

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE:
HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

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Abstract. For more than a thousand years, people have been writing things down in some version of a language called "English"; the result of all this writing is "English Literature." Over the centuries the language itself has changed a great deal, and so has the sort of writing we're willing to consider "language and literature." English language and literature has undergone many significant changes during the process of their development. **The purpose of the paper** under consideration is to demonstrate historical and cultural aspects which mostly influenced the process of formation of English language and literature; to trace the development of the English language from its earliest forms to the present. The present paper also singles out basic periods and representatives of English language and literature. English literature is literature written in the English language from the English-speaking world. The English language has developed over the course of more than 1000 years. The paper under consideration throws light upon general knowledge of the conditions out of which English literature has come into being, as a whole and during its successive periods, that is of the external facts of one sort or another without which it cannot be understood. This means chiefly tracing in a general way, from period to period, the social life of the nation, and getting some acquaintance with the lives of the more important authors. The principal thing, however, is the direct study of the literature itself. This study in turn should aim first at an understanding of the literature as an expression of the authors' views of life and of their personalities and especially as a portrayal and interpretation

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of the life of their periods and of all life as they have seen it; it should aim further at an appreciation of each literary work as a product of Fine Art, appealing with peculiar power both to our minds and to our emotions, not least to the sense of Beauty and the whole higher nature. In the present book, it should perhaps be added, the word Literature is generally interpreted in the strict sense, as including only writing of permanent significance and beauty. **Methodology** of the given study is based on general research, critical analysis and generalization. **Results** of the considered work has generalized that the course of the English Language and Literature takes a diachronic perspective towards the English language as the language is constantly and incrementally changing. To see how English went from a Germanic dialect to a global issue. The authors of the considered manuscript prove that the history of the English language and literature can be traced from prehistoric Indo-European days through Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English up to the present time. The development of the English language and literature is explored in order to deepen the understanding of the present permutations of English. **Practical implementation** of the precise work is to provide a general manual of English Language and Literature for students in colleges and universities and others beyond the high-school age. **Value/originality**. Lies in the complex analysis and generalization since it outlines the development of the literature with due regard to national life, and to give appreciative interpretation of the work of the most important authors.

1. Introduction

The concept of "Old English" (or "Anglo-Saxon") refers to language, literature and culture of England before the Norman Conquest Invasion dated 1066, which was accompanied by a significant spread of all things French residents of Britain until the V century. There were Britons who belonged to the Celtic race and spoke the Celtic language. In the 5th century, after the retreat of the Romans, the territory of Britain was captured by Germanic or Teutonic tribes: Angles, Saxons, Jutes, who formed their kingdoms. The Celts were forced to retreat west to Wales and north to Scotland (where the Celtic language is still preserved). The tribes spoke different Germanic dialects and practiced paganism. They were noted for their belligerence, and waged continuous internecine wars for supremacy.

In the 10th century kingdom of the English Northumbria gave way to the hegemony of Wessex, after which the West Saxon dialect of Wessex became the classical dialect of Old English. Thus, the Anglo-Saxon tribes are considered to be the progenitors of the modern English language and literature.

At the end of the 6th century the Anglo-Saxons did not yet have a written literature, but the oral tradition, in particular the song culture, was of great importance. There were singer-musicians – *glasomans* (of the folk type) and *ospreys* or *bards* (professional consort singers). Table, funeral, cult songs became widespread, and the most popular were military songs, which glorified the exploits of soldiers. Bravery, ruthlessness towards enemies and loyalty to the military leader were considered the main value criteria. Christianization carried out by St. had a significant impact on the development of Anglo-Saxon culture by Augustine of Canterbury in 597.

The first Catholic church was built in Kent. In connection with Christianization, Latin gradually penetrated the Anglo-Saxon language, since the literature brought from Rome was written in Latin. Monasteries became centers of education.

Early Anglo-Saxon poetry passed through the church filter, because the greatest number of literate people were among church ministers. It is thanks to them that samples of Old English poetry and prose have been preserved.

2. The dawn of English language and literature

All Old English texts that have come down to our days are contained in 4 manuscript volumes: *Codex Beowulf* (British Museum), *Exeter Codex* (Exeter Cathedral, Devonshire), *Verchelska book* (N. Italy), *Codex Junius* (Oxford). They comprise 30,000 lines of poetry, prose, religious instructions, and historical chronicles. The presence or absence of Christian elements is one of the main criteria for the chronological classification of Anglo-Saxon literature.

The oldest Anglo-Saxon poetry, pagan in spirit and ideas, with a small amount of Christian elements, which are rather mechanical:

- the heroic poem "Beowulf";
- fragments of the *Battle of Finsburg* (The Fight at Finnsburg);
- elegies and poems (conveyed a difficult life, losses, they are dominated by sad moods, lack of hope for the future).

Christian poetry based on biblical themes. These are mostly hymns that praise God (second half of the 7th century). They belong to the two greatest English poets – the shepherd Caedmon and the monk Cynewulf. The only work of Caedmon that has reached our time is the 9-line hymn "Praise to the Creator" (Hymn). As for Cuenewulf, in addition to hymns, he also created two poems in the Anglo-Saxon language – "Elene" and "Juliana", in which female characters are revealed for the first time in English literature.

Latin prose, the greatest achievement of which is the "History of the English Church", written by a poet-monk, who was called Venerable Bede [2, p. 22]. "History of the English Church" has been translated into many European languages, it has not lost its relevance until now. Other books of the monk, devoted to natural science, history, and astronomy, are also known.

Anglo-Saxon prose written in the West-Saxon dialect. This group includes translations of King Alfred (King Alfred the Great), who ruled in the period 871–900. He was a scholar, traveled a lot, spread education among his countrymen, compiled the first code of laws, translated the "History of the English Church" into Anglo-Saxon, as well as part of the Bible. Thanks to him, the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of England" began to be written, which was continued for another 250 years after the king's death. Prose by Aelfric Grammar (Aelfric, 955-1020) – a scientist who translated into English the book of Aurelius "The Art of Grammar" (Ars Grammatica). Aelfric enriched it with an introduction, next to the Latin ones, he included examples from the English language. Heroic poem "Beowulf" [1, p. 34].

The earliest monument of the ancient German epic is the Anglo-Saxon poem "Beowulf". The manuscript of the work dates back to the 10th century, but its origin is associated with the 7th, and according to some sources, with the 6th century. The author is unknown. The poem combines the Christian worldview (the global flood, the names of Cain, Abel, and Noah are mentioned) with the pagan worldview. However, pagan elements prevail. The events in the work relate to the resettlement of the Anglo-Saxons to the British Isles.

Obviously, the original version of the poem, which was passed on by word of mouth, was gradually supplemented and changed by the singers. Manuscript of the 10th century is its final version. The poem was published in modern English in the first half of the 19th century. Currently, the

manuscript is kept in the library of the British Museum. The work consists of 3000 lines and two parts. Contains folklore and mythological images, as well as references to real people and events. The epic tells about the famous warrior Beowulf – the hero of the Scandinavian tribe of Geats. He arrived in Denmark to help King Grotgar overcome a terrible creature – the beast Grendel, who came at night to the castle Heort (deer house) and killed the king's men, drinking their blood. It lasted for 12 years. None of the Danes could handle him. Grotgar used the help of Beowulf, known for his courage, nobility, ability to swim like a fish, as well as unusual strength, which was equal to the strength of men. Mortally wounded, Grendel retreated, but his mother, who lived at the bottom of a deep swamp, decided to take revenge for her son. At the bottom of the reservoir, Beowulf defeated both monsters with a great sword. Beowulf later became king of the Danes. He successfully ruled his country. After 50 years of reign, the already quite old king had to save his people from another monster – the fiery dragon. Beowulf managed to overcome him, but the knight dies from a mortal wound. The poem ends with the scene of Beowulf's funeral, glorifying his exploits and courage, which symbolize man's victory over the forces of evil, darkness and death. The poem has a great cognitive and artistic value. Detailed descriptions vividly depict the life of soldiers at that time, their difficult campaigns, holidays, entertainment, love of the sea and adventure. The style of the poem is pathetic, elegiac. The greatest artistic wealth of the work is metaphors – descriptive words, or kennings, which are based on the similarity of two objects or two ideas. With their help, the image appeared in a completely different light, which greatly enriched the style of the work, helped to avoid monotony.

At the end of the XVII – beginning of 18th century English literature entered the Age of Enlightenment. The Enlightenment is defined as a general cultural ideological movement that covered all spheres of human activity and was directed against monarchical regimes, feudal ideology and culture, serfdom, church dogmas and morality.

On the other hand, its activists sympathized with all the oppressed, expressed and defended the interests of the third class, believed in the future democratic order. In relation to this, enlighteners attached crucial importance to science and education as a transforming force capable of changing humanity according to new concepts of the surrounding reality,

as well as educating members of society in the spirit of goodness and justice. Therefore, they actively spread knowledge among all strata of the population, affirmed true ideas about the world and man, and put forward new moral and civic values. The figures of the era themselves were noted for their high education, encyclopedic interests and knowledge, and an active social position.

The Enlightenment in England had a moderate character, as it developed in the conditions of the post-revolutionary period, in contrast to the Enlightenment of France, which ideologically prepared the bourgeois revolution. The great merit of the English Enlightenment is that the philosophers John Locke (John Locke, 1632–1704), and later E. Shaftesbury developed key worldview, moral-ethical and aesthetic concepts related to the nature of man, the importance of mind and feelings in the process of learning reality, the role of art, etc. John Locke had the same influence on the development of literature of the 18th century as Descartes had on the development of literature of the 17th century. In contrast to Descartes, English philosophers, starting with Locke, were sensualists – next to the mind, special importance was given to sensations and feelings in the process of knowledge of the world, that is, they questioned the universal capabilities of the mind. In this way, the direct experience of each person who learned about the world with the help of his senses and drew his own conclusions was recognized.

The main focus of the literature was on the upbringing and education of a person. That is why the novel gained the greatest importance in England. English novelists are considered to be the founders of a new type of novel – psychological and social-everyday, different from the medieval one, where adventurous and allegorical elements prevailed. Almost all novelists were innovators – starting with D. Defoe and ending with L. Stern, everyone contributed to the development of this genre.

Although the drama continues to develop, but, in contrast to the cheerful comedy of manners, the bourgeois drama becomes popular. It was in England that a work in this genre was created for the first time. Its founder is George Lilo (George Lillo, 1693–1739), author of the play "The London Merchant" (The London Merchant, 1731), in which representatives of the middle class are depicted in a positive light, considerable attention is paid to their lifestyle, way of thinking, moral qualities, etc. Spread in English drama

of the 18th century. acquires a new genre of ballad opera. It was written in prose form, but included a large number of popular songs and ballads, and often had a parodic character. The most famous is the socially revealing "Opera of the Beggars" by John Gay. Depicting the criminal world, the author creates a satire on representatives of the law and the ruling elite of England. The plot of Gay will be used 200 years later by the German writer B. Brecht in the play "The Threepenny Opera" (1928). Along with prose, sentimental poetry makes itself known, becoming an important factor in the renewal of English poetry.

Literature of England of the 18th century. can be divided into three periods: Early Enlightenment (end of the 17th century – 30s of the 18th century) Journalism develops, which becomes a forerunner of the English family-domestic and social-domestic novel, representatives of J. Addison and R. Steele. A significant phenomenon of the period is the work of O. Pope, a follower of classicism, the author of satirical poems. The first educational novels of D. Defoe "Robinson Crusoe" (1719) and J. Swift "Gulliver's Travels" (1926).

Sentimental poetry is born in the work of James Thomson (1700–1748). Mature Enlightenment (40-50s). Enlightenment literature is in its heyday. Domestic, socio-psychological novels were created by S. Richardson ("Pamela", 1740), G. Fielding ("The Adventures of Joseph Andrews", 1742, "The Story of Tom Jones, Find", 1749), T. Smollet ("The Adventures of Rodrick Random", 1748 and "Adventures of Peregrine Piklya", 1751).

The early and mature Enlightenment in England is called the Augustan Age. The name Augustian is associated with the period of flourishing of Roman literature during the reign of Emperor Augustian, when such outstanding artists as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid created. English writers of the early Enlightenment admired Roman poets, imitated their literary models, drew parallels between the two eras, sharing Augustus' views on civilization, social life, literature, and language, which should be based on ideas of reason and good taste [1, p. 39].

3. Further development of English language and literature

The age of Augustus contributed to the development of classicism or neoclassicism. The main focus was on the social person, so the Augustinians were attracted to themes related to the urban environment. Samuel Johnson's

famous saying at the time, "he who is tired of London is tired of life", reflects the worldview of that time. Bright Augustians include J. Addison, R. Steele, J. Swift, O. Pope.

Verses (heroic couplets – iambic pentameter with couplet rhyming) and in prose, were considered dominant in the literature of that time. In this way, the Augustians not only imitated their Roman masters (Horace and Juvenal), but also demonstrated their loyalty to the principles of rationalism.

The Renaissance is an era during which European culture reaches its highest development. The name is associated with the revival of interest in Greek and Roman culture, literature, art. The era focused its attention on the assertion of freedom man, exaltation of his intellect, soul, body. The man posed as crown of God's creation. The new outlook entered history as "humanistic". Humanism became the leading literary, philosophical and educational direction of the Renaissance, carried the center attention from human life after death to earthly life. So religious and moral ideas gave way to aesthetic and intellectual ones. Movement began in Italy at the end of the 14th century, spreading later in most European countries.

In England, the Renaissance falls on the period of the end of the XV – the beginning of 17th century and coincides with the reign of the Tudor dynasty – Henry VII, Henry VIII and Elizabeth I (daughter of Henry VIII). Conditionally it can be divided for three periods: early, mature and late.

Mature Renaissance or Elizabethan period (second half 16th century, reign of Queen Elizabeth 1558–1603) – the most successful stage of social, political and cultural life in England.

The country is becoming a powerful maritime power, something is happening the reconciliation of the bourgeoisie and the nobility, international relations are developing, which promotes cultural exchange. London is becoming important commercial and cultural center. This period marks the heyday of Renaissance ideas, it appears a galaxy of English lyric poets, a rich drama arises, all genres of the novel are developing: chivalric, pastoral, adventurous, real-life. A significant place is occupied by translation literature, scientific and philosophical thought becomes widespread, emerges F. Bacon's materialistic philosophy [5, p. 15].

They are considered the most prominent poets of the mature Renaissance Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare are among the

playwrights mention Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare.

Rapid development of theaters in the modern sense of the word in England begins with the second half of the 16th century (in the 70s) and falls on the period the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603), so it is called Elizabethan Theater buildings began to appear in London, where traveling groups of actors stopped. They bore their names patrons are rich people. These were the so-called publicly available or public theaters, there were also private and court ones. The biggest public theaters that were not located in central parts of London, and on the banks of the Thames. They became center of the English national theater of the Renaissance era. The price of tickets for the performance here was lower, so people came here representatives of the most diverse strata of the population (hence the name).

The first public theater was built in 1576 by the theater entrepreneur James Burbage. He was named after the Greek manner "Theater". Later, such theaters as "Rose", "Swan", "Globus" appeared etc. The theater became one of the most favorite entertainments of city residents, becoming more and more important in social and political life of England.

At the beginning of the XVII century. there were twenty of them. The theater kept an ancient stage with a proscenium extended into the hall, with a must for all play with a set of decorations that depicted the yard in front of the house, on the balconies, the action could develop simultaneously with the events (parallel actions) that took place on the proscenium in front of the house. Action often took place successively, sometimes on one part of the stage, then on another, moreover there was no common curtain. The audience, out of old habit, often fell in love sit on stage The main auditorium was located in a spacious courtyard, surrounded by walls, along which several tiers of galleries stretched, where it was possible to sit. Spectators on the parterre watched the performance standing, the roof above the parterre was absent.

Thanks to dramatists who belonged to university minds, there was a theater school was created, which contributed to its formation and development the Elizabethan theater. University minds have achieved significant qualitative changes in dramaturgy, in particular:

- processed and adapted the "white poem" to the stage;

- contributed to the widespread use of mythology as a source plots;
- improved dialogue;
- introduced the language of facial expressions and gestures, etc.

Socio-political and cultural process in England of the first half 17th century marked by the aggravation of contradictions between supporters royal power and parliament around church politics. the king supported by adherents of the Church of England, who demanded strict loyalty dogmas of the official religion and attacked humanistic traditions; a rather motley opposition of representatives of various social and ideological orientations gathered around the parliament, which was called puritans and declared themselves to be the purveyors of customs established under during the reign of the Stuarts [4, p. 45].

An important feature of English literature of the period is noticeable strengthening of moral and religious issues. Gaining popularity biblical motifs, sermons, translations and adaptations are becoming more active psalms Renaissance culture is experiencing a deep decline. In the literature the polarization of salon and folk cultures is observed, is taking place sending aristocratic tastes, departure from folk themes.

The most fully aristocratic culture of the Stuarts was expressed in drama. At this time, folk theaters cease to exist, great Shakespearean themes and characters disappear. Theater life takes place mostly in private, taste-oriented scenes a certain viewer. Mask plays and tragicomedies (tragedies with a happy ending). Performances were celebrated schematism, excessive idealization of characters, introduction implausible plots with elements of a gallant fairy tale, instructive an extremity in the spirit of loyalty to the monarchy.

At the end of the XVII – the beginning 18th century English literature entered the Enlightenment era. Enlightenment is defined as a general cultural ideological movement that covered all spheres of human life activity and was directed against monarchical and feudal regimes ideology and culture, serfdom, church dogma and morality.

On the other hand, its activists sympathized with all the oppressed, expressed defended the interests of the third class, believed in the future democratic system. In relation to this, educators are crucial gave to science and education as a transformative force capable of change humanity according to new concepts about the surrounding reality, and also to

educate members of society in the spirit of goodness and justice. Actively disseminated knowledge among all strata of the population, affirmed true ideas about the world and man, put forward new moral and civic values. The figures of the era themselves were highly regarded education, encyclopedic interests and knowledge, active social position.

Enlightenment in England had a moderate character, because developed in the conditions of the post-revolutionary period, in contrast to The Enlightenment of France, which ideologically prepared the bourgeois revolution. It was thus recognized direct experience of each person who, with the help of his she learned about the world through her senses and made her own conclusions [7, p. 33].

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Sentimentalism established itself in England in the 60s and 70s as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, expressing disillusionment with illusions enlightened ideas about bourgeois society.

In poetry arose back in the 40s and 50s in the works of James Thomson, Eduard Jung and Thomas Gray, later (60s) in the works of Oliver Goldsmith and Lawrence Stern The name became fixed after the publication of Sterne's novel "The Saint's Mental Journey" (1768).

The philosophical basis of English sentimentalism was theories of subjective idealism of English philosophers George Berkeley, 1685–1753 ("Treatise on the Beginnings of Human Knowledge") and David Hume, 1711–1776 ("Researches about the human mind"), which, denying the opinion previous philosophers about the possibility of objective knowledge of the world with the help of the mind, not matter was considered the only real thing, but human things impressions, ideas, emotions. Each person with the help of his imagination creates its own picture of the surrounding reality, and its conclusions about those or other things are subjective.

Philosophical systems pushed artists to clarify the internal sources of human activity and behavior in general. In art, this approach contributed to

a more full-blooded and multifaceted artistic expression of human nature, the study of its specific sensory originality.

Sentimentalism gradually overcomes the rationalistic direct linearity in the depiction of heroes, characteristic of the early period development of Enlightenment. Keeping the enlightening tradition, you lead a programmatic positive hero, a bearer of high qualities, born of nature, sentimentalists still present human nature in a more complex way. The main character mostly belongs to the lower strata of the population, endowed with noble qualities, rich inner world and deep feelings. A sharp feeling of injustice, any kind of cruelty causes constant in his soul experiences and torments, pushes sometimes to reckless steps, and even death [7, p. 45].

Due to his lack of adaptability to life, lack of pragmatism, and recklessness, the hero is often unsettled in life, reclusive, feels redundant in society. He seeks refuge in such areas as like nature, art, love, favorite pastime ("grasshopper"), succeeds to melancholy thoughts, etc. A sentimental hero is not a fighter, but observer, but the great power of experiences causes sympathy in readers and pity for him, at the same time a protest against the cruel laws of the world and social injustice.

Since the object of artistic reinterpretation of sentimentalists is the inner life of a person, a novel about travel and adventure changes for a novel about thoughts and feelings, events often take place in the background private life within family relationships.

Pre-romanticism is a literary trend of the end of the 18th century, which arose as transitional stage from the Enlightenment to Romanticism. In the basis of aesthetics and poetics of pre-romanticism, as well as sentimentalism – feelings and emotions, however, in pre-romanticism great importance is given to mystery and mystery. If sentimentalist heroes pour out their feelings mainly against the background of their native nature, then they find it in pre-romanticism also shelter in distant countries, distant past, in unusual and picturesque setting.

Hence the attraction of pre-romantics to history and folklore, in particular the Middle Ages with its gloom and mystery.

The subject of special attention of the English representatives of the direction there were Scandinavian and Celtic legends, sights of English national culture. In 1765, they entered the world of processing Celtic epic "Songs of Ossian" (The Works of Ossian).

4. Conclusions

For more than a thousand years, people have been writing things down in some version of a language called "English"; the result of all this writing is "English Literature." Over the centuries the language itself has changed a great deal, and so has the sort of writing we're willing to consider "language and literature." The English language has not always been the way it is today. It has developed over hundreds and hundreds of years to reach its current state. If you are already taking English lessons in Singapore, it might also interest you to know a short history on the origins of this language.

English has originated from the language of West Germany and includes some dialects of Anglo Frisian as well. It was first spoken during early medieval England, where "early medieval" meant a period in time. The word "English" has been derived from the word "Angles" which refers to a Germanic tribe that moved from Germany to England.

English can be categorised into five different categories according to their time and pronunciation, and those categories are:

Latin English

It is the earliest form of English mainly inspired by Roman Language and the English we speak today are mostly inspired by Latin words.

Old English

It is another form of English, where Anglo-Saxon settlers brought the dialects of Anglo-Frisian into Great Britain during the 5th century.

Middle English

It began in the late 11th century with the victory of Norman tribe from France, who conquered England and during this period the English language got immensely influenced by the French Language.

Early Modern English

This began in the late 15th century together with the introduction of the first printing press in England and the King James Bible which was the most standard form of Bible printed.

Modern English

The nature and status of the English language and literature underwent a profound transformation during the early modern period, and literature in English was also subject to many changes in its style and content.

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