

GEOGRAPHY

There is no Geography assignment for this week.

LITERATURE**Literary Introduction**

Imagine a cavern at the mouth of the sea, surrounded by surging waves, mist, and the lonely screaming of gulls. Pretend that the entrance of the cavern is as high-arched as a cathedral door. Within it, the voice of the sea booms and echoes. Can you picture a hero-warrior lying asleep on a rock in the gloom? He is Fingal, who will awaken in Ireland's hour of greatest need. His story comes to us through the songs of his son and chief bard, Ossian. Or, at least, so they say. . . .

Ossian was supposedly a great Gaelic bard from the distant third century A.D., whose works were "rediscovered" in the mid-1700's by James MacPherson, a Scottish poet who claimed to have translated them from the Scottish Gaelic. MacPherson published "Ossian's" works and other "ancient" poems between 1760 and 1765, arousing instant controversy about the authenticity of the poems. The general belief now is that he did collect ancient fragments, but recombined and greatly expanded on the original material, so that it is mostly true to call the poetry "ancient," but only about half-true to call it Ossian's, and not at all true to call it third century. Nevertheless, the poems became very popular and Ossian was hailed as the Celtic version of Homer. Men like Thomas Jefferson and Napoleon treasured copies of the poems.

MacPherson was one of a group of about twelve poets (loosely referred to as the Graveyard School) whose lives and works spanned the eighteenth century. Their poetry tended towards the supernatural and melancholy, two elements which were otherwise lacking in Neoclassical literature. In the same year in which the complete *Works of Ossian* appeared (1765), a volume called *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (a collection of ballads), by another graveyard poet named Thomas Percy, was published. Together with the *Works of Ossian*, it seems to have inspired a European movement which sought to recover and record stories, ballads, songs, and other treasures of oral folk literature. The ballad as a form was revived in England and Germany. This movement, sometimes called a "medieval revival," continued throughout the nineteenth century and led to remarkable folk literature collections (such as the Grimm brothers' fairy tales).

MacPherson's *Works of Ossian* did not merely help to spark a medieval revival; it also contributed to a revival of Scottish literature in general. In the same decade of its publication, in 1759 and 1771, two of Scotland's great writers were born: Robert Burns first, and then Sir Walter Scott.

Robert Burns is remembered for his many delightful (and often profound) short poems, both narrative (ballads) and non-narrative (lyrics). For most of these, he chose the diction of the Scots (Scots is a dialect of English). A famous Burns line in the Scots dialect is, "The best laid schemes o' Mice and Men / Gang aft agley [go often awry]." Burns also wrote a few poems in English, including one beauty in the old pastoral mode. In his own time and in ours, Robert Burns is considered one of the greatest of all Scottish poets.

Sir Walter Scott was a young man of sixteen when Burns was at his height, but in his maturity he equalled and perhaps even briefly eclipsed Burns in popularity. Influenced by *The Works of Ossian*, Scott wrote primarily narrative poetry in English on historical and legendary topics, including ballads and several long narrative poems (romances) such as *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake*. He is also credited with the invention of the historical novel (a novel set in historical times). Though extremely popular in his day (Scott admired, and was admired by, the young Jane Austen), he is now regarded as gifted and enjoyable, but not as truly great as some others. However, Scott's influence is enormous, especially as the inventor of the historical novel. For example, he was closely imitated by one of America's first internationally successful authors, James Fenimore Cooper.

While all this went on in Scotland, a young Englishman named William Blake (1757–1827) was born in London and grew up amid the Ossianic fervor. Blake was the first of the six great English Romantic poets, and he too admired *The Works of Ossian*. Trained as an artist and engraver, Blake devoted himself to these professions as a lifelong occupation and also printed and illustrated his own works. Most of his popular poetry is collected into two books written for children: *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*.

Blake believed that there is no progress made without contraries: “Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.”¹ He believed strongly that the human being needs both body and mind, both reason and energy—and, perhaps he would say, both innocence and experience. In his poems for children, “innocence” is characterized as youthful, hopeful, happy, naive, playful, and trusting. Its central symbol is the Lamb, who represents in some places the children, and in others the source of their hope: Jesus. Experience is characterized as older, more sadly aware of evil, grief, sickness, death, anger, cruelty, fear, hypocrisy, and oppression, but it is also more intense and charged with greater energy, as in “The Tyger.”

Reading

Here is a list of poems that you should read this week. It is also possible that your teacher may instruct you to read all the poetry by Burns, Scott, and Blake in the *Shorter Works Anthology*, so be sure to ask before you begin reading. Also, this week and every week that you are reading in the *Shorter Works Anthology*, pay careful attention to the notes, footnotes, and glosses. Since these are specially designed to help you understand each poem, make good use of them!

- Ballads from Percy’s *Reliques*: “Sir Patrick Spens” and “King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid”
- From MacPherson’s *Fragments of Ancient Poetry*: Fragment VI
- Robert Burns
 - “Green Grow the Rashes”
 - “Robert Bruce’s March to Bannockburn” (also known as “Scots, Wha Hae”)
 - “To a Mouse”
- Sir Walter Scott: “Lochinvar”
- William Blake²

From *Songs of Innocence*

- “Introduction”
- “The Shepherd”
- “The Echoing Green”
- “The Lamb”
- “The Chimney Sweeper”
- “Laughing Song”

- “Holy Thursday”
- “Spring”
- “Nurse’s Song”
- “Infant Joy”
- “On Another’s Sorrow”

- “Auld Lang Syne”
- “Flow Gently, Sweet Afton”
- “A Red, Red Rose”
- “To a Louse”

From *Songs of Experience*

- “Introduction”
- “The Clod and the Pebble”
- “Holy Thursday”
- “The Chimney Sweeper”
- “Nurse’s Song”
- “The Tyger”
- “London”
- “Infant Sorrow”
- “The Schoolboy”

Recitation or Reading Aloud

Your teacher may allow you to choose your own selection for recitation or reading aloud, or may assign you one of the suggestions below:

- Robert Burns’s “Robert Bruce’s March to Bannockburn” or “To a Mouse” (though you may need to do some research to get the accent right for the latter!)
- Sir Walter Scott’s “Lochinvar”
- William Blake’s “The Tyger”

Defining Terms

You should continue your index card bank of literary terms this week, and make cards for whichever of these terms you do not already have. Be sure to write down exactly what you see here.

Terms for Beginning and Continuing Levels

- Ballad: A short narrative poem, usually sung, and most often arranged in quatrain stanzas of four lines each with a rhyme pattern either of *abab* or *abcb*, that tells of vivid events in a community, such as tales of love and death. Ballads are a type of oral and folk literature and are often “composed” over time by a whole community.
- Descriptive Structure: A type of poetic structure in which the main element is description.
- Diction: From the Latin *dictus*, meaning literally “spoken things”: language or words. In literature, the term refers to the author’s choice of words, or more widely to his choice of words, images, allusions, and even sentence structure.

1 “William Blake Quotations.” *MemorableQuotations.com*. Accessed 13 May, 2008 <<http://www.memorablequotations.com/blake.htm>>.

2 Many of our selected poems from *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* have the same titles, but are actually different poems. So, for some of these, you will read two poems that have the same title.

- Dramatic Structure:** A type of poetic structure in which the dominant element is an address by the speaker to a listener.
- Image (Imagery):** A literary device that presents an object through a concrete, non-literal, informing word picture. (Based on Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook*, 93)
- Implied Situation:** The implied and understood—but not explicitly told—situation of the speaker in a poem.
- Lyric Poem:** 1) In ancient Greece and Rome, a poem written to be accompanied by the music of a lyre, 2) a poem that has the form and (or) musical quality of a song, being written to be sung or accompanied by music, 3) a short poem expressing the thoughts and feelings of a speaker, 4) some combination of the second and third elements.
- Narrative Poem:** A poem that is also a story, having at least one character and a plot.
- Pastoral Mode:** A mode of poetry most often characterized by a mood of rustic pleasure (or sometimes longing or melancholy) and by certain settings and subjects: normally, an idyllic countryside wherein lovers (almost always shepherds and shepherdesses) enjoy a healthy, simple, natural lifestyle in small cottages or even in the open.
- Repetitive Structure:** A type of poetic structure in which the main element is repetition, including repetition of phrases, refrains of lines, or even of whole stanzas.

Additional Terms for Continuing Level Only

- Ballad Stanza (or Ballad Form):** A quatrain stanza which is extremely common in ballads, in which the first and third lines are either rhymed or unrhymed iambic tetrameter, and the second and fourth lines are rhymed iambic tetrameter or rhymed iambic trimeter.
- Historical Novel:** A novel set in a significantly older historical period than the one in which it is produced. The author theoretically portrays this older era with historical accuracy. (The degree of accuracy often varies.)

Beginning Level

1. For the following poems, name the poetic structures used, and mark any images that you come across. Be prepared to share your findings with your teacher in class.
 - "A Red, Red Rose"
 - "Holy Thursday" (from *Songs of Innocence*)

Continuing Level

Do everything in the Beginning level above, plus the following:

2. Thinking Question: "Is Blake the kind of person you would want for a friend, or as a hero and a role model?"

CHURCH HISTORY

***Amazing Grace in the Life of William Wilberforce*, by John Piper**

1. Characterize Wilberforce's youth up to the time of his conversion, when he was twenty-five. Note specific choices and actions that tell you about Wilberforce's beliefs during this period of his life.
2. List the main influences that God used to bring Wilberforce to saving faith. Be specific!
3. Why was Wilberforce so circumspect (sneaky) about meeting with John Newton?
4. In what matters did Wilberforce become confused after his conversion? What steps did he take to clarify his mind?
5. From your readings this week, summarize Piper's description of what made Wilberforce "tick."

GOVERNMENT

How did the Supreme Court gain the power to declare Acts of Congress unconstitutional? It didn't start off with that way. In *The Federalist* papers, Alexander Hamilton referred to the judiciary as "the least dangerous branch" of government. He did not anticipate how much power the Supreme Court would one day wield.

Last week we saw how Congress flagrantly violated the First Amendment by passing the Alien and Sedition Acts. America was unable to resolve the problem. This week we'll study another violation of the Constitution, but this time, the matter was put before the Supreme Court. Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that an unconstitutional law was no law at all. More to the point, he believed that it was the Supreme Court's job to decide whether laws are constitutional. For better or for worse, that has been the rule in the United States ever since.