**SII: Lesson 1**

**Literary Movements**

Literary movements are marked by **shared** traits of **style**, **subject**, and literary **genre**.

**a. Classicism** (Also known as the **Enlightenment** **1669-1798**)

**Classicism** is an attitude to language and literature found in many ages and cultures. It is based on respect for the models and achievements of **Roman** and **Greek** **art** and **culture**. Advocates of classicism value tradition and usually believe that written language should be governed by **traditional** formal **rules**. They are generally conservative and often consider that contemporary culture cannot match the achievements of the ancients. They usually value regularity and simplicity of form, seek to maintain order, admire elegance, encourage and emotional restraint, and regard literature as art.

**\*Key Characteristics**

- Revitalized interest in the values and ideas of the classical world

- Clarity

- Disciplined structure

**b. Romanticism (1798-1850)**

**Romanticism** is an **artistic**, **literary**, **musical**, and **intellectual** **movement** that occurred as a reaction to classicism. It emphasized love of nature, emotional expression, individual experience, and the importance of ordinary people and folk traditions. Often, romantics longed for a simpler, gentler past -a time when noble people lived in harmony with unspoiled nature.

**\*Key Characteristics \*Major Writers**

- Emotion over reason **-** William Blake (poetry)

- Subjective over objective **-**William Wordsworth (poetry)

-Imagination -Victor Hugo (poet-novelist-dramatist)

-Nature as a source of goodness and inspiration -Edgar Allan Poe (poet – short story writer)

**c. Realism and Naturalism**

**Realism**

**Late-nineteenth-century** writers moved toward a new style called “realism” practiced by authors such as **Flaubert**, **Tolstoy**, **Maupassant**, and **Ibsen**. It began as a cultural movement with its roots in France, where it was a very popular art form, not only in France but in the rest of Europe as well, from the mid to late 1800s. Realism is just as it sounds. It was a style and type of writing in which writers sought to portray life as it really was: real characters in real lives with real jobs and real problems. It was a reaction to and a rejection of Romanticism.

**\*Key Characteristics**

-It renders reality in comprehensive detail.

-Character is more important than action and plot.

-Objectivity in presentation is important.

**\*Major Writers**

-Honoré de Balzac

-William Dean Howells

-Mark Twain

-Henry James

### Naturalism (1890-1915)

**Naturalism** is a harsher, more **pessimistic** form of realism. The term “naturalism” describes a type of literature that attempts to apply **scientific principles** of **objectivity** to its study of human beings. Naturalistic writers studied human beings as governed by forces of **heredity** (**instincts**-like hunger and sexuality-, **glandular secretions**) and **environment**. Naturalism is based on **Charles** **Darwin**’s theory of **evolution**. According to naturalism, humanity has **no free will**, for we are **victims** of our heredity and environment. Naturalists show life to be **cruel**, and the dominant subject is the **violent struggle** to survive in a cold, uncaring universe.

**\*Key Characteristics \*Major Naturalist Writers**

-Objective narration - Stephen Crane

-Cruel circumstances / violence / animal imagery -Theodore Dreiser

- Characters do not have free will. -John Steinbeck

-Characters are controlled by heredity and environment. -Emile Zola

**d. Modernism**

**Modernism** isa movement that was born in the **20th** century when artists began experimenting **new themes** and **techniques** and turning away from the styles, forms, and contents of the 19th century literature. “Modern” life seemed radically **different** from traditional life (more **scientific**, **faster**, and more **technological**). The Modernist period is characterized by a sense of **instability** and **meaninglessness**. Modern literature showed people as **alienated** and disconnected from one another, society, and God.

**\*Key Characteristics**

-Modernist writers showed a strong and intentional **break** with **tradition** and began **abandoning** the **traditional** plot structure and omitting devices (like transition words) because of the themes that were common at that time, such as uncertainty, confusion, and apparent meaninglessness.

-Modern art, which was famous by the “**open** **end**,” was a good parallel to Modern literature, and **fragmentation** was its major property.

-Their experience is that of alienation, loss, and despair.

-Life is unordered.

**\*Major Modernist Writers**

-James Joyce

-T. S. Eliot

-Virginia Woolf

-Earnest Hemingway

-F. Scott Fitzgerald