A short comprehensive history of the above sort too easily degenerates into a mere catalog. Unimportant, but obviously noteworthy writers, get a few dutiful lines, more important ones get a few more, sometimes much more. In the first category you may look for writers you have not heard of, in the second category you are looking for outspoken opinions and maybe ideally some insight you have never thought of before. Anyway there will not be enough space to develop an argument, and it makes you appreciate the approach taken by Watt\(^1\) where there is a fully extended narrative focusing on just a few protagonists, which can bring in a host of others in supporting roles. A mere historical cavalcade serves only two useful purposes. One hand it reminds the already knowledgeable whether he has forgotten anything obvious, on the other hand it can serve the student of literature as a crib, something to memorize in anticipation of a test. Not very important purposes.

The book is divided (didactically?) into four parts each chronologically presented. The first is on poetry, the second on the play and the stage, the third on the novel, and the fourth on prose, mopping up what has not already been covered, making a case for historians such as Gibbon and Macaulay, and philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke and Hume. Poetry starts almost from Anglo Saxon beginnings, plays a bit later and for novels there is not much to be said before Defoe (the 16th century example is not convincing enough). Poetry marches on steadily, each century having their fair share of talent. Different with the stage. The golden 17th century century had its beginning already at the end of the 16th with Marlowe and his Faustus and the early plays by Shakespeare. In fact the entire century was of high class, and unfortunately so many of the playwrights, who stood on their own, have been overshadowed by Shakespeare. In fact, one surmises, had there been no Shakespeare, Ben Jonson would have been regarded as a genius. In the 18th century it was a steady decline and the entire 19th century produced nothing of any value, until the very end with Shaw and Wilde. There was a certain resurgence in the 20th and favorable mentions are made of Osborne and T.S.Eliot. The novel on the other hand did not get a footing until the 18th century, but reigned supreme during the 19th with an embarrassment of riches, and with no novelist really dominating, although when comes to popularity, sustainability and profuseness, Dickens stands out with his unique blend of pathos and comedy driven by sheer inventive power. A novelist should of course be inventive, but not necessarily in profusion. Jane Austen stands out as a peak of perfection, never surpassed in her own realm. And indeed, it is noteworthy how many women were successful novelists, especially when compared to music and painting. The putative prejudice they were supposed to be subjected to, should have worked as effectively in writing as in the other arts? But why not? The author does make the general remark but does not follow it up. We have Austen, the sisters Brontë (who owe a lot to the Gothic craze of the 19th century, but did

\(^{1}\) In the previous review
transcend it through psychological sincerity in my opinion, it was not just done for effect), George Eliot (who chose a masculine pen-name, but that was an option also available to composers and painters), Gaskell, and a trend to continue into the 20th century. The novel survived into the 20th century but lost much of its vitality and became too eclectic and experimental. The novel was a popular entertainment in the previous century, just as opera, but became more elitist later on. Telling a story was no longer enough it had to be done in a contorted way, starting with Henry James, and then continued by Woolf and ultimately James Joyce, and after that the novel was never the same. Much of the popular appeal of the novel has in the 20th century been taken over by the TV-soaps. In fact the classical 19th century publication in installments in newspapers becoming more accessible and affordable, was for all intents and purposes soaps.

When it comes to prose, there really is not much to be said, or at least not much said by the author. The whole section has the taste of an add-on paying heed to the obvious fact that there is more to writing than to the writing of poetry, plays and novels. That prose has its own power and may come to its full fore only in extended arguments, is not really addressed. But after all this is not a book of ideas but of names.

May 27, 2019
English literature includes literature composed in English by writers not necessarily from England, but all are considered important writers in the history of English literature (for example, Robert Burns was Scottish, James Joyce was Irish, Joseph Conrad was Polish, Dylan Thomas was Welsh, Thomas Pynchon is American, V.S. Naipaul was born in Trinidad). In other words, English literature is as diverse as the varieties and dialects of English spoken around the world. Until the early 19th century literature from Britain will mainly be discussed; then America starts to produce major writers and w... Fables. The emphasis of a fable is always on a moral. It's a short story, which has animals as main characters. Primitive myths. Since its first appearance in 1940, A Short History of English Literature has served countless readers as a perceptive, reliable, and readable guide. This fourth edition < revised and extended to include major poets, dramatists, and novelists of the present day < provides an invaluable map to the vast field of English literature. ...more. Get A Copy. Amazon. Ifor Evans first published his "Short History of English Literature" in 1940 and by 1976 it had gone through many reprints as well as an end chapter by Bernard Bergonzi bringing it up to date with critiques of new writers such as Phillip Larkin, Anthony Burgess and John Osbourne. 2. Classification of Literary History The outline of English Literature conveniently falls into the following historical divisions: I. Middle Ages (449 - 1500) a) Anglo Saxon Period (449 - 1066) b) Middle English Period (1066 - 1485) II. Renaissance (1500 - 1640) III. great contribution to English literature and history of the English nation was his famous book Ecclesiastic History. The History tells about the Anglo-Saxon conquest though his main theme was the spread of Christianity and the growth of English Church. It contains many stories of saints and miracles that testified the glory of God. Another merit of Bede was the fact that he wrote the first autobiographical account in English Literature. Bede’s writings prove that he is reliable as a writer and a historian.