion, or their theological equivalent, grace—the spectacular triumph of virtue that marks the ends of these plays suggests redemptive hope for the human condition. In these late plays, the necessity of death and sadness in human existence is recognized but located within larger patterns of harmony that suggest we are "led on by heaven, and crowned with joy at last,"as the epilogue of Pericles proposes. *Pericles, Price of Tyre,The Tempest* and the *winter's Tale* are his later plays.

5.7.2.2. Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Francis Bacon, English philosopher and statesman, one of the pioneers of modern scientific thought. The best of his philosophical works are *The Advancement of Learning (1605),* a review in English of the state of knowledge in his own time, and Novum Organum; or, Indications Respecting the Interpretation of Nature (1620).

Bacon's philosophy emphasized the belief that people are the servants and interpreters of nature, that truth is not derived from authority, and that knowledge is the fruit of experience.

5.7.2.3. John Milton (1608-1674)

John Milton, an English poet, whose rich, dense verse was a powerful influence on succeeding English poets, and whose prose was devoted to the defense of civil and religious liberty. Milton is often considered the greatest English poet after Shakespeare. His masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*, is considered unsurpassed among English epic poems. It is a powerfully imaginative and dramatic work, based in part on the biblical story of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

Paradise Lost is considered Milton's masterpiece and one of the greatest poems in world literature. It is written in 12 books that vividly tell the story of Satan's rebellion against God and his tempting of Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge. The poet's announced aim was to "justify the ways of God to men," although Satan holds center stage in the first four books and for many readers emerges as the most interesting figure in the poem. But Satan's heroism, which is genuine within its limits, serves finally to set off the greater heroism of Christ and Adam. The last part of the poem systematically degrades Satan, and it is precisely because Adam does not react to his fall as Satan does to his that the fall can be thought of as fortunate.

John Milton's work is marked by cosmic themes and lofty religious idealism; it reveals an astonishing breadth of learning and command of the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew classics. His blank verse is of remarkable variety and richness, so skillfully modulated and flexible that it has been compared to organ tones.

5.8. Literature in the Enlightenment (Neoclassical)

Brain storming questions:

1. What is neoclassicism in literature?
2. Compare and contrast the philosophies of Dryden, Alexander Pope and Johnson?

Period Neoclassicism is a literary movement of the 17th and 18th centuries that stressed the importance of using ancient Greek and Roman (the Classical period) literature as a guide for creation and criticism. Hence, there is the paradox of the term: "neo," meaning "new" and classicism, meaning "oldness". Literature in the Western world can be thought of as swinging back and forth between two artistic

ideals: classicism, which stresses following tradition and the rules derived thereof, and anti-classicism (or romanticism), which stresses originality and breaking tradition.

5.8.1. Ages of the Neoclassical Period

I. The Restoration Age (1660- 1700)-Age of Dryden: This period takes its name from the restoration of the monarchy (Charles II) to the English throne and the triumph of reason and tolerance over religious and political passion. Writing should be well structured, emotion should be controlled, and emphasize qualities like wit.

John Dryden: Dryden identified himself with official opinion and regards himself as the chronicler of the age. The tragic drama of this period was made up of Heroic Plays or Heroic Drama. The restoration age is also the first great age of English literary criticism. Dryden's philosophy is clearly stated in the Essay on Satire: According to Dryden the purpose of literature is to give a picture of truth and imitate nature in the manner of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

II. **The Augustan Age (1700-1745) -** Age of Pope This period takes its name from the original Roman Augustan Age (27 B.C.-14 A.D.), which the leading writers of this period greatly admired its figures. The new Augustans drew parallels between the two ages, and deliberately imitated their literary forms and subjects, their emphasis on social concerns, and their ideals of moderation and urbanity

Alexander Pope (1688-1744), is the greatest poet of this period. He followed Dryden by using the couplet in verse. When he was young, he wrote his Essay on Criticism, which contains sayings often remembered today: Pope's delightful poem The Rape of the Lock [the stealing of the hair] takes a light subject and treats it as important. He also translated the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer. His other famous Essay on Man shows his perfection of the heroic couplet: The greatest prose writer of the whole century is Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). He was a great humorist and a bitter satirist. Swift's most famous satire was produced then.

The greatest novelist of the century is Henry Fielding (1707-1754). He started his novel-writing career almost by accident. His Tom Jones is his masterpiece. It has picaresque elements – the theme of the journey occupies the greater part of the book – but it would be more accurate to describe it as a mock-epic. We appreciate Tom Jones for its boisterous humor, its good sense, and its vivid characterization.

III. The Age of Sensibility (1745-1798) - Age of Johnson: The man whose personality seems to dominate the whole of the Age of Sensibility is Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). He was a kind of literary ruler, giving judgments on books and authors like a god. Late in life he wrote his Lives of the Poets (1779-81) with decision and clear expression. His own writings are less important than what he said, and a record of his conversations has been preserved in the Life of Johnson. His name as a scholar will live chiefly because of his Dictionary of the English Language.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850): He was one of the most accomplished and influential of England's romantic poets, whose theories and style created a new tradition in poetry. Although Wordsworth had begun to write poetry while still a schoolboy, none of his poems was published until 1793, when An Evening Walk and Descriptive Sketches appeared. These works, although fresh and original in content, reflect the influence of the formal style of 18th-century English poetry. The poems received little notice, and few copies were sold. Wordsworth had met the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, an enthusiastic admirer of his early poetic efforts. Wordsworth and Coleridge collaborated on a book of poems entitled Lyrical Ballads, first published in 1798. This work is generally taken to mark the beginning of the Romantic Movement in English poetry. Wordsworth wrote almost all the poems in the volume, including the memorable “Tintern Abbey”; Coleridge contributed the famous “Rime of the Ancient Mariner.” Representing a revolt against the artificial classicism of contemporary English verse, Lyrical Ballads was greeted with hostility by most leading critics of the day. In defense of his unconventional theory of poetry, Wordsworth wrote a “Preface” to the second edition of Ballads, which appeared in 1800. His premise was that the source of poetic truth is the direct experience of the senses. Poetry, he asserted, originates from “emotion recollected in tranquility.” Rejecting the contemporary emphasis on form and an intellectual approach that drained poetic writing of strong emotion, he maintained that the scenes and events of everyday life and the speech of ordinary people were the raw material of which poetry could and should be made. Far from conciliating the critics, the “Preface” served only to increase their hostility. Wordsworth,

however, was not discouraged, continuing to write poetry that graphically illustrated his principles. Much of Wordsworth's easy flow of conversational blank verse has true lyrical power and grace, and his finest work is permeated by a sense of the human relationship to external nature that is religious in its scope and intensity.

5.9. The Romantic Period (1790-1830)

Brain storming questions:

1. What was the main concerns of the romantic period literature/
2. What the distinct features/characteristics of the romantic literature?
3. Who was the well noted personalities of the age?

5.9.1. Literature in the Romantic Period

Romanticism is a term loosely used to designate numerous and diverse changes in the arts during a period of more than 100 years (roughly, 1760–1870), changes that were in reaction against Neoclassicism (but not necessarily the classicism of Greece and Rome) or against what is variously called the Age of Reason the Enlightenment, or 18th-century materialism.

In the sense of a personal temperament Romanticism had always existed, but in the sense of an aesthetic period it signified works of art whose prime impulse and effect derived from individual rather than collective reactions. Romanticism can generally be said to have emphasized the personal, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the spontaneous, the emotional, and even the visionary and transcendental in works of art. The Romantic Movement first developed in northern Europe with a rejection of technical standards based on the classical ideal that perfection should be attained in art. It was writers and poets who gave initial expression to Romantic ideas; painters, while subject to similar feelings, acquired

fundamental inspiration from the literature of the period. There was an increasing awareness generally of the way the various arts interacted.

5.9.2. Characteristics of Romantic Literature

Romanticism saw a shift from faith in reason to faith in the senses, feelings, and imagination; a shift from interest in urban society to an interest in the rural and natural; a shift from public, impersonal poetry to subjective poetry; and from concern with the scientific and mundane to interest in the mysterious and infinite. Mainly they cared about the individual, intuition, and imagination.

1. **Imagination and emotion** are more important than reason and formal rules; imagination is a gateway to transcendent experience and truth.
2. Along the same lines, **intuition and a reliance on "natural"** feelings as a guide to conduct are valued over controlled, rationality.
3. Romantic literature tends to emphasize **a love of nature, a respect for primitivism, and a valuing of the common, "natural" man;** Romantics idealize country life and believe that many of the ills of society are a result of urbanization.
4. Romantics were interested in the **Medieval past, the supernatural, the mystical, the "gothic," and the exotic;**
5. Romantics were attracted to **rebellion and revolution**, especially concerned with human rights, individualism, and freedom from oppression;
6. There was emphasis on introspection, psychology, melancholy, and sadness. The art often dealt with death, transience and mankind's feelings about these things. The artist was an extremely individualistic creator whose creative spirit was more important than strict adherence to formal rules and traditional procedures

5.10. History of Modern English Literature

Modernism as a literary movement reached its height in Europe between 1900 and the mid-1920s and the Modern Age in English Literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century. The modern period of literature approximately covers theyear(1901-45).

Generally speaking, modern literature tends to revolve around themes of individuality, the randomness of life, mistrust of government and religion. Modernist literature is a movement away from Romanticism, Victorian trends in literature, and Realism, and really, is marked by its determined desire to break away from all previous forms and conventions. It reflects the lack of order seen in a growing urban society, celebrates passion over reason, and questions traditional moralities.

The three thinkers who influence the Modern Era and Modern literature are probably **Charles Darwin** (1809-1882), **Karl Marx** (1818-1883) and **Sigmund Freud**. This is not to say that Modern authors were ardent evolutionists, or Marxists or even practitioners of Freudian psychology; rather, these thinkers simply fueled and framed the perspectives and debates that formulated so much Modern art and literature. Today, Freud's specific theories are largely dismissed as unscientific. Still, these ideas had a profound influence on art and literature as much as on our common, daily perceptions/conceptions of existence and reality.

5.10.1. Characteristics of the Modern Literature

The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it was opposed to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public. The other important characteristic of literature is "the dehumanization of art" and an attempt to find common ground in a world. Modernist literature also

emphasize individual perception and experiences as an attempt to find shared meaning of humanity and Omit traditional forms of stories (exposition, rising action….resolution). Most of the themes in the modern literature were implied, not stated; it forces readers to draw their own conclusions. Furthermore, rather than attempting to describe the outer, external and social reality and class conflict, modernist literary works focused on the inner life, psychology, mind and subjective experience of characters.

5.10.2. Major Figures of Modern literature

D.H. Lawren: His Literary works include: The Rainbow, Women in Love, Lady Chatterley's Lover. In his writings, Lawrence has expressed a strong reaction against the mechanical civilization. In his opinion, the bourgeois industrialization or civilization caused the distortion of personality. Under the mechanical control, human beings were turned into inanimate matter.

James Joyce (1882-1941) was an Irish novelist, short story novel writer, poet and playwright born in Dublin. Joyce wrote several volumes and an autobiographical novel which follows his life from infancy to his first departure for Paris. Joyce subsequently wrote an unsuccessful play published in 1918 and furthermore a slight volume of verses. These were amid the beginnings of his two great works to come, Ulysses and Finnegan’s Wake. These both occupied the remainder of his life.

Virginia Woolf: During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Her most famous works include the novels Mrs. Dalloway (1925), To the Lighthouse (1927) and Orlando (1928), and the book-length essay A Room of One's Own (1929), with its famous dictum, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Self-study Questions

I. State the following as True/False

1. Greek Classical literature heavily influenced Roman literature.
2. Modernist literature is a movement away from Romanticism.
3. In realistic literature imagination and emotion are more important than reason and formal rules; imagination is a gateway to transcendent experience and truth.
4. Aristotle was one of the greatest intellectual figures of Western history.

II- Choose the best answer for the following

5. Which epic poem is attributed to Homer?
   a. Iliad c. Aeneid
   b. Odyssey d. Metamorphoses
6. Who wrote the play 'Macbeth'?
   a. William Shakespeare c. Herman Melville
   b. George Orwell d. Mark Twain
7. The three thinkers who have influenced the Modern Era and Modern literature are _____
   a. Charles Darwin c. Sigmund Freud.
   b. Karl Marx d. all
8. _____is a literary movement of the 17th and 18th C that stressed the importance of using the Classical period literature as a guide
   a. Period Neoclassicism
   b. Modern English literature era
   c. Renaissance literature
   d. The Medieval period literature

III- Give detailed answers for the following

9. Examine the role of fate in 'Romeo and Juliet'.
10. How did ***The Canterbury Tales*** influence the development of English literature?

Reference:

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Glossary of Literary Terms

Allegory: An **allegory** is a **story** within a story. It has a "surface story" and another story hidden underneath. For example, the surface story might be about two neighbors throwing rocks at each other's homes, but the hidden story would be about war between countries.

Alliteration: In alliteration, words that begin with the same sound are placed close together. Although **alliteration** often involves **repetition** of letters, most importantly, it is a repetition of sounds.

Allusion: **Allusion** is basically a reference to something else. It's when a writer mentions some other work, or refers to an earlier part of the current work. In literature, it's frequently used to reference cultural works (e.g. by alluding to a Bible story or Greek myth).

Analogy: An **analogy** is a literary technique in which two unrelated objects are compared for their shared qualities. Unlike a **simile** or a metaphor, an analogy is not a figure of speech, though the three are often quite similar. Instead, analogies are strong **rhetorical devices** used to make rational arguments and support ideas by showing connections and **comparisons** between dissimilar things.

Anecdote: An anecdote is a very short story that is significant to the topic at hand; usually adding **personal** knowledge or experience to the topic.

Antagonist: In a story, the **antagonist** is the opposite of the protagonist, or main character. Typically, this is a **villain** of some kind, but not always! It's just the opponent of the main character, or someone who gets in their way.

Antithesis: **Antithesis** literally means "opposite" – it is usually the opposite of a statement, concept, or idea. In literary analysis, an antithesis is a pair of statements or images in which the one reverses the other. The pair is written with similar grammatical structures to show more contrast.

Aphorism: An **aphorism** is a short, concise statement of a general truth, insight, or good advice. It's roughly synonymous with "a saying." Aphorisms often use ***metaphors*** or creative **imagery** to get their point across.

Assonance: **Assonance** is the repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds within words, phrases, or sentences.

Character: A character is a person, animal, being, creature, or thing in a story. Writers use characters to perform the actions and speak dialogue, moving the story along a **plot** line. A story can have only one character (protagonist) and still be a complete story.

Characterization: Any of the various techniques used by an author to reveal the traits of a character to the reader.

Cliché: A **cliché** is a saying, image, or idea which has been used so much that it sounds terribly uncreative. The word "cliche" was originally French for the sound of a printing plate, which prints the same thing over and over.

Climax: **Climax** is the highest point of tension or **drama** in a narrative's plot. Often, climax is also when the main problem of the story is faced and solved by the main character or protagonist.

Conflict: Conflict is the central struggle that drives the plot of a story or, more generally, any struggle between opposing forces in a story. Literary scholars often classify conflicts as internal, in which a character struggles

with some internal dilemma, or external, in which a character struggles against outside forces like nature, other characters, or supernatural forces.

Connotation: A **connotation** is a common feeling or association that a word has, in addition to its literal meaning (the denotation). Often, a series of words can have the same basic definitions, but completely different connotations—these are the emotions or meanings implied by a word, phrase, or thing. (compare this with **denotation)**

Comedy: **Comedy** is a broad genre of film, television, and literature in which the goal is to make an audience laugh. It exists in every culture on earth (though the specifics of comedy can be very different from one culture to another), and has always been an extremely popular genre of storytelling.

Denotation: **Denotation** is a word' or thing's "dictionary definition", i.e. its literal meaning.

Denouement: The **denouement** is the very end of a story, the part where all the different plotlines are finally tied up and all remaining questions answered.

Dialogue: **Dialogue** means "conversation." In the broadest sense, this includes any case of two or more characters speaking to each other directly. But it also has a narrower definition, called the dialogue form. The dialogue form is the *use* of a sustained dialogue to express an argument or idea.

Diction: **Diction** refers to word choice and phrasing in any written or spoken text. Many authors can be said to have their own "diction," because they tend to use certain words more than others or phrase things in a unique way.

Drama: Drama has two very different meanings. In modern pop culture, it means a genre of film or television that deals with serious, often negative, emotions.

It's the opposite of comedy, which is just for laughs. Drama refers only to film and television, not novels or other purely written art forms.

Elegy: A poem or song of lamentation written in honor of a deceased (dead) person.

Extended Metaphor: An **extended metaphor** is a metaphor that is developed in some detail by being used in more than one phrase, from a sentence or a paragraph, to encompassing an entire work.

Fairy Tale: A **fairy tale** is a story, often intended for children, that features fanciful and wondrous characters such as elves, goblins, wizards, and even, but not necessarily, fairies. The term "fairy" tale seems to refer more to the fantastic and magical **setting** or magical influences within a story, rather than the presence of the character of a fairy within that story.

Fable: In literature, a fable is a short fictional story that has a moral or teaches a lesson. Fables use humanized animals, objects, or parts of nature as main characters, and are therefore considered to be a sub-genre of fantasy.

Fantasy: Fantasy, in Greek 'making visible,' is a genre of fiction that concentrates on imaginary elements (the fantastic). This can mean magic, the supernatural, alternate worlds, superheroes, monsters, fairies, magical creatures, mythological heroes—essentially, anything that an author can imagine outside of reality.

Figures of Speech: A **figure of speech** is a word or phrase using **figurative** language—language that has other meaning than its normal definition. In other words, figures of speeches rely on implied or suggested meaning, rather than a dictionary definition.

Flashback: **Flashback** is a device that moves an audience from the present moment in a chronological **narrative** to a scene in the past.

Folklore: **Folklore** refers to the tales people tell – folk stories, fairy tales, "tall tales," and even **urban legends**. Folklore is typically passed down by word of mouth, rather than being written in books. It has no author – it just emerges from the culture and is carried forward by constant retelling. It is also defined as it is the collection of traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community passed through the generations by word of mouth.

Foreshadowing: **Foreshadowing** gives the audience hints or signs about the future. It suggests what is to come through imagery, language, and/or symbolism.

Genre: A genre is a category of literature identified by form, content, and style. **Genres** allow literary critics and students to classify compositions within the larger canon of literature.

Hero/Heroine: is the main character (protagonist) of a literary work, especially one who exhibits admirable traits such as courage and righteousness; in mythology, heroes/heroines also typically possess supernatural powers or other qualities.

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which an author or speaker purposely and obviously exaggerates to an extreme. It is used for emphasis or as a way of making a description more creative and humorous.

Idiom: An **idiom** is a phrase that conveys a figurative meaning different from the words used. In this sense, idiom is pretty much synonymous with "figure of speech," though with a slightly narrower definition: an idiom is part of the language.

Imagery: Imagery is language used to create images in the mind of the reader. Imagery includes figurative and metaphorical language to improve the reader's experience through their senses.

Irony: **Irony** is when there are two contradicting meanings of the same situation, event, image, sentence, phrase, or story. In many cases, this refers to the difference between expectations and reality.

Jargon: **Jargon** is the specific type of language used by a particular group or profession.

Literary Device: In literature, any technique used to help the author achieve his or her purpose is called a *literary device*.

Metaphor: A metaphor is a common figure of speech that makes a comparison by directly relating one thing to another unrelated thing (though these things may share some similarities). Unlike similes, metaphors do not use words such as "like" or "as" to make comparisons.

Metonymy: **Metonymy** is a figure of speech that replaces words with related or associated words. A metonym is typically a part of a larger whole, for example, when we say "wheels," we are figuratively referring to a "car" and not literally only the wheels.

Monologue: A **monologue** is a speech given by a single character in a story.

Mystery: Mystery is a genre of literature whose stories focus on a mysterious crime, situation or circumstance that needs to be solved.

Narrative: A narrative is a story. The term can be used as a noun or an adjective. As a noun, narrative refers to the story being told. As an adjective, it describes the form or **style** of the story being told.

Negritude: Negritude is the sum of the cultural values of the black world as they are expressed in the life, the institutions, and the works of black men (Léopold Sédar Senghor). It is a literary movement of the 1930s, ’40s, and ’50s that began among French-speaking African and Caribbean writers living in Paris as a protest against French colonial rule and the policy of assimilation.

Ode: In the strict definition, an ode is a classical poem that has a specific structure and is aimed at an object or person. In the loose definition, an ode is any work of art or literature that expresses high praise.

Onomatopoeia: **Onomatopoeia** refers to words whose pronunciations imitate the sounds they describe. A dog’s bark sounds like “woof,” so “woof” is an example of onomatopoeia.

Orature: Orature (or oral literature) is the unwritten form of literature existing in the form of stories, poems, proverbs, riddles, and sayings.

Oxymoron: An **oxymoron** is a figure of speech that puts together opposite elements. The combination of these contradicting elements serves to reveal a paradox, confuse, or give the reader a laugh.

Parable: A **parable** is a short story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. A parable often uses metaphor, simile, or symbolism to make the moral more accessible to the audience. E.g. the **Good Samaritan** in the Bible explores the meaning of one of the Ten Commandments, to “love their neighbors as themselves.

Paradox: A **paradox** is a statement that contradicts itself, or that must be both true and untrue at the same time.

Personification: Personification is a kind of metaphor in which you describe an inanimate object, abstract thing, or non-human animal in human terms.

Plot: In a narrative or creative writing, a plot is the sequence of events that make up a story, whether it's told, written, filmed, or sung. The plot is the story, and more specifically, how the story develops, unfolds, and moves in time.

Poetry: Poetry is a type of literature based on the interplay of words and rhythm. It often employs rhyme and meter (a set of rules governing the number and arrangement of syllables in each line). In poetry, words are strung together to form sounds, images, and ideas that might be too complex or abstract to describe directly.

Prose: Prose is just non-verse writing. Pretty much anything other than poetry counts as prose.

Protagonist: Protagonist is just another word for "main character." The story circles around this character's experiences, and the audience is invited to see the world from his or her perspective.

Proverb: A proverb is a short saying or piece of folk wisdom that emerges from the general culture rather than being written by a single, individual author.

Pun: A pun is a joke based on the interplay of ***homophones*** — words with the same pronunciation but different meanings.

Resolution: The resolution, also known as the denouement, is the conclusion of the story's plot structure where any unanswered questions are answered, or "loose ends are tied."

Romance: A romance is a narrative genre in literature that involves a mysterious, adventurous, or spiritual a story line where the focus is on a quest that

involves bravery and strong values, not a love interest. However, modern definitions of romance also include stories that have a relationship issue as the main focus.

Sarcasm: Sarcasm is a form of verbal irony that mocks, ridicules, or expresses contempt. You're saying the opposite of what you mean (verbal irony) and doing it in a particularly hostile tone.

Satire: The formal definition of satire is "the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices." It's an extremely broad category.

Setting: Setting is the time and place (or when and where) of the story. It may also include the environment of the story, which can be made up of the physical location, climate, weather, or social and cultural surroundings.

Simile: A simile is a literary term where you use "like" or "as" to compare two different things, implying that they have some quality in common.

Style: Style is the way in which an author writes and/or tells a story. It's what sets one author apart from another and creates the "voice" that audiences hear when they read.

Symbol: A symbol is any image or thing that stands for something else. It could be as simple as a letter, which is a symbol for a given sound (or set of sounds).

Synecdoche: A **synecdoche** is figure of speech which allows a part of something to stand for a whole, or the whole to stand for a part.

Theme: **Theme** is the central idea, topic, or point of a story, essay, or narrative.

Tone: **Tone** refers to the "feel" of a piece of writing. It's any or all of the stylistic qualities of the writing, such as formality, dialect, and atmosphere.

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