



Universitas  
**Esa Unggul**

**INTRODUCTION TO LINGUISTICS  
(PBI 321)**

**3<sup>rd</sup> MODUL  
HISTORY OF LITERATURE**

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# HISTORY OF LITERATURE

## A. Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students are expected to be able to identify, classify, and elaborate the history of literature which covers:

- History of literature in Revolution and Restoration
- History of literature in Romanticism
- History of literature in Critical Realism
- History of literature in English Renaissance

## B. Explanation

After reading an article and a module in the link given in the previous meeting and listening to video, Have you understood the first history of literature? How did they deliver the literature? Did you remember the reason why the drama was closed at the end of renaissance period?

For this meeting, we are going to learn the history of literature after the previous periods; those are History of literature in Revolution and Restoration, in Romanticism, in Critical Realism, and in English Renaissance.

### 1. Revolution and Restoration

The restored monarchy inaugurated a new temper, and a cultural style which lasted. The theatres opened, determined to reject Puritan earnestness. The king's friends came back from France with a more secular, sceptical and 'civilized' tone, and neo-classical ideas. The Church of England was reestablished. Literature was a period of novelty, change and refoundation rather than of great writing. The only books from these forty years to have been read in every generation are some poems by John Dryden, and the

better Restoration comedies. The philosophy of John Locke, and the mathematics and optics of Sir Isaac Newton had more lasting cultural impact than any literary work of the period in verse, prose, or drama. An exception can be made for Dryden's *Absolom and Achitophel* (1681), the model for a century of couplet satire. In a period of recurrent public crisis, writing was topical, allusive and factional, and the theatre was taken up with current affairs, political, ecclesiastical, and sexual. The newspaper and the novel were at hand.

Dryden was equally a master of what he called 'the other harmony of prose', Although musical, he contrives to sound as if he is talking to an intelligent friend, This civilized tone became general over a range of English discourse, including humbler genres: diary, familiar letters, the essay, the 'character'; romance and autobiography; history, criticism, philosophy, political thought, religion and natural science.

John Locke (1632-1704) was a key figure in British cultural history. An Oxford academic, he became physician to Lord Shaftesbury, moved to Holland in the Monmouth crisis and returned with William of Orange. Publishing after 1689, he formulated an empirical philosophy which derived knowledge from experience and a theory of government as a contract between governor and the governed.

## **2. Romantics**

The word "romantic" comes from the French word "roman", the name for medieval tales written in Romanic (Venacular French) dialect. The term was initially used in the middle of the 17th century in a derogatory way to mean "exaggerated, unconvincing". Later, it took on a positive meaning and described the expression of personal feelings and emotions. Romanticism was a European cultural movement which involved writers, artists and philosophers in Germany, France, Italy and England. In France, Rousseau called into

question the influence of civilization upon man and placed man's emotional capacities over "reason".

Unlike the early 18th century authors, who looked outwards to society for general truths to communicate to common readers, Romantic writers looked inwards to their soul and imagination to find private truths for special readers. Romantic poets attached much importance to the role of the imagination in the creative processes. They believed the imagination was an ability of the mind to apprehend a kind of truth and reality which lay beyond sensory impressions, reason and rational intellect. The imagination is an almost divine activity through which a poet gets the access to the supernatural order of things. He recreates and reinterprets the world becoming a prophet to all men.

This new, subjective vision of reality went hand in hand with a much stronger emphasis on individual thought and feeling. Poetry became more introspective and meditative. Autobiographical element and first person point of view, which for many years had been unpopular, became very common and most appropriate for the expression of emotions and feelings. Some of the Romantics lived in isolation and believed that poetry should be created in solitude. In this they anticipated the idea of the artist as a non-conformist. This feeling of alienation later was shared by many writers of the modernist age. Together with the new emphasis on imagination, Romantic poets turned their attention to the irrational aspects of human life – the subconscious, the mysterious and the supernatural. As a result poetry became more symbolic and metaphorical.

Besides the poet, there were three types of novel flourished in the Romantic period: the historical novel, the novel of manners and the Gothic novel. **Walter Scott (1771–1832)** started out as a writer of Romantic narrative verse and ended up as a **historical novelist**. He wrote several historical novels, mainly about Scottish history. **Jane Austen (1775–1817)** shared the chronological time with the Romantics, but her novels have some features of Realism. She has a unique talent and cannot really be assigned to any group.

Her novels remain as popular and critically acclaimed as ever. Her primary interest is people, not ideas, and her achievement lies in the meticulously exact presentation of human situations and in the delineation of characters that are really living creatures. Her novels deal with the life of rural landowners, seen from a woman's point of view. There is little action but a lot of humor and true dialogue.

The public taste for Gothic novels which had first appeared in the second half of the eighteenth century continued throughout the Romantic period. **Gothic novels** were based on tales of the macabre, the fantastic and the supernatural. They were usually set in haunted castles, graveyards, ruins and wild picturesque landscapes. This type of novel satisfied the Romantic appetite for wild natural settings, the Middle Ages, and unrestrained imagination. The greatest Gothic novel of the Romantic period is Mary Shelley's (1797–1851) *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818).

### 3. Critical Realistics

Literary realism is the trend, beginning with mid nineteenth-century literature and extending to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century authors, toward depictions of contemporary life and society as it was, or is. Realist authors opted for depictions of everyday and banal activities and experiences, instead of a romanticized or similarly stylized presentation. Most of the 19th century novels tended to be idealized portraits of difficult lives in which hard work, perseverance, love and luck win in the end. The majority of books virtue was rewarded and wrong-doers were punished in the end. The novels tended to improve human nature.

### 4. Modernism

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by a crucial change in the intellectual climate. This was a new age of uncertainty. Scientific discoveries such as relativity and the quantum theory destroyed people's

assumptions about reality. Advances in physics, cybernetics, genetics, psychoanalysis, and other sciences alongside with rich literary output, and the emergence of the motion picture as an art form greatly enriched philosophical subject matter. Numerous philosophical developments, such as existentialism, tended to undermine firm 19th century beliefs in the solidity of observed reality.

Modernism is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends, arose from changes in Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Modernism, in general, includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, and activities of daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world. Modernism explicitly rejected the ideology of realism and manifested the deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression that distinguish many styles in the arts and literature of the 20th century. It brought innovations like the stream-of-consciousness novel, twelve-tone music and abstract art.

Modernism led cultural trend of the beginning of the 20th century, first began to be exhibited in the visual arts. The specific feature of modern literature is the variety of genres and styles. The new time brings new heroes, new experience in theatrical life, open-minded attitudes in society.

### **C. Exercise**

1. What does The Romantics Period mean?
2. What are the characteristics of each prose that came up in Romantics Period?

#### D. Answer key

1. The word "romantic" comes from the French word "roman", the name for medieval tales written in Romanic (Venacular French) dialect. The term was initially used in the middle of the 17th century in a derogatory way to mean "exaggerated, unconvincing". Later, it took on a positive meaning and described the expression of personal feelings and emotions. Romanticism was a European cultural movement which involved writers, artists and philosophers in Germany, France, Italy and England. In France, Rousseau called into question the influence of civilization upon man and placed man's emotional capacities over "reason". Some literatures in English renaissance performed on the stage was closed because they showed violence.
2. There were three types of novel flourished in the Romantic period: the historical novel, the novel of manners and the Gothic novel. **Walter Scott (1771–1832)** started out as a writer of Romantic narrative verse and ended up as a **historical novelist**. He wrote several historical novels, mainly about Scottish history. **Jane Austen (1775–1817)** shared the chronological time with the Romantics, but her novels have some features of Realism. She has a unique talent and cannot really be assigned to any group. Her novels remain as popular and critically acclaimed as ever. Her primary interest is people, not ideas, and her achievement lies in the meticulously exact presentation of human situations and in the delineation of characters that are really living creatures. Her novels deal with the life of rural land-owners, seen from a woman's point of view. There is little action but a lot of humor and true dialogue.

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