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Egyptian hieroglyphs with cartouches for the name " Ramesses II ", from the Luxor Temple , New Kingdom

The history of literature follows closely the development of civilization. Please improve it by verifying the claims made and adding inline citations. Statements consisting only of original research should be removed.

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Different historical periods are reflected in literature. National and tribal sagas, accounts of the origin of the world and of customs, and myths which sometimes carry moral or spiritual messages predominate in the pre-urban eras. The epics of Homer , dating from the early to middle Iron age , and the great Indian epics of a slightly later period, have more evidence of deliberate literary authorship, surviving like the older myths through oral tradition for long periods before being written down. The plot is for more than just entertainment purposes; within it lies information about economics, psychology, science, religions, politics, cultures, and social depth. Studying and analyzing literature becomes very important in terms of learning about our[who? Through the study of past literature we[who? This can even help us to understand references made in more modern literature because authors often make references to Greek mythology and other old religious texts or historical moments. Not only is there literature written on each of the aforementioned topics themselves, and how they have evolved throughout history like a book about the history of economics or a book about evolution and science, for example but one can also learn about these things in fictional works. Canto I" [22] and expresses his opinions through his character Childe Harold. Through literature we are able to continuously uncover new information about history. It is easy to see how all academic fields have roots in literature. Eventually everything was written down, from things like home remedies and cures for illness, or how to build shelter to traditions and religious practices. From there people were able to study literature, improve on ideas, further our knowledge, and academic fields such as the medical field or trades could be started. In much the same way as the literature that we study today continue to be updated as we[who? As a more urban culture developed, academies provided a means of transmission for speculative and philosophical literature in early civilizations, resulting in the prevalence of literature in Ancient China , Ancient India , Persia and Ancient Greece and Rome. Many works of earlier periods, even in narrative form, had a covert moral or didactic purpose, such as the Sanskrit Panchatantra or the Metamorphoses of Ovid. Drama and satire also developed as urban culture provided a larger public audience, and later readership, for literary production. Lyric poetry as opposed to epic poetry was often the speciality of courts and aristocratic circles, particularly in East Asia where songs were collected by the Chinese aristocracy as poems, the most notable being the Shijing or Book of Songs. Over a long period, the poetry of popular pre-literate balladry and song interpenetrated and eventually influenced poetry in the literary medium. In ancient China, early literature was primarily focused on philosophy, historiography , military science , agriculture, and poetry. The most important of these include the Classics of Confucianism , of Daoism , of Mohism , of Legalism , as well as works of military science e. Ancient Chinese literature had a heavy emphasis on historiography, with often very detailed court records. In ancient India, literature originated from stories that were originally orally transmitted. Early genres included drama , fables , sutras and epic poetry. The Vedas are among the oldest sacred texts. The Samhitas vedic collections date to roughly " BCE, and the "circum-Vedic" texts, as well as the redaction of the Samhitas, date to c. In ancient Greece, the epics of Homer , who wrote the Iliad and the Odyssey , and Hesiod , who wrote Works and Days and Theogony , are some of the earliest, and most influential, of Ancient Greek literature. Classical Greek genres included philosophy, poetry , historiography, comedies and dramas. Plato and Aristotle authored philosophical texts that are the foundation of Western philosophy , Sappho and Pindar were influential lyric poets , and Herodotus and Thucydides were early Greek historians. Although drama was popular in Ancient Greece, of the hundreds

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of tragedies written and performed during the classical age , only a limited number of plays by three authors still exist: Aeschylus , Sophocles , and Euripides. The plays of Aristophanes provide the only real examples of a genre of comic drama known as Old Comedy , the earliest form of Greek Comedy, and are in fact used to define the genre. Controversial, religious, political and instructional literature proliferated during the Renaissance as a result of the invention of printing, while the mediaeval romance developed into a more character-based and psychological form of narrative, the novel , of which early and important examples are the Chinese Monkey and the German Faust books. In the Age of Reason philosophical tracts and speculations on history and human nature integrated literature with social and political developments. The inevitable reaction was the explosion of Romanticism in the later 18th century which reclaimed the imaginative and fantastical bias of old romances and folk-literature and asserted the primacy of individual experience and emotion. But as the 19th century went on, European fiction evolved towards realism and naturalism , the meticulous documentation of real life and social trends. Much of the output of naturalism was implicitly polemical, and influenced social and political change, but 20th century fiction and drama moved back towards the subjective, emphasizing unconscious motivations and social and environmental pressures on the individual. Writers such as Proust , Eliot , Joyce , Kafka and Pirandello exemplify the trend of documenting internal rather than external realities. Genre fiction also showed it could question reality in its 20th century forms, in spite of its fixed formulas, through the enquiries of the skeptical detective and the alternative realities of science fiction. The separation of "mainstream" and "genre" forms including journalism continued to blur during the period up to our own times. William Burroughs , in his early works, and Hunter S. Thompson expanded documentary reporting into strong subjective statements after the second World War , and post-modern critics have disparaged the idea of objective realism in general. Mitchell, for example, explains how one author used young adult literature to describes a state of "wonder" she had experienced as a child. It also suggests that neurological development hinders actualizing this and a person becomes estranged from his or her true self. Poetry A calligram by Guillaume Apollinaire. These are a type of poem in which the written words are arranged in such a way to produce a visual image. Poetry is a form of literary art which uses the aesthetic qualities of language including music, and rhythm to evoke meanings beyond a prose paraphrase. Prose and Literary fiction Prose is a form of language that possesses ordinary syntax and natural speech , rather than a regular metre ; in which regard, along with its presentation in sentences rather than lines, it differs from most poetry. Eliot suggested that while: They offer some of the oldest prose writings in existence; novels and prose stories earned the names "fiction" to distinguish them from factual writing or nonfiction, which writers historically have crafted in prose. Novel [edit] A long fictional prose narrative. In English, the term emerged from the Romance languages in the late 15th century, with the meaning of "news"; it came to indicate something new, without a distinction between fact or fiction. Walter Scott defined it as "a fictitious narrative in prose or verse; the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents", whereas in the novel "the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events and the modern state of society". Summarizing the variable definitions of the novella, William Girdaldi concludes "[it is a form] whose identity seems destined to be disputed into perpetuity". Edgar Allan Poe , or the clearly modern short story writers e. Genres related to the essay may include the memoir and the epistle. Natural science[edit] As advances and specialization have made new scientific research inaccessible to most audiences, the "literary" nature of science writing has become less pronounced over the last two centuries. Now, science appears mostly in journals. Scientific works of Aristotle , Copernicus , and Newton still exhibit great value, but since the science in them has largely become outdated, they no longer serve for scientific instruction. Yet, they remain too technical to sit well in most programs of literary study. Outside of " history of science " programs, students rarely read such works. Philosophy[edit] Philosophy has become an increasingly academic discipline. More of its practitioners lament this situation than occurs with the sciences; nonetheless most new philosophical work appears in academic journals. Major philosophers through historyâ€” Plato , Aristotle , Socrates , Augustine , Descartes , Kierkegaard , Nietzsche â€”have become as canonical as any writers. Some recent

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philosophy works are argued to merit the title "literature", but much of it does not, and some areas, such as logic, have become extremely technical to a degree similar to that of mathematics. History[edit] A significant portion of historical writing ranks as literature, particularly the genre known as creative nonfiction, as can a great deal of journalism, such as literary journalism. However, these areas have become extremely large, and often have a primarily utilitarian purpose: As a result, the writing in these fields often lacks a literary quality, although it often and in its better moments has that quality. Major "literary" historians include Herodotus, Thucydides and Procopius, all of whom count as canonical literary figures. Law[edit] Law offers more ambiguity. Some writings of Plato and Aristotle, the law tables of Hammurabi of Babylon, or even the early parts of the Bible could be seen as legal literature. Roman civil law as codified in the Corpus Juris Civilis during the reign of Justinian I of the Byzantine Empire has a reputation as significant literature. The founding documents of many countries, including Constitutions and Law Codes, can count as literature. Drama Drama is literature intended for performance. A play is a subset of this form, referring to the written dramatic work of a playwright that is intended for performance in a theater; it comprises chiefly dialogue between characters, and usually aims at dramatic or theatrical performance rather than at reading. A closet drama, by contrast, refers to a play written to be read rather than to be performed; hence, it is intended that the meaning of such a work can be realized fully on the page. Greek drama exemplifies the earliest form of drama of which we have substantial knowledge. Tragedy, as a dramatic genre, developed as a performance associated with religious and civic festivals, typically enacting or developing upon well-known historical or mythological themes. Tragedies generally presented very serious themes. With the advent of newer technologies, scripts written for non-stage media have been added to this form. War of the Worlds radio in saw the advent of literature written for radio broadcast, and many works of Drama have been adapted for film or television. Conversely, television, film, and radio literature have been adapted to printed or electronic media. Other narrative forms[edit] Electronic literature is a literary genre consisting of works that originate in digital environments. Films, videos and broadcast soap operas have carved out a niche which often parallels the functionality of prose fiction. Graphic novels and comic books present stories told in a combination of sequential artwork, dialogue and text. Literary techniques encompass a wide range of approaches: Literary devices involves specific elements within the work that make it effective. Examples include metaphor, simile, ellipsis, narrative motifs, and allegory. Even simple word play functions as a literary device. In fiction stream-of-consciousness narrative is a literary device.

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Moreover, in the French field of literature Le Deuff proposed a vision of information literacy in relation to citizenship and to mastering technical knowledge. According to him, the technical knowledge composes a culture, which is understood as Simondon's [19] approaches as related to power struggles.