

Prof Tayeb Bouazid

BRITISH LITERATURE

From the Old Period
to the Renaissance



Icars éditions

I.S.B.N: 978-9969-618-02-0

Dépôt légal: Deuxième semestre 2025

icarseditions@gmail.com

0774465958 / 035865297

Bordj Bou Arreridj - Algérie.

Première édition

Tous droits réservés

دار خيال للنشر والترجمة ©

تجزئة 53 قطعة. رقم 27. بلجور

برج بوعريش - الجزائر -

0774465958

035865297

Khyaleditions@gmail.com

جميع الحقوق محفوظة للناشرين.

Tayeb bouazid

British

Literature

From the old period to the renaissance

Preface to the Book

Literature, in its deepest essence, is a mirror to humanity—its fears, its triumphs, its desires, and its dreams. This book, *British Literature from the Old Period to the Renaissance*, is born from that understanding: a voyage through time that seeks not only to chart the evolution of English literary expression but also to invite the reader into the soul of a culture shaped by war, faith, nature, knowledge, and longing.

From the mysterious times of *Beowulf* echoing in the Anglo-Saxon halls, to the courtly elegance of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, from the thunder of medieval struggles to the gentle cradles of Renaissance sonnets—each work is more than ink on white papers. It is the voice of a people trying to understand their world, their God, their kings, and themselves.

This book is designed with students, teachers, and lovers of literature in mind. Rather than offering a rigid academic analysis, it hopes to provide an accessible narrative that situates each major literary work in its historical, cultural, and linguistic context. The aim is not only to study the texts but to feel them—to hear the swords of epic heroes, to wander alongside pilgrims, and to stand in the glow of the Elizabethan stage soaring high on Shakespeare's stage.

Our trip begins in a world where storytelling was survival—oral, raw, heroic—and ends in a time where the written word became a refined tool of art, philosophy, and social commentary. The Renaissance did not simply mark a rebirth of learning; it was a revolution of the human spirit, and English literature stood at the very heart of that enduring revolution.

It is my hope that as you turn these pages, you will not only gain insight into the literary milestones of the past but also find echoes of your own thoughts, questions, and experiences. For literature is never truly old—it lives anew each time it is read and even its imparters do not grow old—they grow in experience but not in age.

Enjoy embarking the ship...

Aims and Objectives of the Book

This book was conceived with the intention of bridging the historical with the literary—connecting readers not only to the texts of early British literature but also to the lives, beliefs, and challenges of the people who shaped and were shaped by them.

Aims:

1. **To provide a comprehensive overview** of British literary development from the Old English period to the Renaissance.
2. **To explore the socio-political and cultural contexts** that influenced literary creation across different eras.
3. **To cultivate an appreciation** for the richness, diversity, and enduring relevance of early British literature.
4. **To support students and educators** with accessible commentary, critical insight, and historical grounding.

Objectives:

- To introduce major authors, genres, and themes of each literary period covered.
- To analyze selected texts through both historical and literary lenses.
- To highlight the transitions between periods, especially the shift from oral to written traditions and from medieval to humanist thought.
- To provide interpretive tools for readers to engage critically and personally with the literature.
- To foster interdisciplinary connections between literature, history, religion, and philosophy.
- To encourage reflective reading and inspire further exploration into British literary heritage.

Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Preface to the Book	5
Aims and Objectives of the Book	6
1.PART ONE: The Literature of Old English Period (449–1066).	11
Introduction:	11
The Literature of Old English Period (449–1066)	12
Celts and Romans.....	12
1. The Roman Conquest	12
2. The English Conquest	14
1. The Danish Conquest	16
2. The Literature of Middle Ages:.....	17
The Middle English Period /: (1066-1500)	18
1. The 12 th century (The Norman French Conquest)	18
2. THE 13 th Century: The gradual transition from French to English Literature.....	19
3. The 14 th Century: the starting point of English Literature and the Influence of Chaucer.....	20
GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1342-1400).....	20
THE CANTERBURY TALES:	21
Activities On the Old and Middle English	23
1. What is an Epic ?.....	26
2. What makes BEOWULF an epic Poem ?	27
Beowulf: The Epic Poem :	27
Questions on the Epic and Beowulf	29
4.What characterizes old and Middle English Poetry.....	30
1.....	CHARACTERISTIC
S of old English POETRY:	31
2. CHARACTERISTICS of ANGLO-SAXON POETRY:	31
Malory’s Le Morte d'Arthur.....	31
Questions on Malory Morte D’Arthur/ King Arthur.....	34
PART TWO :Puritan, Restoration, and Augustan Literature (1660–1800)	37
The Eighteenth Century Poetry, Novel and Drama.....	37
1. Alexander Pope	38
Ode on Solitude.....	39

References	39
1. Discussion Questions On Alexander Pope	39
2. From Lord Chesterfield (a letter to his son)	42
1. Discussion Questions	43
3. Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe	45
Plot Overview	45
List of Characters	48
1. Robinson Crusoe –	48
Themes, Motifs & Symbols	50
2. The Necessity of Repentance	51
3. The Importance of Self-Awareness	51
Motifs	52
Symbols	54
Key Facts	55
Study Questions & Essay Topics	56
Suggested Essay Topics	57
Quiz-Test your Knowledge	58
4. Sir Philip Sidney <i>Astrophel and Stella</i> (1591) his <i>Defence of Poesie</i>	62
1. Sidney, Sir Philip	62
Astrophel and Stella	62
Sonnet 1	63
Sonnet 5	63
1. Discussion Questions	66
Astrophel and Stella	66
The Defence of Poesy	66
5. John Bunyan's <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> in 1678	69
Context	69
Themes	71
Motifs	72
Symbols	74
1. Discussion Questions	76
Characters and Symbols	78
6. Oliver Goldsmith	80
Oliver Goldsmith: A Detailed Overview	80
2. Life and Career: Early Life:	80
Literary Career:	80
3. Major Works and Themes: a) <i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i> (1766)	
– A Novel	80

4. Legacy and Influence	81
1. Discussion Questions	82
7. Richard Brinsley Sheridan	85
Richard Brinsley Sheridan: A Detailed Overview	85
2. Early Life and Education	85
3. Literary Career	86
Summary:	86
Famous Themes:	86
4. Political Career	87
5. Theater Management	87
6. Writing Style and Legacy	87
Legacy:	87
7. Death and Final Years	88
8. Conclusion	88
1. Discussion Questions	88
Part Three -	92
The Tudors and the Elizabethan Age	92
Introduction	93
A New View of Man (From Medieval Scholasticism to Humanism)	97
.....	97
PLATO 's (428-347 BC).....	97
1. Discussion Questions	97
1. Literature in the Elizabethan Age	100
A. Discussion Questions	100
The Sonnet.....	103
1. The English Sonnet	103
1. Discussion Questions	105
DRAMA	108
1. Discussion Questions	108
PART FOUR :	113
The English renaissance :Elizabethan and Jacobean eras	113
<i>The Man in the Moone by Francis Godwin (1562–1633).</i>	127
Plot summary	128
Sir Walter Raleigh	129
Part Five :SHAKESPEARE'S THEATRE	137
English Theater in the Mid-Sixteenth Century	137
Shakespeare's Stage.....	137
Shakespeare's Language	138
Shakespeare's Genres	138

Shakespeare's Multiple Perspectives	139
How NOT to Read Shakespeare.....	139
HAMLET- Synopsis	140
Hamlet	142
Discussion Questions on the Renaissance Period	153
References	160
Glossary: British Literature from the Old Period to the Renaissance.....	162



Prof Bouazid is a poet and a writer of many books, reflections, Pedagogical Book on educational Psychology, Perspectives on Didactics of English, Strategies for Effective Academic Reading, Crafting Clear Arguments (a Guide to Academic Writing), Precision in Print: Mastering Advanced Written Communication, Creative Myriads Under the Shade, Reflections on EFL Algerian Teaching

tayeb.bouazid@univ-msila.dz

British Literature from the Old Period to the Renaissance offers a captivating journey through the evolution of English literary tradition, from the heroic verses of Anglo-Saxon bards to the refined masterpieces of the Elizabethan age. This comprehensive volume explores the major literary movements, authors, and works that shaped the English canon, including the epic Beowulf, the spiritual prose of Bede, the allegorical vision of Chaucer, and the timeless dramas of Shakespeare. Rich in historical context and critical insight, the book provides readers with an accessible yet scholarly guide to the literary milestones that laid the foundation for modern English literature. Ideal for students, educators, and literature enthusiasts alike.

Prof Tayeb Bouazid is a graduate and postgraduate lecturer in the English Department University Mohamed Boudiaf, Msila, Algeria. He has a PhD in British Literature and Language Teaching, an MA in psycho pedagogy and TEFL, a MEd (with specialisation in Environmental Education (UNISA) and a Teacher Trainer Certificate of Advanced Studies from Lancaster University(UK). In addition, he is awarded a completion certificate with Middle East Partnership of the best practices in teacher training programs. Pr Bouazid is a freelance writer for the London School of Journalism . He is a teacher Trainer, researcher, contributed to many articles writing- Southern African Journal of Environmental Education, Vol. 26, 2009 , Arab Gulf Journal of Scientific Research, 27 (1&2): 59- 69 (2009), Per Linguam 2010 26(2): 33-49 Department of Curriculum Studies, Private Bag X1 7602 Stellenbosch, South Africa.