

ridiculous. Among his examples Pope cites "the modest request of two absent lovers" in a contemporary poem:

Ye Gods! annihilate but Space and Time,
And make two lovers happy.

The slogan "For God, for Country, and for Yale!" is bathetic because it moves to intended **climax** (that is, an ascending sequence of importance) in its rhetorical order but to unintended descent in its reference—at least for someone who is not a Yale graduate. Even major poets sometimes fall unwittingly into the same rhetorical figure. In the early version of *The Prelude* (1805; Book IX), William Wordsworth, after recounting at length the tale of the star-crossed lovers Vaudracour and Julia, tells how Julia died, leaving Vaudracour to raise their infant son:

It consoled him here
To attend upon the Orphan and perform
The office of a Nurse to his young Child
Which after a short time by some mistake
Or indiscretion of the Father, died.

The Stuffed Owl: An Anthology of Bad Verse, eds. D. B. Wyndham Lewis and Charles Lee (rev. 1948), is a rich mine of unintended bathos.

Anticlimax is sometimes employed as an equivalent of bathos; but in a more useful application, "anticlimax" is nonderogatory and denotes a writer's deliberate drop from the serious and elevated to the trivial and lowly in order to achieve a comic or satiric effect. Thus, Thomas Gray in his *mock-heroic* "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat" (1748)—the cat had drowned when she tried to catch a goldfish—gravely inserts this moral observation:

What female heart can gold despise?
What cat's averse to fish?

And in *Don Juan* (1819–24; I. ix.) Byron uses anticlimax to deflate the would-be gallantry of Juan's father:

A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
Or, being mounted, e'er got down again.

battle rapping: 272.

beast fable: 10.

Beat writers: "Beat writers" identifies a loose-knit group of poets and novelists, in the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s, who shared a set of social attitudes—antiestablishment, antipolitical, anti-intellectual, opposed to the prevailing cultural, literary, and moral values, and in favor of unfettered self-realization and self-expression. The Beat writers often performed in *coffeehouses* and other public places, to the accompaniment of drums or jazz

music. (See *performance poetry*.) “Beat” was used to signify both “beaten down” (that is, by the oppressive culture of the time) and “beatific” (many of the Beat writers cultivated ecstatic states by way of Buddhism, Jewish and Christian mysticism, and/or drugs that induced visionary experiences). The group included such diverse figures as the poets Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the novelists William Burroughs and Jack Kerouac. Ginsberg’s *Howl* (1956) is a central Beat achievement in its breathless, chanted celebration of the down-and-out and the subculture of drug users, social misfits, and compulsive wanderers, as well as in representing the derangement of the intellect and the senses effected by sexual abandon, drugged hallucinations, and religious ecstasies. (Compare the vogue of *decadence* in the late nineteenth century.) A representative and influential novel of the movement is Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* (1958). While the Beat movement was short-lived, it left its imprint on the subjects and forms of many writers of the 1960s and 1970s; see *counterculture*, under *Periods of American Literature*.

Notwithstanding the desire of the Beat writers to be considered rebellious, obscene, and anarchic, a considerable body of scholarship now argues for their canonical status. Refer to Lawrence Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians* (1959, reprinted 2010); Ann Charters, ed., *The Portable Beat Reader* (1992); Brenda Knight, ed., *Women of the Beat Generation: The Writers, Artists and Muses at the Heart of a Revolution* (1996); Jennie Skerl, ed., *Reconstructing the Beats* (2004); Jonah Raskin, *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl” and the Making of the Beat Generation* (2004); Kurt Hemmer, ed., *Encyclopedia of Beat Literature* (2006); and Nancy Grace, *Jack Kerouac and the Literary Imagination* (2009). Holly George-Warren has edited a collection of essays, reviews, memoirs, and interviews: *Rolling Stone Book of the Beats: The Beat Generation and American Culture* (1999).

For references to *Beat Writers* in other entries, see page 80.

beginning (of a plot): 295.

beliefs (in reading literature): 132.

bibliography: 34.

Bildungsroman (bild’ ungsrōmān’): 255; 167.

binary opposition: 82; 100, 328.

biography: Late in the seventeenth century, John Dryden defined biography neatly as “the history of particular men’s lives.” The name now connotes a relatively full account of a particular person’s life, involving the attempt to set forth character, temperament, and milieu, as well as the subject’s activities and experiences.

Both the ancient Greeks and Romans produced short, formal lives of individuals. The most famed surviving example is the *Parallel Lives* of Greek

and Roman notables by the Greek writer Plutarch, c. AD 46–120; in the translation by Sir Thomas North in 1579, it was the source of Shakespeare's plays on Roman subjects. Medieval authors wrote generalized chronicles of the deeds of a king, as well as **hagiographies**: the stylized lives of Christian saints, often based more on pious legends than on fact. In England, the fairly detailed secular biography appeared in the seventeenth century; the most distinguished instance is Izaak Walton's *Lives* (including short biographies of the poets John Donne and George Herbert), written between 1640 and 1678.

The eighteenth century in England is the age of the emergence of the full-scale biography and also of the theory of biography as a special literary genre. It was the century of Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1779–81) and of the best known of all English biographies, James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791). In our own time, biographies of notable women and men have become one of the most popular of literary forms, and usually there is at least one biographical title high on the best seller list.

Autobiography is a biography written by the subject about himself or herself. It is to be distinguished from the **memoir**, in which the emphasis is not on the author's developing self but on the people and events that the author has known or witnessed, and also from the private **diary** or **journal**, which is a day-to-day record of the events in one's life, written for personal use and satisfaction, with little or no thought of publication. Examples of the latter type are the seventeenth-century diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, the eighteenth-century journals of James Boswell and Fanny Burney, and Dorothy Wordsworth's remarkable *Journals*, written 1798–1828 but not published until long after her death. The first fully developed autobiography is also the most influential: the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, written in the fourth century. The design of this profound and subtle **spiritual autobiography** centers on what became the crucial experience in Christian autobiography: the author's anguished mental crisis, and a recovery and **conversion** in which he discovers his Christian identity and religious vocation.

Michel de Montaigne's *Essays*, published in 1580 and in later expansions, constitute in their sum the first great instance of autobiographical self-revelation that is presented for its inherent interest rather than for religious or didactic purposes. Among later distinguished achievements in secular autobiography are Rousseau's *Confessions* (written 1764–70), Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* ("Poetry and Truth," written 1810–31), the autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Sean O'Casey, Lillian Hellman, and Gertrude Stein (published in 1933 under the title *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*), and *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (1964). Many spiritual histories of the self, however, like John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), followed Augustine's example of religious self-revelation centering on a crisis and conversion. An important offshoot of this type are secular autobiographies that represent a spiritual crisis which is resolved by the author's discovery of his identity and vocation, not as a Christian, but as a poet or artist; examples are Wordsworth's autobiography in verse, *The Prelude* (completed 1805, published in revised form 1850), or the partly autobiographical works

of prose fiction such as Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913–27), James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1915), and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1965). In a development associated with postmodernism, the distinction between autobiography and fiction has become more and more blurred, as authors include themselves under their own names in novels, write autobiographies in the asserted mode of fiction, or (as in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*, 1975) mingle fiction and personal experience as a way to get at one's essential life story (see the entry *novel*).

On biography: Leon Edel, *Literary Biography* (1957); Richard D. Altick, *Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America* (1965); David Novarr, *The Lines of Life: Theories of Biography, 1880–1970* (1986); Linda Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women's Lives: The New Biography* (1994). Catherine N. Parke, *Biography: Writing Lives* (1996), includes a chapter on "Minority Biography." On autobiography: Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (1960); Estelle C. Jelinek, ed., *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism* (1980), and *The Tradition of Women's Autobiography from Antiquity to the Present* (1986). The importance of autobiography in the Victorian period in England is discussed in Avron Fleishman, *Figures of Autobiography* (1983); Jerome H. Buckley, *The Turning Key: Autobiography and the Subjective Impulse since 1800* (1984); and Linda H. Peterson, *Victorian Autobiography* (1986). For an extended discussion of Augustine, Rousseau, and Beckett, see James Olney, *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing* (2001). M. H. Abrams, in *Natural Supernaturalism* (1971), describes the wide ramifications of spiritual autobiography in historical and philosophical as well as literary forms. In a highly influential essay on "The Autobiographical Pact" (1974), Philippe Lejeune argues for an historical view of the self as expressed in autobiography; reprinted in Paul John Eakin, ed., *On Autobiography* (1989). Paul John Eakin's *How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves* (1999) is an account of autobiography that draws on cognitive science, memory studies, and developmental psychology; see also Eakin's *Living Autobiographically: How We Create Identity in Narrative* (2008). For autobiography in literatures other than English, see Pey-Yi Wu, *The Confucian's Progress: Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China* (1990); and Dwight F. Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (2001).

Black Aesthetic: 32.

Black Arts Movement: The "Black Arts Movement" designates a number of African-American writers whose work was shaped by the social and political turbulence of the 1960s—the decade of massive protests against the Vietnam War, demands for the rights of African-Americans that led to repeated and sometimes violent confrontations, and the riots and burnings in Los Angeles, Detroit, New York, Newark, and other major cities. The literary movement was associated with the Black Power movement in politics, whose spokesmen, including Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X, opposed the proponents of integration and instead advocated black separatism, black pride, and black solidarity. Representatives of the Black Arts put their literary writings at the

service of these social and political aims. As Larry Neal put it in his essay "The Black Arts Movement" (1968): "Black Art is the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power Concept. As such it envisions an art that speaks directly to the needs and aspirations of Black America" and "to the Afro-American desire for self-determination and nationhood."

The **Black Aesthetic** that was voiced or supported by writers in the movement rejected, as aspects of domination by white culture, the "high art" and modernist forms advocated by Ralph Ellison and other African-American writers in the 1950s. Instead, the black aesthetic called for the exploitation of the energy and freshness of the black vernacular, in rhythms and moods emulating jazz and the blues, dealing especially with the lives and concerns of lower-class blacks, and addressed to a black mass audience. The most notable and influential practitioner of the Black Arts was Imamu Amiri Baraka (born LeRoi Jones) who, after an early period in Greenwich Village as an associate of Allen Ginsberg and other *Beat* writers, moved to Harlem, where he founded the Black Arts Repertory Theater/School in 1965. Baraka was distinguished as a poet, a dramatist (his play *Dutchman* is often considered an exemplary product of the Black Arts achievement), a political essayist, and a critic both of literature and of jazz music. Among other writers of the movement were the poets Etheredge Knight, Sonia Sanchez, Haki Madhubuti, and Nikki Giovanni; the authors of prose fiction John Alfred Williams, Eldridge Cleaver, and James Alan McPherson; and the playwrights Paul Carter Harrison and Ed Bullins.

The revolutionary impetus of the Black Arts Movement had diminished by the 1970s, and some of its pronouncements and achievements now seem undisciplined and crudely propagandistic. But its best writings survive, and their critical rationale and subject matter have served as models not only to later African-American writers but also to Native American, Latino, Asian, and other *ethnic* writers in America. For a later emergence, on the popular level, of antiestablishment poetry by African-Americans, see *rap* under *performance poetry*.

The *Black Aesthetic*, ed. Addison Gayle (1971), includes essays that were important in establishing this mode of criticism by Ron Karenga, Don L. Lee, and Larry Neal, as well as by Gayle himself. See also Imamu Amiri Baraka, *Home: Social Essays* (1966), and editor with Larry Neal of *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (1968); Stephen Henderson, *Understanding the New Black Poetry* (1973); and the text, biographies, and bibliographies for "The Black Arts Movement: 1960-1970" in *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, eds. H. L. Gates, Nellie Y. McKay, and others, 1997.

black comedy: 2.

black humor: 2; 354.

Black Mountain poets: 277.

Black writers: 273. See also *African-American writers*.

blank verse: "Blank verse" consists of lines of *iambic pentameter* (five-stress iambic verse) which are unrhymed—hence the term "blank." Of all English metrical forms it is closest to the natural rhythms of English speech, yet flexible and adaptive to diverse levels of discourse; as a result it has been more frequently and variously used than any other form of versification. Soon after blank verse was introduced by the Earl of Surrey in his translations of Books 2 and 4 of Virgil's *The Aeneid* (about 1540), it became the standard meter for Elizabethan and later poetic drama; a free form of blank verse remained the medium in such twentieth-century verse plays as those by Maxwell Anderson and T. S. Eliot. John Milton used blank verse for his epic *Paradise Lost* (1667), James Thomson for his descriptive and philosophical *Seasons* (1726–30), William Wordsworth for his autobiographical *Prelude* (1805), Alfred, Lord Tennyson for the narrative *Idylls of the King* (1891), Robert Browning for *The Ring and the Book* (1868–69) and many dramatic monologues, and T. S. Eliot for much of *The Waste Land* (1922). A large number of meditative lyrics, from the *Romantic Period* to the present, have also been written in blank verse, including Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight," Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears" (in which the blank verse is divided into five-line stanzas), and Wallace Stevens' "Sunday Morning."

Divisions in blank verse poems, used to set off a sustained passage, are called **verse paragraphs**. See, for example, the great verse paragraph of twenty-six lines which initiates Milton's *Paradise Lost*, beginning with "Of man's first disobedience" and ending with "And justify the ways of God to men"; also, the opening verse paragraph of twenty-two lines in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" (1798), which begins:

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.

For references to *blank verse* in other entries, see pages 66, 145.

Bloomsbury Group: "Bloomsbury Group" is the name applied to an informal association of writers, artists, and intellectuals, many of whom lived in Bloomsbury, a residential district in central London. This group of friends began to meet around 1905 for conversations about the arts and issues in philosophy. Its members, who opposed the narrow post-Victorian restrictions in both the arts and morality, included the novelists Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster, the painters Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell (Virginia Woolf's sister), the influential art critics Clive Bell and Roger Frye, the iconoclastic biographer of Victorian personages Lytton Strachey, and the famed economist John Maynard Keynes. Some members were linked not only by common interests and viewpoints but also by complicated erotic liaisons, both heterosexual and homosexual. The Bloomsbury Group had an important influence on innovative literary, artistic, and intellectual developments in the two decades after the First World War, which ended in 1918. A memoir by the son of Clive Bell and Vanessa Stephen is Quentin Bell, *Bloomsbury Recalled* (1997). See Leon Edel, *Bloomsbury: A House of Lions* (1979);

S. P. Rosenbaum, ed., *A Bloomsbury Group Reader* (1993); and Rosenbaum, ed., *The Bloomsbury Group: A Collection of Memoirs and Commentary* (1995).

bombast: “Bombast” denotes a wordy and inflated diction that is patently disproportionate to the matter that it signifies. The magniloquence of even so fine a poet as Christopher Marlowe is at times inappropriate to its sense, as when Faustus declares (*Doctor Faustus*, 1604; III. i. 47ff.):

Now by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon I swear
That I do long to see the monuments
And situation of bright-splendent Rome;...

which is to say: “By Hades, I’d like to see Rome!” Bombast is a frequent component in the heroic *drama* of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The pompous language of that drama is parodied in Henry Fielding’s *Tom Thumb the Great* (1731), as in the noted opening of Act II. v., in which the diminutive male lover cries:

Oh! Huncamunca, Huncamunca, oh!
Thy pouting breasts, like kettle-drums of brass,
Beat everlasting loud alarms of joy;
As bright as brass they are, and oh! as hard;
Oh! Huncamunca, Huncamunca, oh!

Fielding points out in a note that this passage was specifically a *parody* of James Thomson’s bombastic lines in *The Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1730):

Oh! Sophonisba, Sophonisba, oh!
Oh! Narva, Narva, oh!

“Bombast” originally meant “cotton stuffing” and in Elizabethan times came to be used as a metaphor for an over-elaborate style. For references to *bombast* in other entries, see page 161.

bomolochos (bōmōl’ ōkōs): 377.

book: In its inclusive sense, the term designates any written or printed document which is of considerable length, yet is light and durable enough to be easily portable. Studies devoted to the identification of the authorship, dates of issue, *editions*, and physical properties of books are called **bibliography**.

In ancient Greece and Rome the standard form of the book was the double papyrus roll. **Papyrus**, which had been developed in Egypt, was made from the papyrus reed, which grows profusely in the Nile delta; the stems of the reed were cut into strips, soaked, and impregnated with paste. The texts were **manuscripts** (that is, written by hand), and were inscribed in columns; as the reader went along, he unwound the papyrus from the right-hand roll and wound it on the left-hand roll.

In a very important change in the form of the book during the fifth century of the Middle Ages, papyrus rolls were superseded by the parchment or vellum codex. **Parchment** was made from the skins of sheep, goats, or calves, which were stretched and scraped clean to serve as a material for writing. **Vellum** is sometimes used interchangeably with "parchment" but is more useful as a term for an especially fine type of parchment that was prepared from the delicate skin of a calf or a kid. To make a **codex** (the plural is "codices"), the parchment was cut into leaves; as in the modern printed book, the leaves were stitched together on one side and then bound. The great advantages of the codex over the roll were that the codex could be opened at any point; the text could be inscribed on both sides of a leaf; and the resulting book was able to contain a much longer text than a manuscript roll. In its early era, the codex was used primarily for biblical texts—a single volume could contain all four Gospels, where a roll had been able to encompass only a single Gospel.

In the course of the Middle Ages, many monasteries had **scriptoria**—rooms in which scribes copied out texts; often, a number of scribes copied texts that were dictated by a reader, in an early form of the mass production of books. To make especially fine codices—at first for religious, and later for secular texts, including works of literature—the manuscripts were **illuminated**; that is, they were adorned by artists with bright-colored miniature paintings and ornamental scrolls. Since all kinds of parchment were expensive, written surfaces were sometimes scraped off, then used for a new text. Such parchments are called **palimpsests** (Greek for "scraped clean"); often, the original text, or in some cases multiple layers of texts, remain visible under an ultraviolet light.

Paper, invented by the Chinese as early as the first century AD, was introduced to Europe by the Arabs in the eighth century, after which it increasingly replaced parchment. Early paper was made from linen and cotton rags; later, technology was invented for making paper from the pulp of wood and other vegetable fibers. The use of paper was essential for the invention of printing. The Chinese had been printing from carved wood blocks since the sixth century; but in 1440–50, Johannes Gutenberg introduced in Germany a new craft of printing from movable metal type, with ink, on paper, by means of a press that was tightened by turning a levered screw. Within the next half century, this cheap method of making many uniform copies of a book had spread throughout Europe, with enormous consequences for the growth of literacy and learning and for the widespread development of the experimental sciences. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols., 1979.

The term **incunabula** (in' kyoonăb' yoolă; the singular is incunabulum) designates books that were produced in the infancy of printing, during the half century before 1500. "Incunabula" is Latin for "swaddling clothes" or "cradle."

From the mid-seventeenth century on, there was a great increase in literacy and in the demand by the general public for literary and all other types of books. The accessibility and affordability of books was greatly expedited, beginning in the nineteenth century, by the invention of machines—powered