

CHAUCER.THE OLD DRAMATISTS.THE OLD DRAMATISTS (CONTD [CHAPMAN AND FORD] pdf

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Chaucer.-The old dramatists.-The old dramatists (Cont'd) [Chapman and Ford] Skip to main content Search the history of over billion web pages on the Internet.

An addition has been made to these volumes of two essays on kindred subjects,-one on "English Sonnets," and another on "Hartley Coleridge. The lectures already issued have been most kindly received on both sides of the Atlantic; and it would be ungraceful were I to omit, for myself and his still nearer family, an expression of the deep feeling with which this appreciation has inspired us. The supernatural of the Drama-Macbeth-The Tempest his last poem Abundance of biographical materials-Dr. THE course of Lectures I am about attempting is the first of a contemplated series upon English Poetry, undertakeii as well from an uncalculating impulse, as from a conviction that, in our systems of education, it is a department more than any neglected. As, year after year, I have wandered through the forsaken region if I may be indulged in so far speaking of myself and contemplated the mighty achievements of our English mind, a glowing admiration has kindled, higher and higher, the hope that it might not be beyond my strength to be the humble guide of others to the same unfailing springs of intellectual happiness. The portion of literature to be treated of is that which may be regarded as its eminence, its Poetry. I have ventured to speak of it as the noblest portion of our noble literature; and, if I shall succeed in awakening a thoughtful admiration of that which has been given to the world by the souls of mighty poets finding utterance in the music of English words, that opinion will not be condemned for its extravagance. It is a large field to travel over; and, therefore, among the introductory topics at present to be noticed, it is necessary to advert to the general plan, which will, however, more satisfactorily appear when practically illustrated in the succeeding lectures. It will be my aim to convey such information on the history of English poetry as the circumstances under which we meet will allow. To penetrate the obscurity of an early age, and thence to trace the progress of poetry from its rude beginnings down to modern years,-to show it in its successive eras,-to discover the connection between the poetry and the spirit of the age acting and reacting on each other,-to see how at one time the muse has soared and at another crept,-are topics which the idea of these lectures comprehends, how far soever the execution may fall short of it. This consideration with regard to literary history will, therefore, involve, to a certain extent, allusion to what is usually and eminently entitled history; I mean the narrative of national events. Further than this, comprehensive criticism embraces considerations of a biographical character; for, in studying the works of genius, it is a matter of no slight interest to examine the gradual structure, or rather growth, of the individual powers that have produced them. I should, for instance, deem that but an imperfect comment on the Fairy Queen which took no heed of the age in which its author lived,-a time animated by a high, adventurous spirit, when the sentiment of chivalry was still for a season outliving its institutions and usages, and which the poet sought imaginatively to perpetuate in his matchless allegory. It would also be a faulty negligence to turn away from the personal history which portrays Spenser embodying his high imaginings while dwelling in a barbarous island, and, at length, heartstricken with neglect and domestic sorrow. But a course of literary lectures must comprehend more than the communication of historical and biographical facts, the details of which, orally addressed, are apt to be unsatisfactory and often wearisome. The mind may be oppressed by the accumulation of isolated facts, which are never more troublesome than when unprovided with some principle by means of which they may be marshalled into order. A paramount object, therefore, which I have proposed, is the cultivation of a theory of criticism to be familiarized by application to the most worthy effusions of the English muse, from the first great outbreak in the happy freshness of Chaucer and the early nameless minstrels, down to the majestic and meditative imagination of Wordsworth. When I speak of a theory of criticism, let me not be understood as having in my thoughts any hypothesis fashioned from the study of some particular form of poetic invention and narrowed to it, but an ample groundwork, built in the philosophy of the human spirit, and fitted, therefore, to sustain a catholic taste in the estimate of literary productions. The mind is too apt to

become capricious and contracted, bigoted in its literary creed, and cramped and enfeebled by a species of favouritism; so that nothing has been more common than attempts to strip the laurel from the brow of a poet like Pope, or to refuse it to that great living master of the art who has passed, through the obloquy of a scornful ignorance, to his fame. In all this there is grievous error. The intellect, like the heart, has its hundred avenues of happiness, and it is not wise to close or abandon any of them. The true aim of every student should be to acquire a taste which, while it can discriminate between the different endowments of different minds, can also feed on all that genius sets before it, no matter how various it may be. A taste strong in health is not more ready to reject what is unwholesome than to draw its nourishment from variety. The food of the mind, like that of the body, is various, and the function of health is to assimilate to itself the variety which nature proffers. It is the invalid whose delicate digestion needs to be pampered with dainties. So is it with the weak and uncultivated in intellect. Genius pours out its abundance for them in vain. In this way arises exclusive devotion to some one author, as if wisdom had been his monopoly. While the oracle of poetry is uttering its inspirations in a thousand tones, there are ears which are deaf to all but one of the notes which issue from the temple. Of this dulness consequent on contracted taste it would yna. But it is more than individual malady, for it spreads into an epidemic; and I shall hereafter have occasion to advert to revolutions in literary opinion, and to show that the feeblest voice had gained the public ear which was almost closed to that of Milton, when he craved "fit audience, though few," while Cowley was earning his speedy popularity; and, again, the glory of the older poets fading before the admiration of the high-wrought verse of Pope. An illustration within our own memory was that declamatory, undisciplined, indiscriminate enthusiasm, which, knowing no other inspiration, was in truth the poorest tribute that could be paid to genius such as Lord Byron unquestionably possessed. The domain of Parnassus is not so narrow as to be susceptible of any such appropriation. The sovereignty of even Homer or Shakspeare could hold no exclusive usurpation. The sacred mount is covered with the homesteads of the poets; some, in modest humility, where its first declivity rises from the level of the plain; others, midway up the mount; and a few seated, where others durst not soar, high as the summit in the upper air. The great endowment of poetry has been bestowed in almost infinite degrees and forms; and it is the office of philosophic criticism to trace it in its truth wherever it may exist: The taste thus cultivated and strengthened will be safe from that narrowspirited habit which prostrates the intellect in its solitary idolatry. The voice of the muse, come whence it may, if it come in truth, will not come in vain; for the open heart will give it entrance. So important do I consider the possession of a catholic spirit in literature as the means of enlarged intellectual enjoyment, that I shall sedulously shun the adoption of any contracted poetical system, directing my efforts rather, in the examination of English poetry, so to discuss the subject as to assist not only in discriminating, but in appreciating, the varieties of merit. The catalogue of English poets is voluminous. The mere enumeration of them and of their writings-if it were in my power to give-would consume the time which will be at my command. In a course, therefore, of lectures limited in number as well as length, some method must be adopted in treating a subject which, of course, transcends the necessary bounds. The annals of English poetry offer a series of names known much more familiarly than their productions, because fame has given them an elevation in the midst of what Milton styles "the laureate fraternity of poets. It is in the school of mighty artists that criticism itself is taught. The critic acquires skill by the modest contemplation-the affectionate study "of the works of genius. The great English poets, arrayed as they may be in an almost unbroken chronological series, stand as the types and emblems of the literary spirit of their times; and thus the progress of literature may be illustrated by the examination of those who are most prominent in its successive eras. This method will therefore be pursued, with occasional notices of others less celebrated. This method will, I trust; unless grievously deficient in the execution, conduce to the attainment of the best purposes of criticism, on which I desire to say a few words before passing to other introductory topics. The main design of poetry being to communicate, through the medium of the imagination, pleasures of a highly-intellectual and moral nature, the criticism which best subserves the cause is that which illustrates and develops qualities in poetical composition adapted to effect such results. Fault-finding-so far from constituting, as is sometimes

supposed, criticism-is but a subordinate function, necessary, indeed, occasionally to the formation of a discriminating judgment. But, whenever the detection of poetical irregularities and error is made the chief purpose, we suffer ourselves to be cheated of the enjoyment which attends that better habit of seeking for what gives pleasure in preference to that which gives pain. The best criticism ever produced has been that which had its birth in a genial admiration "a love" of that on which it passes judgment. There is no more healthy mental exercise than the study of a great work of art, if directed to the discovery of the elements of its glory, to cause its sublimity or its beauty to be felt more and more deeply, and not only felt, but understood, that the understanding may have cognizance of that which the heart has loved. It is to criticism thus conducted in the spirit of faith and hope that genius vouchsafes to us the most ample revelation of its glories. It is important, too, to shun the habit of dogmatic criticism. It is a singular but familiar fact that men are never more apt to be intolerant of difference of opinion than in what concerns the mingled powers of judgment and feeling denominated taste. I need suggest no other illustration than the striking contrariety of judgment on the merits of the most distinguished poets who have flourished in our own times, the discussion of which I shall not now anticipate by the expression of any opinion. To what is this owing? Partly, no doubt, to variety of character, intellectual and moral; to diversity of temperament and education; and whatsoever else makes one man in some respects a different being from his neighbour. Each reader, as well as each writer, has his peculiar bent of mind, his own way of thinking and feeling; so that the passionate strains of poetry will find an adaptation in the heart of one, while its thoughtful, meditative inspirations will come home to the heart of another. After making all due allowance in this respect, it is not to be questioned that there is right judgment and wrong judgment, -a sound taste and a sickly taste. There are opinions which we may hold with a most entire conviction of their truth, an absolute and imperious self-confidence, and a judicial assurance that the contradictory tenets are errors. There is a poetry, for instance, of which a man may both know and feel not only that it gives poetic gratification to himself, but that it cannot fail to produce a like effect on every well-constituted and well-educated mind. When an English critic, Rymer, some hundred and fifty years ago, disloyal in his folly, pronounced the tragical part of Othello to be plainly none other than a bloody farce, without salt or savor "when Voltaire scoffed at the tragedy of Hamlet as a gross and barbarous piece, which would not be tolerated by the vilest rabble of France or Italy, likening it I give you his own words to the fruit of the imagination of a drunken savage,-when Steevens, an editor of Shakspeare, said that an act of Parliament would not be strong enough to compel the perusal of the sonnets and other minor poems of the bard,-when Dr. And how is a theory of criticism to be formed? How, in a matter in which men are apt to think and feel so differently, to have such various fancies, prejudices, and prepossessions,-how are we to get at the truth? The process of criticism is a process of induction; and, happily, we have the pages of Spenser and Shakspeare and Milton to gather instruction from -happily, I say, for no one is so bold or so stupid in paradox as to question the sufficiency of such authorities. But induction is something more than the gathering of examples, more than what is often thought to be all-sufficient,-mere observation and experiment. The pages of the mighty poets cannot of themselves bestow the power to recognize and to feel what they contain. All their utterance may be unheeded; and it is only when the human spirit has studied its own nature that the sounds which before passed over it as idly and as noiselessly as a floating cloud make the spiritual music which is poetry. It is not enough to know the voice and the tones of poetry, but to discover the avenues of the human heart which lie open to them, and which send back the music echoed from its depths. These are the sources of that wisdom which enables us to distinguish the truth of poetic inspiration from that which is counterfeit and delusive. I know not where else to search for the elements of criticism than in the minstrelsy of the mighty dead, and the life which is the pulse of every living heart. It would not be inappropriate for me here to examine what is the union of qualifications essential to the character of an enlightened critic of poetry. Let me assure you that when I look forth to the magnificent theme which is before me,-the vast compass of English poetry and its lofty soarings, "no one is more painfully impressed than he who is addressing you with the thought of how much is demanded for the faithful execution of that which he has undertaken. I am well aware that this is a sentiment

in which many minds will be reluctant to concur, and that not a few will utterly revolt at it. We live in an age whose favourite question is, What is the use? The inquiry is a rational one; and equally rational is the conclusion,-that what is useless is contemptible. But the notion of utility is very various, and we must be cautious that we are not condemning by a false standard. In the common business transactions of the world, men are very careful as to the weights and measures they are dealing with. The buyer of a yard of cloth, or a chest of tea, or a prescription of medicine, trusts to an accurate measurement as the means of giving him all that he is entitled to, and, in the last case, saving him from being drugged with more than his malady makes inevitable. The mind, instead of being truly poised, is often perversely planted; and it has its makeweights in the shape of covert prejudices or prepossessions, and thence come distorted judgments and misdirected affections. Eminently is this the case in our estimate of utility, for the obvious reason that, men proposing to themselves different objects to be attained, a pursuit is applauded as useful, or despised as the reverse, just as it may happen to conduce to those ends respectively. The aim of one man may be wealth; of another, power, political or military; of another, notoriety or fame; of another, ease, eating and drinking and sleeping; of another, knowledge or literary cultivation; of another, the social amelioration of mankind; or, of another, the enlargement of his whole being by the improvement of every talent which God has given him, and the further-looking hope of the promised happiness of an hereafter. Each one, by a process of reasoning, equal, too, in logical accuracy, reaches a conclusion of his own. And thus the art of bookkeeping and the tables of interest are useful; and so is the art of cookery; and so is history, or politics, or the art of war; and so is poetry; and so is the Bible; -all useful, each in its own way. But the moment you begin to apply to any one the standard proper to another, then comes error, with confusion on confusion. The question to be discussed in its most striking form comes directly to this: Now, when a question of this sort is made, the answer must depend very much on the temper and the tone in which it is propounded. There is a wide gulf separating the cold, dark, and indurated heart of the sensual and the mercenary from the imaginative and the spiritual; and it is a vain and almost hopeless thing to try to send the voice across it. If ever the blindness of the clouded heart, purged away in any chance moment, catches a glimpse of the glory enveloping the mighty poets, it sees them only "as trees walking. Criticism has no more precious office than to give its aid "that men may learn more worthily to understand and appreciate what a glorious gift God bestows on a nation when he gives them a poet. It is necessary to go to the root of what is erroneous, and. Let us, in the first place, observe what is the mode of thinking prevalent in the estimate of poetical composition. I do not mean opinions expressed in the shape of deliberately-framed propositions, but a state of opinion which, while rarely venturing on such expressions, will yet betray itself in numberless indirect forms equally significant. If any one will be at the trouble of observing these, he can scarce fail to perceive signs of a low appreciation of the imaginative department of literature, whether considered in comparison or positively. It is betrayed either by absolute neglect or by what is far more injurious, because more plausible and offensive, the habit of alluding to poetry as a mere matter of sentimental recreation, or, at best, a species of elegant trifling, congenial to effeminacy or immaturity of mind rather than to the robust and manly energy of a ripened intellect. I have little doubt that, in many minds, the first association called up by the word "poetry" is the effusion of that generous vanity which gratifies itself in a small way on the pages of albums and scrap-books, and sometimes by a more adventurous flight, as high as the corner of a newspaper.

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Chaucer.-The old dramatists.-The old dramatists (Cont'd) [Chapman and Ford]. Responsibility: by James Russell Lowell; with an introduction by Fred Lewis Pattee.

It was, on the contrary, far more natural, and, intellectually, of much higher value. None of this school of English comedians approached their model, Moliere. He excelled his imitators not only in his French urbanity--the polished wit and delicate grace of his style--but in the dexterous unfolding of his plot, and in the wisdom and truth of his criticism of life, and his insight into character. The new poets, both in their theory and practice, insisted upon correctness, clearness, polish, moderation, and good sense. It gave English poetry a didactic turn and started the fashion of writing critical essays in riming couplets. The classicism of the 18th century, it has been said, was a classicism in red heels and a periwig. It was Latin rather than Greek; it turned to the least imaginative side of Latin literature and found its models, not in Vergil, Catullus, and Lucretius, but in the satires, epistles, and didactic pieces of Juvenal, Horace, and Persius. The chosen medium of the new poetry was the heroic couplet. This had, of course, been used before by English poets as far back as Chaucer. But now a new strength and precision were given to the familiar measure by imprisoning the sense within the limit of the couplet, and by treating each line as also a unit in itself. Edmund Waller had written verse of this kind as early as the reign of Charles I. He, said Dryden, "first showed us to conclude the sense most commonly in distichs, which, in the verse of those before him, runs on for so many lines together that the reader is out of breath to overtake it. O, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream My great example as it is my theme! Here we have the regular flow, and the nice balance between the first and second member of each couplet, and the first and second part of each line, which characterized the verse of Dryden and Pope. Waller was smooth, but Dryden taught to join The varying verse, the full resounding line, The long resounding march and energy divine. Thus wrote Pope, using for the nonce the triplet and alexandrine by which Dryden frequently varied the couplet. Cowley introduced the Pindaric ode, a highly artificial form of the lyric, in which the language was tortured into a kind of spurious grandeur, and the meter teased into a sound and fury, signifying nothing. Nevertheless, the fashion spread, and "he who could do nothing else," said Dr. Johnson, "could write like Pindar. Dryden was not so much a great poet as a solid thinker, with a splendid mastery of expression, who used his energetic verse as a vehicle for political argument and satire. He was at his best in satirical character-sketches, such as the brilliant portraits in this poem of Shaftesbury, as the false counselor Ahitophel, and of the Duke of Buckingham as Zimri. Flecknoe, an obscure Irish poetaster, being about to retire from the throne of duncedom, resolved to settle the succession upon his son, Shadwell, whose claims to the inheritance are vigorously asserted. The rest to some faint meaning make pretense, But Shadwell never deviates into sense Dryden is our first great satirist. The formal satire had been written in the reign of Elizabeth by Donne, and by Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, and subsequently by Marston, the dramatist, by Wither, Marvell, and others; but all of these failed through an over violence of language, and a purpose too pronouncedly moral. They had no lightness of touch, no irony and mischief. They bore down too hard, imitated Juvenal, and lashed English society in terms befitting the corruption of imperial Rome. They denounced, instructed, preached, did every thing but satirize. The satirist must raise a laugh. Donne and Hall abused men in classes; priests were worldly, lawyers greedy, courtiers obsequious, etc. But the easy scorn of Dryden and the delightful malice of Pope gave a pungent personal interest to their sarcasm, infinitely more effective than these commonplaces of satire. Dryden was as happy in controversy as in satire, and is unexcelled in the power to reason in verse. Dryden had the misfortune to be dependent upon royal patronage and upon a corrupt stage. He sold his pen to the court, and in his comedies he was heavily and deliberately lewd, a sin which he afterward acknowledged and regretted. He had a coarseness of moral fiber, but was not malignant in his satire, being of a large, careless, and forgetting nature. He had that masculine, enduring cast of mind which gathers heat and clearness from motion, and grows better with age. Dryden is also our first

critic of any importance. His critical essays were mostly written as prefaces or dedications to his poems and plays. Johnson called our "first regular and valuable treatise on the art of writing," was in the shape of a Platonic dialogue. When not misled by the French classicism of his day, Dryden was an admirable critic, full of penetration and sound sense. He was the earliest writer, too, of modern literary prose. If the imitation of French models was an injury to poetry it was a benefit to prose. The best modern prose is French, and it was the essayists of the gallicised Restoration age--Cowley, Sir William Temple, and above all, Dryden--who gave modern English prose that simplicity, directness, and colloquial air which marks it off from the more artificial diction of Milton, Taylor and Browne. A few books whose shaping influences lay in the past belong by their date to this period. It is the simplest, the most transparent of allegories. They represent the poles of the Puritan party. Yet it may admit of a doubt whether the Puritan epic is, in essentials, as vital and original a work as the Puritan allegory. They both came out quietly and made little noise at first. Dryden visited him in his retirement and asked leave to turn it into rime and put it on the stage as an opera. In this startling conjunction we have the two ages in a nutshell: The literary period covered by the life of Pope, , is marked off by no distinct line from the generation before it. Taste continued to be governed by the precepts of Boileau and the French classical school. The literature of the "Augustan age" of Queen Anne was still more a literature of the town and of fashionable society than that of the Restoration had been. It was also closely involved with party struggles of Whig and Tory, and the ablest pens on either side were taken into alliance by the political leaders. Addison became secretary of state under a Whig government. Prior was in the diplomatic service. Steele, who was a violent writer on the Whig side, held various public offices, such as Commissioner of Stamps, and Commissioner for Forfeited Estates, and sat in Parliament. After the Revolution of the manners and morals of English society were somewhat on the mend. The women were mostly frivolous and uneducated, and not unfrequently fast. They are spoken of with systematic disrespect by nearly every writer of the time, except Steele. Johnson said that Pope was the first writer in whose case the book-seller took the place of the patron. His translation of Homer, published by subscription, brought him between eight and nine thousand pounds and made him independent. But the activity of the press produced a swarm of poorly-paid hack-writers, penny-a-liners, who lived from hand to mouth and did small literary jobs to order. The politics of the time were sordid, and consisted mainly of an ignoble scramble for office. The Whigs were fighting to maintain the Act of Succession in favor of the House of Hanover, and the Tories were secretly intriguing with the exiled Stuarts. Many of the leaders, such as the great Whig champion, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, were without political principle or even personal honesty. The Church, too, was in a condition of spiritual deadness. Bishopsrics and livings were sold, and given to political favorites. Clergymen, like Swift and Lawrence Sterne, were worldly in their lives and immoral in their writings, and were practically unbelievers. The growing religious skepticism appeared in the Deist controversy. John, Lord Bolingbroke, the head of the Tory ministry, whose political writings had much influence upon his young French acquaintance, Voltaire. As Rochefoucauld his maxims drew From nature, I believe them true. They argue no corrupted mind In him; the fault is in mankind. The succession which Dryden had willed to Congreve was taken up by Alexander Pope. He was a man quite unlike Dryden--sickly, deformed, morbidly precocious, and spiteful; nevertheless he joined on to and continued Dryden. Dryden had translated Vergil, and so Pope translated Homer. There is a great waste of strength in this elaborate squib, and most of the petty writers, whose names it has preserved, as has been said, like flies in amber, are now quite unknown. But, although we have to read it with notes, to get the point of its allusions, it is easy to see what execution it must have done at the time, and it is impossible to withhold admiration from the wit, the wickedness, the triumphant mischief of the thing. He secreted venom, and worked out his revenges deliberately, bringing all the resources of his art to bear upon the question of how to give the most pain most cleverly. Pope was the Homer of the drawing-room, the boudoir, the tea-urn, the ombre-party, the sedan-chair, the parrot cage, and the lap-dogs. This poem, in its sparkle and airy grace, is the topmost blossom of a highly artificial society, the quintessence of whatever poetry was possible in those Tea-cup times of hood and hoop, And when the patch was worn, with whose decorative features, at least, the recent Queen

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Anne revival has made this generation familiar. Or on the beached margent of the sea To dance their ringlets to the whispering wind. Our humble province is to tend the fair; Not a less pleasing, though less glorious, care; To save the powder from too rude a gale, Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale Nay oft in dreams invention we bestow To change a flounce or add a furbelow. Pope was not a great poet; it has been doubted whether he was a poet at all. He does not touch the heart, or stimulate the imagination, as the true poet always does. In the poetry of nature, and the poetry of passion, he was altogether impotent. But he was a great literary artist. Within the cramped and starched regularity of the heroic couplet, which the fashion of the time and his own habit of mind imposed upon him, he secured the largest variety of modulation and emphasis of which that verse was capable. He used antithesis, periphrasis, and climax with great skill. His example dominated English poetry for nearly a century, and even now, when a poet like Dr. Holmes, for example, would write satire or humorous verse of a dignified kind, he turns instinctively to the measure and manner of Pope. He was not a consecutive thinker, like Dryden, and cared less about the truth of his thought than about the pointedness of its expression. His great art was the art of putting things. He is more quoted than any other English poet but Shakspeare. He struck the average intelligence, the common sense of English readers, and furnished it with neat, portable formulas, so that it no longer needed to "vent its observation in mangled terms," but could pour itself out compactly, artistically in little ready-made molds. But this high-wrought brilliancy, this unceasing point, soon fatigue. His poems read like a series of epigrams; and every line has a hit or an effect. From the reign of Queen Anne date the beginnings of the periodical essay.

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3: Literary Terms and Definitions V

Abstract. Chaucer.-The old dramatists.-The old dramatists (Cont'd) [Chapman and Ford]Mode of access: Internet.

Middleton was an unsentimental playwright who, Eliot notes, flatly depicted human relations without making judgements on them. Eliot discusses him because of his dependence on the "inner voice" of criticism, which Eliot finds non-authoritative, insubstantial, and unreliable as a basis for critical thought. Lucius Annaeus Seneca Seneca c. Seneca became a politician and, after an eight-year banishment, the tutor to Emperor Nero. He wrote nine tragedies that are generally considered to be intended for recitation, not performance; they contain no naturalistic or realistic speech but engage in rhetoric, about which Eliot has qualified reservations. Stoicism was a philosophical attitude popular in Roman times, stressing a passive response to a world seen as hostile to weak and insignificant humans. Section III stresses that stoicism underlies Shakespeare as well as Renaissance writers; and since for Eliot it is an inferior philosophy to Christianity, it poses a problem for the moral and aesthetic quality of Renaissance plays. Seneca did not create stoicism, but he wrote about it and supposedly practiced it although his pupil Nero was famous for excesses directly violating stoic belief. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, a town in the English midlands, and by had moved to London to act and write plays. He wrote poetry, including his famous sonnets, in addition to dramatic comedies, histories, and tragedies. His writing is revered for a variety of contradictory reasons. He was known as a fierce opponent of mainstream Victorian morals, and his poems of made him both famous and hated because of their rebellious and even perverted themes. Swinburne had a superb capacity for imagination; he both experimented with old forms and created new ones, but Eliot points out that it is difficult to find "meaning" or consistency of thought in his works. Cyril Tourneur An Elizabethan playwright, Tourneur c. Themes Tradition Selected Essays, begins with what is probably the most important theme of the collection: Eliot has a complex and personal idea of tradition, but mainly he refers to the vast canon of literature written by great authors of the past. He does not specifically mean literature written in English, but he does mean "Western classical" literature, from the ancient Greeks to Seneca, Dante, Chaucer, the Renaissance writers, Dryden, and Pope, through the romantics and the Victorians. In other words, tradition in Selected Essays, is literature that Eliot considers of the highest order, literature he deems important for modern English writers and critics to have read. Eliot is one among many famous critics to have established such an idea of tradition; even in selecting and revising the list of important works, he heavily relies on such writers as Matthew Arnold, who is famous for identifying the classical literary canon in Victorian times. This seems somewhat ironic, since modernism, the literary movement of which Eliot is considered a great leader, is generally thought to break from the past. Eliot makes clear in his description of the importance of tradition, however, that writers of his time should only break with the very recent past, the age immediately before theirs, which Eliot considers to have gone astray in artistic principles. Indeed, Eliot finds art meaningless unless it is placed within the broad context of literary history. Literature finds its value in the way it communicates with the past. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature, will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. Because of his concept of tradition, Eliot analyzes each single work only as a single part of the grand, shifting meaning of literature. Although it begins with the concept of "a continual extinction of personality" on the part of the poet in order to fit in with tradition, this concept changes and gradually develops Selected Essays, Dramatic Poetry Eliot is interested throughout his essays in the merging of poetry and dramatics. He continually stresses the aesthetic ideal of beautiful verse and sophisticated use of language merged with realistic characters in compelling situations. The essays in section 2, especially, point out that a literary form, or convention, established by like-minded artists of a generation is necessary for great dramatic poetry to succeed. Often, Eliot judges writers almost entirely by how well they accomplish this feat; for Eliot, the two must coexist in all great pieces of literature. Essays on novelists like Dickens or poets like Marvell are few and tend not to place their subjects on the same

level as a dramatic poet like Shakespeare. His plays, particularly *Murder in the Cathedral*, are meant to form the convention of dramatic poetry for which he argued in his essays. Although section 1 provides an approach to literature that is not dependent on any religious belief, the philosophy underlying various authors and movements begins to be a criterion for judgment, especially in sections 4, 6, and 7. To Eliot, religion is absolutely vital to any discussion of philosophy or ethics: Eliot changes his idea, however, of whether a writer "thinks" and believes in a particular theology; he begins by denying this but later recognizes as in the essay on William Blake that theology is often a conscious effort that strongly influences the greatness of a work. Topics for Further Study Listen to some classical music by Igor Stravinsky and others, written between and Describe its form using the criteria of Selected Essays, What do you think he would say about it? Then, listen to some music from the same time period by Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. Some critics most notably Anthony Julius in his book *T. Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form* have accused Eliot of being anti-Semitic, and others have accused him of being a fascist. How does his critical theory relate to his poetry, and how would he fare under his own standards? Read one of the works that Eliot discusses at length in Selected Essays, and research other criticism on the work you choose. Does Eliot have a unique viewpoint? Do other critics follow a similar method of analysis? Do you agree with what Eliot says about the work? Eliot discusses philosophy and theology at length, and both are extremely important to his critical theory. Do some reading of early twentieth-century philosophers or theologians who discuss art at some point in their theories F. What is the main philosophical trend of the time? How does Eliot fit into it? Style Circuitous Argument Selected Essays, engages in a subtle and complex form of argument that can be called "circuitous," or roundabout and even indirect. Yet the entire collection, despite its indirect approach, is best seen as a thorough and subtle argument, using generalizations from nearly the entire history of literature as examples to support a theory. Indeed, his circuitous argumentative technique is suited to the subtle, roundabout literary theory. Rhetoric When Eliot begins section 2 by arguing that "rhetoric" is not necessarily bad writing, he is subtly defending a characteristic of his own style. The tone is immediately authoritative and magisterial. Eliot, *Critical Assessments*, a "literary dictator," Eliot develops an enormously influential theory of literature. And, although he tries to separate himself from Matthew Arnold, whose wide-ranging opinions determined the mainstream aesthetic views of his time, Eliot consciously places himself in a very similar role. His rhetorical style is very important to this process; by it, he ceases to sound like one critic with an opinion and moves into the role of an authority. Historical Context The Renaissance and English Writers The Renaissance refers to the extremely broad European cultural movement characterized by a flowering of art and literature. Although it began in fourteenth-century Italy, the movement did not have much influence in English literature until the reign of Elizabeth I to , which marked a new sophistication and sensibility in poetry and drama. Writers such as Edmund Spenser and Philip Sidney began this revolution in poetry, while Christopher Marlowe and Thomas Kyd were among the first pioneers in the new dramatic verse form that came to a height with the plays of William Shakespeare. With the introduction of printing technology, lyric poetry became widely available to all classes for the first time, and this is one of the reasons that Elizabethan writing was not confined to the court. Poets began to divide into two main new camps: Chiefly important to Victorian literature are three main elements: These combined to form a number of like-minded writers, particularly novelists, who wrote "realist" fiction attempting to display the actual social conditions of the time, often with moral judgments about social and political issues. The British Empire is just beginning. With the defeat of the Spanish Armada in , the seas are open to British trade and exploration, and British culture is showing the beginnings of racism towards future colonies. The British Empire is still strong, and Britain is still pervaded by imperialist thinking that emphasizes the superiority of British culture. The British Empire has crumbled, and the British public is far more skeptical of notions of cultural superiority. Although Elizabeth I shows a greater degree of religious tolerance than the previous ruler, all British subjects are required to be members of the Church of England. In practice, a significant number of Puritans and Catholics retain their own beliefs. Atheism is taboo and very uncommon. The Church of England is building up to a crisis, with its authorities of very different minds about

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how to approach a developing lack of religious conviction in the British public. Some bishops in the Church of England are acknowledged atheists. Although much of the British public remains devout, the general population has become significantly less religious in the past eighty years. English writing is flowering, but the respected literary canon is composed almost entirely of male, ancient Greek and Roman writers. Classical English literature has a fairly clear, firm, and ancient tradition. Feminist thought is beginning to be influential, but the general public does not often question the white-male-dominated literary canon. English literature is pervaded by a multiplicity of viewpoints. Critics frequently condemn the white-male-oriented tradition and attempt to draw attention to undervalued minority writers. The most popular forms of art are plays, which anyone can attend, and lyric poetry, which is beginning to spread around England because of the invention of the printing press. Although poetry is becoming more important because of the revolution in style, popular forms of art are not so radically different from Victorian times, and it is the era of the novel. Together with popular music, motion pictures especially those from America have exploded as one of the most popular art forms in England. Victorian literature is also characterized, however, by the growing counterculture that exploded in the 1860s. Critics such as Walter Pater argued vehemently with eminent Victorian social and critical writers such as Matthew Arnold although Eliot argues that Pater and Arnold are of the same philosophical disposition without knowing it. But Victorian values did not completely break down until the modernist movement of the early twentieth century. Modernism Modernism is generally considered to have coincided with World War I, which caused drastic changes to a variety of assumptions and ways of thinking. Many modernist writers, feeling that they could no longer express themselves in old forms, responded with experimental techniques that borrowed from a variety of other movements, most notably postimpressionism which dealt with a simplification of form in the visual arts and naturalism which dealt with a deterministic universe involving a brutal struggle for individual survival. His theory, which guided the main current of modernist thought, desires both to experimentally break from the immediate past and to communicate closely with a dense tradition creating a new but classical form. Selected Essays, is an effort to form a group of artists united around a common aesthetic goal. Critical Overview Although Ezra Pound and a few other radicals were supportive from the start, critics tended to resent or ignore the early essays anthologized in Selected Essays, But, by the time Eliot published Selected Essays, in 1932, he was already an extremely well-established critic. Eliot" that many found Eliot far too overbearing and authoritative. All, however, found his thinking innovative and important. Richard Shusterman points out in his introduction to T. Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism: Eliot, Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form: Eliot is a Christian critic, and his Selected Essays, develops a Christian view on literature. First, it is necessary to briefly discuss what a Christian viewpoint on literature entails.

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Defoe Such ambitious debates on society and human nature ran parallel with the explorations of a literary form finding new popularity with a large audience, the novel. Daniel Defoe came to sustained prose fiction late in a career of quite various, often disputatious writing. The variety of interests that he had pursued in all his occasional work much of which is not attributed to him with any certainty left its mark on his more-lasting achievements. His distinction, though earned in other fields of writing than the polemical, is constantly underpinned by the generous range of his curiosity. He brought the same diversity of enthusiasms into play in writing his novels. The first of these, *Robinson Crusoe*, an immediate success at home and on the Continent, is a unique fictional blending of the traditions of Puritan spiritual autobiography with an insistent scrutiny of the nature of man as social creature and an extraordinary ability to invent a sustaining modern myth. *A Journal of the Plague Year* displays enticing powers of self-projection into a situation of which Defoe can only have had experience through the narrations of others, and both *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* lure the reader into puzzling relationships with narrators the degree of whose own self-awareness is repeatedly and provocatively placed in doubt. Samuel Richardson, a prosperous London printer, was the next major author to respond to the challenge. Its moral tone is self-consciously rigorous and proved highly controversial. It was a publishing sensation, not only selling in large numbers but also provoking parodies and imitations, attacks and eulogies. As well as being popular, it was the first such work of prose fiction to aspire to respectability, indeed moral seriousness. *Clarissa* uses multiple narrators and develops a profoundly suggestive interplay of opposed voices. At its centre is the taxing soul debate and eventually mortal combat between the aggressive, brilliantly improvisatorial libertine Lovelace and the beleaguered Clarissa, maltreated and abandoned by her family but sternly loyal to her own inner sense of probity. The tragic consummation that grows from this involves an astonishingly ruthless testing of the psychological natures of the two leading characters. Even in its own day, *Clarissa* was widely accepted as having demonstrated the potential profundity, moral or psychological, of the novel. It was admired and imitated throughout Europe. Fielding Henry Fielding turned to novel writing after a successful period as a dramatist, during which his most popular work had been in burlesque forms. He also turned to journalism, of which he wrote a great deal, much of it political. His entry into prose fiction had something in common with the burlesque mode of much of his drama. *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Fielding* continued his quarrel with Richardson in *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, which also uses Pamela as a starting point but which, developing a momentum of its own, soon outgrows any narrow parodic intent. In *Joseph Andrews* and *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, Fielding openly brought to bear upon his chosen form a battery of devices from more traditionally reputable modes including epic poetry, painting, and the drama. This is accompanied by a flamboyant development of authorial presence. In the deeply original *Tom Jones* especially, this assists in developing a distinctive atmosphere of self-confident magnanimity and candid optimism. His fiction, however, can also cope with a darker range of experience. *The Life of Mr. Smollett* Tobias Smollett had no desire to rival Fielding as a formal innovator, and today he seems the less audacious innovator. His novels consequently tend to be rather ragged assemblings of disparate incidents. But, although uneven in performance, all of them include extended passages of real force and idiosyncrasy. His freest writing is expended on grotesque portraiture in which the human is reduced to fiercely energetic automatism. Smollett can also be a stunning reporter of the contemporary scene, whether the subject be a naval battle or the gathering of the decrepit at a spa. His touch is least happy when, complying too facilely with the gathering cult of sensibility, he indulges in rote-learned displays of emotionalism and good-heartedness. His most sustainedly invigorating work can perhaps be found in *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, and an altogether more interesting encounter with the dialects of sensibility *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. The last was his only epistolary novel and

perhaps the outstanding use of this form for comic purposes. It was published in five separate installments over the course of some eight years and has an open-endedness all its own. The part-by-part publication also enabled Sterne to manipulate public responses and even to make the reception of one volume the subject matter for satire in a later volume. The focus of attention is shifted from the fortunes of the hero himself to the nature of his family, environment, and heredity, and dealings within that family offer repeated images of human unrelatedness and disconnection. Tristram, the narrator, is isolated in his own privacy and doubts how much, if anything, he can know certainly even about himself. Sterne is explicit about the influence of Lockean psychology on his writing, and the book, fascinated with the fictive energies of the imagination, is filled with characters reinventing or mythologizing the conditions of their own lives. An apparently random collection of scattered experiences, it mingles affecting vignettes with episodes in a heartier, comic mode, but coherence of imagination is secured by the delicate insistence with which Sterne ponders how the impulses of sentimental and erotic feeling are psychologically interdependent. It was a powerful influence on later, less-ironic sentimental writing. Other novelists The work of these five giants was accompanied by experiments from a number of other novelists. This particular work of fiction had become an honorary work of English literature. But the most engaging and thoughtful minor novelist of the period is Fanny Burney, who was also an evocative and self-revelatory diarist and letter writer. Written in letters, it charts the fortunes and misfortunes of an ingenuous heroine encountering the delights and dangers of Georgian London for the first time. Poets and poetry after Pope Eighteenth-century poetry after Pope produced nothing that can compete with achievements on the scale of *Clarissa* and *Tristram Shandy*, but much that was vital was accomplished. The odes also mine vigorously the potentiality of personification as a medium for poetic expression. In later odes, particularly *The Progress of Poesy*, Gray successfully sought close imitation of the original Pindaric form, even emulating Greek rhythms in English, while developing ambitious ideas about cultural continuity and renewal. Another eclectically learned and energetically experimental poet is Christopher Smart, whose renown rests largely on two poems. *A Song to David* is a rhapsodic hymn of praise, blending enormous linguistic vitality with elaborate structural patterning. Both contain encyclopaedic gatherings of recondite and occult lore, numerous passages of which modern scholarship has yet to explicate satisfactorily, but the poetry is continually energized by minute alterations of tone, startling conjunctions of material, and a unique alertness to the mystery of the commonplace. Smart was also a superb writer of hymns, a talent in which his major contemporary rival was William Cowper in his *Olney Hymns*. Both are worthy successors to the richly inventive work of Isaac Watts in the first half of the century. Elsewhere, Cowper can write with buoyant humour and satiric relaxation, as when, for instance, he wryly observes from the safety of rural seclusion the evils of town life. But some of his most characterful poetry emerges from a painfully intense experience of withdrawal and isolation. His most extended achievement is *The Task*, an extraordinary fusion of disparate interests, working calmly toward religious praise and pious acceptance. There was also a significant number of inventive and sometimes popular women poets in the period. Their poetic ventures were encouraged by the growth in publishing generally and, in particular, by the invention of magazines and literary journals. The most notable woman poet of the early 18th century is probably Lady Mary Montagu, who still composed for manuscript circulation rather than publication. She also wrote, in letters, her sparkling *Embassy to Constantinople* often called *Turkish Letters*, published posthumously in . Notable female poets later in the century include Mary Leapor, a Northhamptonshire kitchen servant who was also a witty verse satirist, celebrated by contemporaries only after her early death. Much admired in their own lifetimes were Anna Seward and Hannah More, both of whom wrote much miscellaneous prose as well as poetry, and Charlotte Smith, whose sonnets were hugely popular in the s. Drawing on the precedents of Allan Ramsay and Robert Ferguson, Burns demonstrated how Scottish idioms and ballad modes could lend a new vitality to the language of poetry. His work bears the imprint of the revolutionary decades in which he wrote, and recurrent in much of it are a joyful hymning of freedom, both individual and national, and an instinctive belief in the possibility of a new social order. Goldsmith Two other major poets, both of whom also achieved distinction in

an impressive array of nondramatic modes, demand attention: The last, published 15 days after his own death, is a dazzling series of character portraits in the form of mock epitaphs on a group of his closest acquaintances. The Traveller, a philosophical comparison of the differing national cultures of western Europe and the degrees of happiness their citizens enjoy, is narrated by a restless wanderer whose heart yet yearns after his own native land, where his brother still dwells. In The Deserted Village the experience is one of enforced exile, as an idealized village community is ruthlessly broken up in the interests of landed power. A comparable story of a rural idyll destroyed though this time narrative artifice allows its eventual restoration is at the centre of his greatly popular novel, The Vicar of Wakefield. He was also a deft and energetic practitioner of the periodical essay, contributing to at least eight journals between and His Citizen of the World, a series of essays originally published in The Public Ledger in 1761, uses the device of a Chinese traveler whose letters home comment tolerantly but shrewdly on his English experiences. He also produced two stage comedies, one of which, She Stoops to Conquer, is one of the few incontrovertible masterpieces of the theatre after the death of Farquhar in 1709. It is a tragic meditation on the pitiful spectacle of human unfulfillment, yet it ends with an urgent prayer of Christian hope. Yet he managed to sustain a remarkable coherence of ethical ambition and personal presence throughout his voluminous labours. His twice-weekly essays for The Rambler 1750, for instance, consistently show his powers at their fullest stretch, handling an impressive array of literary and moral topics with a scrupulous intellectual gravity and attentiveness. Many of the preoccupations of The Vanity of Human Wishes and the Rambler essays reappear in Rasselas, which catalogues with profound resource the vulnerability of human philosophies of life to humiliation at the hands of life itself. The former of these is in some ways his greatest work of literary criticism, for it displays the uses of words by means of illustrations culled from the best writing in English. The latter played a major part in the establishment of Shakespeare as the linchpin of a national literary canon. Johnson was but one of those helping to form a national literature. Although his allegiances lay with Neoclassical assumptions about poetic form and language, his capacity for improvisatory responsiveness to practice that lay outside the prevailing decorums should not be underrated. His final faith, however, in his own creative practice as in his criticism, was that the greatest art eschews unnecessary particulars and aims toward carefully pondered and ambitious generalization. The same creed was eloquently expounded by another member of the Johnson circle, Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his 15 Discourses delivered to the Royal Academy between 1769 and 1791, but first published collectively in 1794. Boswell manifests rich dramatic talent and a precise ear for conversational rhythms in his re-creation and orchestration of the debates that lie at the heart of this great biography. In these he is his own subject of study. In the London Journal especially covering 1763, first published in 1791, he records the processes of his dealings with others and of his own self-imaginings with a sometimes unnerving frankness and a tough willingness to ask difficult questions of himself. Boswell narrated his experiences at the same time as, or shortly after, they occurred. Edward Gibbon, on the other hand, taking full advantage of hindsight, left in manuscript at his death six autobiographical fragments, all having much ground in common, but each telling a subtly different version of his life. These writings were undertaken after the completion of the great work of his life, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire 1789. He brought to the latter an untiring dedication in the gathering and assimilation of knowledge, an especial alertness to evidence of human fallibility and failure, and a powerful ordering intelligence supported by a delicate sense of aesthetic coherence. His central theme—that the destruction of the Roman Empire was the joint triumph of barbarism and Christianity—is sustained with formidable ironic resource.

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old wife--twenty-one years his senior--and he had his house full of unfortunates--a blind woman, an invalid surgeon, a destitute widow, a negro servant--whom he supported for many years, and bore with all their.

The most authoritative and up-to-date reference books for both students and the general reader. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization. It cannot purport to fulfil the functions of a balanced expository guide to literary criticism or literary concepts, nor does it attempt to catalogue the entire body of literary terms in use. It offers instead to clarify those thousand terms that are most likely to cause the student or general reader some doubt or bafflement in the context of literary criticism and other discussion of literary works. Rather than include for the sake of encyclopaedic completeness all the most common terms found in literary discussion, I have set aside several that I have judged to be sufficiently well understood in common speech anagram, biography, cliché and many more, or virtually self-explanatory detective story, psychological criticism, along with a broad category of general concepts such as art, belief, culture, etc. This policy has allowed space for the inclusion of many terms generated by the growth of academic literary theory in recent years, and for adequate attention to the terminology of classical rhetoric, now increasingly revived. Along with these will be found hundreds of terms from literary criticism, literary history, prosody, and drama. The selection is weighted towards literature and criticism in English, but there are many terms taken from other languages, and many more associated primarily with other literatures. Many of the terms that I have omitted from this dictionary are covered by larger or more specialist works; a brief guide to these appears on page In each entry I have attempted to explain succinctly how the term is or has been used, with a brief illustrative example wherever possible, and to clarify any relevant distinctions of sense. My attention has been devoted more to helping readers to use the terms confidently for themselves. To this end I have displayed the plural forms, adjectival forms, and other derived words relevant to each entry, and have provided pronunciation guides for more than two hundred potentially troublesome terms. The simplified pronunciation system Preface to the Second Edition viii used, closely based on the system devised by Joyce M. Hawkins for the Oxford Paperback Dictionary, offers a basic but sufficient indication of the essential features of stress-placing and vowel quality. One of its advantages is that it requires very little checking against the pronunciation key on page ix. In compiling this dictionary, the principal debt I have incurred is to my predecessors in the vexed business of literary definition and distinction, from Aristotle to the editors of the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. If the following entries make sense, it is very often because those who have gone before have cleared the ground and mapped its more treacherous sites. My thanks are owed also to Joyce Hawkins and Michael Ockenden for their help with pronunciations; to Kirm Scott Walwyn of Oxford University Press for her constant encouragement; to Peter Currie, Michael Hughes, Colin Pickthall, and Hazel Richardson for their advice on particular entries; to my students for giving me so much practice; and especially to Harriet Barry, Pamela Jackson, and John Simons for giving up their time to scrutinize the typescript and for the valuable amendments they suggested. I have also updated many of the existing entries along with the appendix on general further reading, and more extensively attached additional recommendations for further reading to several of the longer or more complex entries. Words are broken up into small units, usually of one syllable. The syllable that is spoken with most stress in a word of two or more syllables is shown in bold type. The pronunciations given follow the standard speech of southern England. However, since this system is based on analogies rather than on precise phonetic description, readers who use other varieties of spoken English will rarely need to make any conscious adjustment to suit their own forms of pronunciation. The sounds represented are as follows: In several French words no syllable is marked for stress, the distribution of stress being more even than in English. Pronunciation x A consonant is sometimes doubled,

especially to help show that the vowel before it is short, or when without this the combination of letters might suggest a wrong pronunciation through looking misleadingly like a familiar word. Many 20th-century writers of prose fiction have stressed the absurd nature of human existence: The critic Martin Esslin coined the phrase *theatre of the absurd* in to refer to a number of dramatists of the s led by Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco whose works evoke the absurd by abandoning logical form, character, and dialogue together with realistic illusion. For a fuller account, consult Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *The Absurd* This tradition produced the earliest English comedies, notably Ralph Roister Doister c. Three kinds of accent may be distinguished, according to the factor that accounts for each: See also *ictus*, *recessive accent*. Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed Noun: *Acmeism*, a short-lived c. The principal poetic luminaries of this school were Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam A break between acts often coincides with a point at which the plot jumps ahead in time. *Greimas*, one of six basic categories of fictional role common to all stories. A character or *acteur* is an individualized manifestation of one or more actants; but an actant may be realized in a non-human creature e. Wilde and other devotees of pure beautyâ€™like the artists Whistler and Beardsleyâ€™were sometimes known as *aesthetes*. See also *decadence*, *fin de siecle*. For a fuller account, consult R. *Affective criticism* or *affectivism* evaluates literary works in terms of the feelings they arouse in audiences or readers see e. It was condemned in an important essay by W. Wimsatt and Monroe C. See also *intentional fallacy*. The term is sometimes extended to formal debates in Greek tragedies. It influenced Catullus and other Roman poets. She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. In written narrative, *allegory* involves a continuous alliteration parallel between two or more levels of meaning in a story, so that its persons and events correspond to their equivalents in a system of ideas or a chain of events external to the tale: It can be argued that modern critical interpretation continues this allegorizing tradition. See also *anagogical*, *emblem*, *exemplum*, *fable*, *parable*, *psychomachy*, *symbol*. For a fuller account, consult Angus Fletcher, *Allegory* Now an optional and incidental decorative effect in verse or prose, it was once a required element in the poetry of Germanic languages including Old English and Old Norse and in Celtic verse where alliterated sounds could regularly be placed in positions other than the beginning of a word or syllable. See also *alliterative metre*, *alliterative revival*, *assonance*, *consonance*. Auden revived its use in *The Age of Anxiety* These lines from the 14th-century poem *Piers Plowman* illustrate the alliterative metre: Al for love of oure Lord livede wel straite, In hope for to have hevene-riche blisse. See also *accentual verse*. This group may represent more a continuation than a revival of the alliterative tradition. The technique of *allusion* is an economical means of calling upon the history or the literary tradition that author and reader are assumed to share, although some poets notably Ezra Pound and T. Eliot allude to areas of quite specialized knowledge. Yeats alludes both to the hero of Celtic legend Cuchulain and to the new historical hero Patrick Pearse of the Easter Rising, in which the revolutionaries captured the Dublin Post Office. In addition to such topical allusions to recent events, Yeats often uses personal allusions to aspects of his own life and circle of friends. The verbal compression and uncertain context of much poetry often produce ambiguity: On a larger scale, a character e. *Hamlet*, notoriously or an entire story may display ambiguity. See also *double entendre*, *equivoque*, *multiaccentuality*, *polysemy*. *American Renaissance*, the name sometimes given to a flourishing of distinctively American literature in the period before the Civil War. As described by F. Matthiessen in his influential critical work *American Renaissance* , this renaissance is represented by the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, H. It was rarely used in classical verse, but may occur in English in combination with other feet. Sometimes used 9 *anadiplosis* in Roman comedy, it occurs rarely in English verse. *Anachronies* take two basic forms: See also *in medias res*. *Anacreontics* [a-nayk-ri-on-tiks], verses resembling, either metrically or in subject-matter, those of the Greek poet Anacreon 6th century BCE or of his later imitators in the collection known as the *Anacreontea*. Metrically, the original Anacreontic line combined long - and short w syllables in the pattern u u - u - u - -. It was imitated in English by Sir Philip Sidney. More often, though, the term refers to the subject-matter: Hither haste, some cordial soul! Give my lips the brimming bowl. Similarly, the plots of many novels involve crucial *anagnorises*, e. For a fuller account, consult Terence Cave, *Recognitions* Of these, the anagogical sense was seen as the highest, relating

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to the ultimate destiny of humanity according to the Christian scheme of universal history, whereas the allegorical and moral senses refer respectively to the Church and to the individual soul. Commonly referred to as retrospection or flashback, analepsis enables a storyteller to fill in background information about characters and events. Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place. Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath. Lines made up of anapaests alone are rare in English verse, though; more often they are used in combination with other feet. See also metre, triple metre. These lines by Emily Dickinson illustrate the device: Mineâ€™by the Right of the White Election! Mineâ€™by the Royal Seal! Mineâ€™by the Sign in the Scarlet prison Barsâ€™cannot conceal! The antagonist is often a villain seeking to frustrate a heroine or hero; but in those works in which the protagonist is represented as evil, the antagonist will often be a virtuous or sympathetic character, as Macduff is in Macbeth. The term is now used more often to denote a song in which the words affirm a collective identity, usually expressing attachment to some nation, institution, or cause. Anthems have been adopted, formally or informally, by states, schools, sports clubs, and social movements of all kinds. Byron employs comic anticlimax repeatedly in Don Juan, as in these lines from Canto II , which describe the survivors of a shipwreck: Johnson, and Christine BrookeRose. See also avant-garde, postmodernism.

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6: Go For Gold: How to annotate Chaucer's "The Merchant's Tale"

CONTENTS & *BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD* & *INDEX TO BIBLIOGRAPHIES* & *INDEX TO AUTHORS: ENGLISH: Edited by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. Volume I. From the Beginnings to the Cycles of Romance.*

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. The later Middle English and early Renaissance periods One of the most important factors in the nature and development of English literature between about 1100 and 1500 was the peculiar linguistic situation in England at the beginning of the period. Among the small minority of the population that could be regarded as literate, bilingualism and even trilingualism were common. Insofar as it was considered a serious literary medium at all, English was obliged to compete on uneven terms with Latin and with the Anglo-Norman dialect of French widely used in England at the time. Moreover, extreme dialectal diversity within English itself made it difficult for vernacular writings, irrespective of their literary pretensions, to circulate very far outside their immediate areas of composition, a disadvantage not suffered by writings in Anglo-Norman and Latin. All the more remarkable, then, was the literary and linguistic revolution that took place in England between about 1100 and 1500 and that was slowly and soberly consolidated over the subsequent years. Later Middle English poetry The revival of alliterative poetry The most puzzling episode in the development of later Middle English literature is the apparently sudden reappearance of unrhymed alliterative poetry in the mid-14th century. The earliest examples of the phenomenon, *William of Palerne* and *Winner and Waster*, are both datable to the 1320s, but neither poem exhibits to the full all the characteristics of the slightly later poems central to the movement. Indeed, *Winner and Waster*, with its sense of social commitment and occasional apocalyptic gesture, may well have served as a source of inspiration for Langland himself. The term alliterative revival should not be taken to imply a return to the principles of classical Old English versification. The authors of the later 14th-century alliterative poems either inherited or developed their own conventions, which resemble those of the Old English tradition in only the most general way. The syntax and particularly the diction of later Middle English alliterative verse were also distinctive, and the search for alliterating phrases and constructions led to the extensive use of archaic, technical, and dialectal words. Hunts, feasts, battles, storms, and landscapes were described with a brilliant concreteness of detail rarely paralleled since, while the abler poets also contrived subtle modulations of the staple verse-paragraph to accommodate dialogue, discourse, and argument. Among the poems central to the movement were three pieces dealing with the life and legends of Alexander the Great, the massive *Destruction of Troy*, and the *Siege of Jerusalem*. A gathering sense of inevitable transitoriness gradually tempers the virile realization of heroic idealism, and it is not surprising to find that the poem was later used by Sir Thomas Malory as a source for his prose account of the Arthurian legend, *Le Morte Darthur* completed c. 1470. The alliterative movement would today be regarded as a curious but inconsiderable episode were it not for four other poems now generally attributed to a single anonymous author: *The poet of Sir Gawayne* far exceeded the other alliterative writers in his mastery of form and style, and, though he wrote ultimately as a moralist, human warmth and sympathy often taking comic form are also close to the heart of his work. Purity imaginatively re-creates several monitory narratives of human impurity and its consequences in a spectacular display of poetic skill: No paraphrase can hope to recapture the imaginative resources displayed in the telling of the story and the structuring of the poem as a work of art. *Pearl* stands somewhat aside from the alliterative movement proper. In common with a number of other poems of the period, it was composed in stanzaic form, with alliteration used for ornamental effect. The jeweler-poet is vouchsafed a heavenly vision in which he sees his pearl, the discreet symbol used in the poem for a lost infant daughter who has died to become a bride of Christ. She offers theological consolation for his grief, expounding the way of salvation and the place of human life in a transcendental and extra-temporal view of things. The alliterative movement was primarily confined to poets writing in northern and northwestern England, who showed little regard for courtly, London-based literary developments. It is likely that alliterative poetry, under aristocratic patronage, filled a gap in the literary life of

the provinces caused by the decline of Anglo-Norman in the latter half of the 14th century. Alliterative poetry was not unknown in London and the southeast, but it penetrated those areas in a modified form and in poems that dealt with different subject matter. If what he tells about himself in the poem is true and there is no other source of information, he later lived obscurely in London as an unbeneficed cleric. Langland wrote in the unrhymed alliterative mode, but he modified it in such a way as to make it more accessible to a wider audience by treating the metre more loosely and avoiding the arcane diction of the provincial poets. His poem exists in at least three and possibly four versions: The poem takes the form of a series of dream visions dealing with the social and spiritual predicament of late 14th-century England against a sombre apocalyptic backdrop. Passages of involuted theological reasoning mingle with scatological satire, and moments of sublime religious feeling appear alongside forthright political comment. This makes it a work of the utmost difficulty, defiant of categorization, but at the same time Langland never fails to convince the reader of the passionate integrity of his writing. His bitter attacks on political and ecclesiastical corruption especially among the friars quickly struck chords with his contemporaries. Among minor poems in the same vein are *Mum and the Sothsegger* c. 1370. In the 16th century, *Piers Plowman* was issued as a printed book and was used for apologetic purposes by the early Protestants. Apart from a few late and minor reappearances in Scotland and the northwest of England, the alliterative movement was over before the first quarter of the 15th century had passed. The other major strand in the development of English poetry from roughly proved much more durable. The cultivation and refinement of human sentiment with respect to love, already present in earlier 14th-century writings such as the *Harley Lyrics*, took firm root in English court culture during the reign of Richard II. English began to displace Anglo-Norman as the language spoken at court and in aristocratic circles, and signs of royal and noble patronage for English vernacular writers became evident. Chaucer and Gower Geoffrey Chaucer, a Londoner of bourgeois origins, was at various times a courtier, a diplomat, and a civil servant. His poetry frequently but not always unironically reflects the views and values associated with the term courtly. It is in some ways not easy to account for his decision to write in English, and it is not surprising that his earliest substantial poems, the *Book of the Duchess* c. 1370. Also of French origin was the octosyllabic couplet used in these poems. His mastery of it was first revealed in stanzaic form, notably the seven-line stanza rhyme royal of the *Parliament of Fowls* c. 1374. Though Chaucer wrote a number of moral and amatory lyrics, which were imitated by his 15th-century followers, his major achievements were in the field of narrative poetry. The early influence of French courtly love poetry notably the *Roman de la Rose*, which he translated gave way to an interest in Italian literature. His consummate skill in narrative art, however, was most fully displayed in *The Canterbury Tales*, an unfinished series of stories purporting to be told by a group of pilgrims journeying from London to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket and back. The illusion that the individual pilgrims rather than Chaucer himself tell their tales gave him an unprecedented freedom of authorial stance, which enabled him to explore the rich fictive potentialities of a number of genres: Gower was also deeply concerned with the moral and social condition of contemporary society, and he dealt with it in two weighty compositions in French and Latin, respectively: *Poetry after Chaucer and Gower* Courtly poetry The numerous 15th-century followers of Chaucer continued to treat the conventional range of courtly and moralizing topics, but only rarely with the intelligence and stylistic accomplishment of their distinguished predecessors. By the 15th century, vernacular literacy was spreading rapidly among both men and women of the laity, with the influence of French courtly love poetry remaining strong. Both Chaucer and Gower had to some extent enjoyed royal and aristocratic patronage, and the active seeking of patronage became a pervasive feature of the 15th-century literary scene. Thomas Hoccleve, a minor civil servant who probably knew Chaucer and claimed to be his disciple, dedicated *The Regiment of Princes* c. 1410. Lydgate, too, was greatly stimulated at the prospects opened up by distinguished patronage and produced as a result a number of very long pieces that were greatly admired in their day. A few identifiable provincial writers turn out to have had their own local patrons, often among the country gentry. East Anglia may be said to have produced a minor school in the works of John Capgrave, Osbern Bokenam, and John Metham, among others also active during the middle of the century. Some of the

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most moving and accomplished verse of the time is to be found in the anonymous lyrics and carols songs with a refrain on conventional subjects such as the transience of life, the coming of death, the sufferings of Christ, and other penitential themes. The author of some distinctive poems in this mode was John Audelay of Shropshire, whose style was heavily influenced by the alliterative movement. Some of the shorter verse romances, usually in a form called tail rhyme, were far from negligible: Humorous and lewd songs, versified tales, folk songs, ballads, and others form a lively body of compositions. Oral transmission was probably common, and the survival of much of what is extant is fortuitous. The manuscript known as the Percy Folio, a 17th-century antiquarian collection of such material, may be a fair sampling of the repertoire of the late medieval itinerant entertainer. The extent of medieval origin of the poems collected in Francis J. In the same manuscript, but in a rather different vein, is *The Nut-Brown Maid*, an expertly managed dialogue-poem on female constancy. Political verse A genre that does not fit easily into the categories already mentioned is political verse, of which a good deal was written in the 15th century. Much of it was avowedly and often crudely propagandist, especially during the Wars of the Roses, though a piece like the *Agincourt Carol* shows that it was already possible to strike the characteristically English note of insular patriotism soon after Of particular interest is the *Libel of English Policy* c.

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Albert puts it. yet in the age of Chaucer there are signs of growing influence of the ancients on native literature. in the later half of the century English came to its own. Petrarch (). too. Chaucer1 own poetry was influenced by the Italian writer Boccaccio () and to a lesser extent.

The most authoritative and up-to-date reference books for both students and the general reader. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics rights organization. It cannot purport to fulfil the functions of a balanced expository guide to literary criticism or literary concepts. It offers instead to clarify those thousand terms that are most likely to cause the student or general reader some doubt or bafflement in the context of literary criticism and other discussion of literary works. Rather than include for the sake of encyclopaedic completeness all the most common terms found in literary discussion. I have set aside several that I have judged to be sufficiently well understood in common speech anagram. This policy has allowed space for the inclusion of many terms generated by the growth of academic literary theory in recent years. Along with these will be found hundreds of terms from literary criticism. The selection is weighted towards literature and criticism in English. Many of the terms that I have omitted from this dictionary are covered by larger or more specialist works; a brief guide to these appears on page In each entry I have attempted to explain succinctly how the term is or has been used. Related terms are indicated by cross-reference. I have chosen not to give much space to questions of etymology. My attention has been devoted more to helping readers to use the terms confidently for themselves. To this end I have displayed the plural forms. The simplified pronunciation system Preface to the Second Edition viii used. Hawkins for the Oxford Paperback Dictionary. One of its advantages is that it requires very little checking against the pronunciation key on page ix. In compiling this dictionary. If the following entries make sense. I have also updated many of the existing entries along with the appendix on general further reading. For advice on some of this additional material I am indebted to my colleagues Alcuin Blamires. Words are broken up into small units, usually of one syllable. The syllable that is spoken with most stress in a word of two or more syllables is shown in bold type. The pronunciations given follow the standard speech of southern England. However, since this system is based on analogies rather than on precise phonetic description, readers who use other varieties of spoken English will rarely need to make any conscious adjustment to suit their own forms of pronunciation. The sounds represented are as follows: In several French words no syllable is marked for stress, the distribution of stress being more even than in English. Pronunciation x A consonant is sometimes doubled. Many 20thcentury writers of prose fiction have stressed the absurd nature of human existence: The critic Martin Esslin coined the phrase theatre of the absurd in to refer to a number of dramatists of the s led by Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco whose works evoke the absurd by abandoning logical form, character, and dialogue together with realistic illusion. For a fuller account, consult Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *The Absurd* This tradition produced the earliest English comedies, notably Ralph Roister Doister c. Three kinds of accent may be distinguished, according to the factor that accounts for each: See also ictus, recessive accent. Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed Noun: Acmeism, a short-lived c. The principal poetic luminaries of this school were Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam A break between acts often coincides with a point at which the plot jumps ahead in time. Greimas, one of six basic categories of fictional role common to all stories. A character or acteur is an individualized manifestation of one or more actants; but an actant may be realized in a non-human creature e. Wilde and other devotees of pure beauty-like the artists Whistler and Beardsley-were sometimes known as aesthetes. See also decadence, fin de siecle. For a fuller account, consult R. Affective criticism or affectivism evaluates literary works in terms of the feelings they arouse in audiences or readers see e. It was condemned in an important essay by W. Wimsatt and Monroe C. See also intentional fallacy. The term is sometimes extended to formal debates in

Greek tragedies. It influenced Catullus and other Roman poets. She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. In written narrative, allegory involves a continuous alliteration 6 parallel between two or more levels of meaning in a story, so that its persons and events correspond to their equivalents in a system of ideas or a chain of events external to the tale: It can be argued that modern critical interpretation continues this allegorizing tradition. See also anagogical, emblem, exemplum, fable, parable, psychomachy, symbol. For a fuller account, consult Angus Fletcher, *Allegory* Now an optional and incidental decorative effect in verse or prose, it was once a required element in the poetry of Germanic languages including Old English and Old Norse and in Celtic verse where alliterated sounds could regularly be placed in positions other than the beginning of a word or syllable. See also alliterative metre, alliterative revival, assonance, consonance. Auden revived its use in *The Age of Anxiety* These lines from the 14th-century poem *Piers Plowman* illustrate the alliterative metre: Al for love of oure Lord livede weI straitte, In hope for to have hevne-riche blisse. See also accentual verse. This group may represent more a continuation than a revival of the alliterative tradition. The technique of allusion is an economical means of calling upon the history or the literary tradition that author and reader are assumed to share, although some poets notably Ezra Pound and T. Eliot allude to areas of quite specialized knowledge. Yeats alludes both to the hero of Celtic legend Cuchulain and to the new historical hero Patrick Pearse of the Easter Rising, in which the revolutionaries captured the Dublin Post Office. In addition to such topical allusions to recent events, Yeats often uses personal allusions to aspects of his own life and circle of friends. The verbal compression and uncertain context of much poetry often produce ambiguity: On a larger scale, a character e. Hamlet, notoriously or an entire story may display ambiguity. See also double entendre, equivoque, multiaccentuality, polysemy. American Renaissance, the name sometimes given to a flourishing of distinctively American literature in the period before the Civil War. As described by F. Matthiessen in his influential critical work *American Renaissance*, this renaissance is represented by the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson, H. It was rarely used in classical verse, but may occur in English in combination with other feet. Sometimes used anadiplosis 9 in Roman comedy, it occurs rarely in English verse. Anachronies take two basic forms: See also in medias res. Anacreontics [a-nayk-ri-on-tiks], verses resembling, either metrically or in subject-matter, those of the Greek poet Anacreon 6th century BCE or of his later imitators in the collection known as the *Anacreontea*. Metrically, the original Anacreontic line combined long - and short v syllables in the pattern v v - v - v - -. It was imitated in English by Sir Philip Sidney. More often, though, the term refers to the subject-matter: Hither haste, some cordial soul! Give my lips the brimming bowl. Similarly, the plots of many novels involve crucial anagnorises, e. For a fuller account, consult Terence Cave, *Recognitions* Commonly referred to as retrospection or flashback, analepsis enables a storyteller to fill in background information about characters and events. Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place. Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath. Lines made up of anapaests alone are rare in English verse, though; more often they are used in combination with other feet. See also metre, triple metre. These lines by Emily Dickinson illustrate the device: Mine-by the Right of the White Election! Mine-by the Royal Seal! Mine-by the Sign in the Scarlet prison Bars-cannot conceal! The antagonist is often a villain seeking to frustrate a heroine or hero; but in those works in which the protagonist is represented as evil, the antagonist will often be a virtuous or sympathetic character, as Macduff is in *Macbeth*. The term is now used more often to denote a song in which the words affirm a collective identity, usually expressing attachment to some nation, institution, or cause. Anthems have been adopted, formally or informally, by states, schools, sports clubs, and social movements of all kinds. Byron employs comic anticlimax repeatedly in *Don Juan*, as in these lines from Canto II, which describe the survivors of a shipwreck:

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Themes in Alias Grace I taught this the academic year before last. There are bound to be students out there who will find these notes and se.

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Special emphasis is accorded the theme of the abrupt and relatively belated confrontation of a Christian society with European modernity. Emphasis upon the preponderance in these works of authorial digression over the more usual emphasis of fiction upon human character and action. An opportunity to conduct a special program of inquiry under the guidance of a faculty member. Approval by Chairman required. A consideration of literary renderings of myth with a view to grasping how myths inform particular works of literature. Associated issues are the relations between myth and ritual, cult, religion, philosophy; the persistence of myths from ancient to modern art. Through study of literature written under the Tudors and Stuarts the course reflects upon artistic accomplishment amid conflicting perspectives upon the individual and society, the Church, the relation between Christianity and rediscovered classical ideals, and emerging new science. The major writings of Thomas More and the important literary accounts of his life.

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9: Go For Gold: "The Merchant's Tale" - The Form and Context

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Atanas Manchorov, PhD Mode of delivery: The course of lectures provides a survey of literature in the English language, i. Course place and status within the program Majors: Lectures L " 30 classes; Seminars S " 15 classes Level: Core course at BA level Competence expectations The successful completion of the course requires excellent language skills, keen interest in literature, and a preliminary reading of essential texts to ensure active participation in seminars. Aims and objectives of the course Successful undergraduate course-takers acquire systematic knowledge of literature in the English language by studying the major authors of British and American literary history. Undergraduates should develop philological skills in reading works of previous and modern times, in discussing different issues, and in writing individual and group essays. The course is aimed at helping students attain proficiency in literature and gain an understanding of some of the most influential works of all time. As expected, students should also acquire competence in studying fiction by themselves and finding library and electronic sources. The Middle English Period 3. The Renaissance 1 The Early Tudor Age The Elizabethan Age 4. The Renaissance 2 The Jacobean Age The Colonial Period US 5. The Renaissance 3 The Caroline Age 6. The Neoclassical Period 1 The Neoclassical Period 2 The Augustan Age The Age of Sensibility or Age of Johnson The Revolutionary Age US 8. The Romantic Period The Victorian Period 1 The Romantic Period US The Victorian Period 2 The Realistic Period US The 20th Century 1 The Edwardian Period The Naturalistic Period US The 20th Century 2 The Georgian Period American Modernist Period US s: Jazz Age, Harlem Renaissance ss: The 20th Century 3 The Modern Period present: The Contemporary Period 1 US s: The 20th Century 4 present: The Postmodern Period present: The Contemporary Period 2 US ss: Plan of Seminars 1. The Old English Period. The Middle English Period. Milton " Paradise Lost. The Neoclassical Period 1: The Neoclassical Period 2: US The Revolutionary Age. The Victorian Period 1. US The Romantic Period. The Realistic Period US. The Naturalistic Period US. The Georgian Period poetry. American Modernist Period US. Langston Hughes " Not Without Laughter. The Contemporary Period 1 US. Jack Kerouac " On the Road. The Contemporary Period 2 US. Multi-Ethnic Literature Native American. Scott Momaday " The House of Dawn. Toni Morrison " The Bluest Eye. Bulosan " America is in the Heart. Students are expected and required to attend all seminar classes of this course. It is particularly important for them to be in class to benefit from all that fellow students and instructor have to offer during discussions. No more than three unexcused are permitted. Medieval and Renaissance English Literature is a two-semester course so students must take an exam as soon as they have finished each of the two modules. Well-informed participation in discussions and supportive collaboration with other students is among the essential criteria for the successful completion of this course. Mode of assessment Structure of Exams: Students must take two mid exams as the average grade of them is the final grade. Those who have failed must re-take the exam which encompasses the whole course syllabus. Grading Policy and Guidelines: Anthologies Baym, Nina et al. The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Gates, Henry Louis, and Nelly Y. The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Lauter, Paul, and Richard Yarborough, gen. The Heath Anthology of American Literature. McQuade, Donald et al. The Harper American Literature. Wilkie, Brian, and James Hurt, eds. Literature of the Western World. Surveys of English Literature Corns, Th. The Cambridge Companion to English Poetry. A Critical History of English Literature. A History of English Literature. Literary History of the United States. Companions, Handbooks, and Dictionaries Cuddon, J. The Penguin Companion to English Literature. The Oxford Companion to American Literature. Hugh, and William Harmon, eds. A Handbook to Literature. Handbook of American Popular Literature. A Dictionary of Literature in the English Language. Bibliographies Blanck, Jacob, ed. Bibliography of American Literature. Manly, John Matthews, and Edith

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