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BA [English]

V - Semester

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

The history of English literature dates back at least to the 8th century A.D. when the Anglo-Saxon epic poem *Beowulf* was written. The poem was written in Anglo-Saxon or Old English. English literature came to its own with the development of what is known as Middle English around 1100 A.D. Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is an excellent example of the Middle English language. Another high point in the early history of English literature was the Age of Shakespeare, also known as the Elizabethan Age. This age was marked by the European Renaissance. Popularly understood as a kind of 'revival' of the arts based on Classical Greek models, the Renaissance is widely recognized and studied as one of the most influential, potent and robust movements not only in the arts but also in various other disciplines.

English Literature in the years between 1550 and 1798 can be read and understood in the context of different eras including Elizabethan Age, Jacobean age, Neoclassical and Augustan Age to early beginnings of Romanticism. During this era there was an increase in population, in prices and rents in England. Real wages were at an all-time low in the 1620s, and social relations were plunged into a state of fluidity. The traders and ambitious gentry made profits at the expense of the aristocracy and the labourers. The renaissance age was popular with the sonnets and stanzas by Spencer and Sidney, the later part of the century saw the development of tragedy and comedies by Christopher Marlow and Shakespeare. With the change of power and clash of religion, there were conflicts with swaying support and rejection of monarchy, these periods too saw literature adapt to newer forms of work including metaphysical poetry and debates on religion by Donne, Herbert and Marvell.

Most literary works from the period 1660–1798 are said to have been written from the head and not from the heart. The passion characteristic of the past was absent in the literature of this period. The work of this period was governed by reason. The 18th century, in particular, was referred to as the Age of Enlightenment. There was emphasis on a rational and scientific approach to issues related to not just religion and politics but also the economy and society in general. Further with the rise of parliament, there was the dominance of satire and a neo-classical age reflecting in heroic couplets and mock-satires in the works of Dryden and Pope. Further, the advancements in technology and science brought in a newer acceptance of journals and essays popularised for common people by the likes of Addison and Steele. And then the enlightenment was met with the opposing forces of feeling and imagination through romanticism in the works of Blake. Another significant age of English literature was the Age of Romanticism. It was an artistic, literary, musical, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century, and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. After the Romantic age, came the Victorian, and then

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the Modern Era of English literature. All these ages will be discussed in detail in this book called *History of English Literature*.

This book is written with the distance learning student in mind. It is presented in a user-friendly format using a clear, lucid language. Each unit contains an Introduction and a list of Objectives to prepare the student for what to expect in the text. At the end of each unit are a Summary and a list of Key Words, to aid in recollection of concepts learnt. All units contain Self Assessment Questions and Exercises, and strategically placed Check Your Progress questions so the student can keep track of what has been discussed.

BLOCK I

PERIODS OF SHAKESPEARE, MILTON AND BRYDEN

*Age of Shakespeare:
Verse and Drama*

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UNIT 1 AGE OF SHAKESPEARE: VERSE AND DRAMA

Structure

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Age of Shakespeare is characterized by a number of changes in the socio-political order, advancements in naval prowess and commerce as well as a proliferation in the production of plays and poems. The term 'Renaissance' has been described as standing for an age of development where the ignorance of the Dark Ages had been abandoned. It marks the rebirth of art, literature and architecture that is unmatched by the previous ages. A significant development took place in terms of writing during the Shakespearean Age. Drama became a predominant and much appreciated genre during this time with the emergence of Shakespeare, whose brilliant writing and expression established him as the greatest dramatist of all times. In this unit, the developments that took place in verse and drama during the Age of Shakespeare.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyze Renaissance as a significant period of literary and social history
- Discuss the notions of humanism and secularism
- Examine the literatures written in this age, primarily drama and poetry

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1.2 THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE: RENAISSANCE

‘Renaissance’ is an Italian word, meaning re-birth. Renaissance, as we understand it today, is associated with major social and cultural developments in Europe between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The contribution of the Renaissance to the emergence of modernity in early modern Europe, and especially England, has been for many years an appropriate entry point to the history of the modern world.

The period of reign of Queen Elizabeth in British throne (1558—1603) which is usually termed as the Elizabethan age or the Elizabethan Era is often used synonymously for Renaissance or for ‘The Early Modern Period’ of English literature and culture. Many literary scholars and historians often used the term ‘renaissance’ or the early modern period to refer to the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The term “Renaissance” – meaning “rebirth” or “reawakening”, applies to the socio-political and cultural development that happened all over Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In case of England, the term Renaissance applies to the sixteenth century when England witnessed a socio-cultural upheaval and a change that affected the lives of all. This period witnessed a rapid growth in English Commerce, naval power and nationalist feeling, along with it being the greatest age of English literature, especially plays and poems. The prominent writers of the age were William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, Francis Bacon, Walter Raleigh and others. The age is considered to be one of the most fruitful periods in terms of literature and art. Elizabethan age is also considered by many literary historians as the first Modern Age, as the development in terms of science and the rise of capitalism and mercantilism led to a new outlook towards life. The focus of study shifted from god to man as ‘man’ became the centre of literary and cultural concern. Religion, that is, Christianity, still played a great role in man’s life, but god was not the centre anymore, leading to a new and fresh outlook, often termed by literary historians and scholars as ‘Renaissance Humanism’.

Renaissance (“rebirth”) is a term applied to the period of European history following the Middle Ages; it is commonly said to have begun in Italy in the late fourteenth century and to have continued in Western Europe through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In this period, the art of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature reached an eminence not exceeded by any civilization in any age. The development came late to England in the sixteenth century and did not have its flowering until the Elizabethan and Jacobean period; sometimes, in fact, Milton (1608-1674) is said to be the last great Renaissance poet.

Many attempts have been made to define “the Renaissance.” It has been described as the birth of the modern world out of the ashes of the dark ages; as the discovery of the world and discovery of man; as the era of untrammelled individualism in life, thought, religion, and art. Recently some historians, finding

that these attributes were present in various people and places in the Middle Ages, and also that many elements long held to be medieval survived into the renaissance, have denied that the Renaissance ever existed. It is true that history is a continuous process, and that “periods” are invented not by God but by historians; but the concept of a period is a convenience, if not a necessity, of historical analysis, and one is able to identify, during the span of the Renaissance, a number of events and discoveries which in the course of time altered radically the views, productions, and manner of life of the intellectual classes.

All these events may be regarded as putting a strain on the relatively closed and stable world of the great civilization of the later Middle Ages, when most of the essential truths about man, the universe, religion, and philosophy were held to be well known and permanently established. The full impact of many of these Renaissance developments did not make itself felt until the later seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, but the very fact that they occurred in this period indicates the vitality, the audacity, and the restless curiosity of many men of the Renaissance, whether scholars, thinkers, artists, or adventurers.

(1) The New Learning: Renaissance scholars of the classics, called Humanists, revived the knowledge of the Greek language, discovered and disseminated a great number of Greek manuscripts, and added considerably to the number of Roman authors and works which have been known to the Middle Ages. The result was to enlarge immensely the stock of ideas, materials, literary forms, and styles available to Renaissance writers. In the mid-fifteenth century, the invention of printing on paper from movable type books, for the first time cheap and plentiful, and floods of publications, ancient and modern, poured from the presses of Europe to satisfy the demands of the rapidly expanding literate audience. The speed of the inauguration and spread of ideas, discoveries, and types of literature in the renaissance was made possible by this technological development.

The humanistic revival sometimes resulted in pedantic scholarship, sterile imitations of ancient works and styles, and a rigid rhetoric and literary criticism. It also bred, however, the gracious and tolerant humanity of an Erasmus, and the noble concept of the cultivated Renaissance gentleman expressed in Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il Cortegiano* (*The Courtier*), published in 1528. This was the most admired and widely translated of the many Renaissance courtesy books, or books on the character, obligations, and training of the man of the court. It presents the ideal of the completely rounded or “universal” man, developed in all his faculties and skills, physical, intellectual, and artistic. He is trained to be a warrior and statesman, but is capable also as athlete, philosopher, artist, conversationist, and man of society. His relations to women are in accord with the quasi-religious code of Platonic love, and his activities are crowned by the

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grace of sprezzatura – the seeming ease and negligence with which he meets the demands of complex and exacting rules of behavior. Leonardo da Vinci in Italy and Sir Phillip Sidney in England were embodiments of the courtly ideal.

- (2) **The New Religion:** The Reformation led by Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a successful heresy which struck at the very basis of the institutionalism of the Roman Catholic Church. This early Protestantism was grounded on the individual's inner experience of spiritual struggle and salvation. Faith (based on the word of the Bible as interpreted by the individual) was alone thought competent to save, and salvation itself was regarded as a direct transaction with God in the theater of the individual soul, without the need of intermediation by Church, priest, or sacrament. For this reason, Protestantism is sometimes said to have been an extreme manifestation of "Renaissance individualism" in northern Europe; it soon, however, developed its own institutionalism in the theocracy proposed by John Calvin and his Puritan followers. England in characteristic fashion muddled its way into Protestantism under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, empirically finding a middle way that minimized violence and hastened a stable settlement.
- (3) **The New World:** In 1492, Columbus, acting on the persisting belief in the old Greek idea that the world is a globe, sailed west to find a new commercial route to the East, only to be frustrated by the unexpected barrier of a new continent. The succeeding explorations of this continent gave new materials and stimulus to the literary imagination; the magic world of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, for example, is based on a contemporary account of a shipwreck on Bermuda. More important for literature, however, was the fact that economic exploitation of the new world put England at the center, rather than as theretofore at the edge, of the chief trade routes, and so helped establish the commercial prosperity that in England, as in Italy earlier, was a necessary though not sufficient condition for the development of a vigorous intellectual and artistic life.
- (4) **The New Cosmos:** The cosmos of medieval astronomy and theology was Ptolemaic (that is, based on the astronomy of Ptolemy, second century A.D.) and pictured a stationary earth around which rotated the successive spheres of the moon, the various planets, and the fixed stars; Heaven, or the Empyrean, was thought to be situated above the spheres, and Hell to be situated either at the center of the earth (as in Dante's *Inferno*) or else below the system of the spheres (as in Milton's *The Paradise Lost*). In 1543, Copernicus published his new hypothesis concerning the system of the universe; this gave a much simpler and more coherent explanation of accumulating observations of the actual movements of the heavenly bodies, which had led to

ever greater complications of the Ptolemaic world picture. The Copernican theory pictured a system in which the center is not the earth, but the sun, and in which the earth is not stationary, but one planet among the many planets which revolve around the sun.

Investigations have not borne out the earlier assumption that the world picture of Copernicus and his followers delivered an immediate and profound shock to the theological and secular belief of thinking men. For example in 1611, when Donne wrote in “The First Anniversary” that “new Philosophy calls all in doubt,” for “the Sun is lost, and th’ earth,” he did so only to support the ancient theme of the world’s decay and to enforce a standard Christian *contemptus mundi*. Still later, Milton in *Paradise Lost* expressed a suspension of judgment between the Ptolemaic and Copernican theories; he adopted for his own poem the older Ptolemaic scheme because it was more firmly traditional and better adapted to his imaginative purposes.

Much more important, in the long run, was the effect on men’s opinions of the general principles and methods of the new science of the great successors of Copernicus, such as the physicists Kepler and Galileo, and the English physician and physiologist, William Harvey. The cosmos of many Elizabethan writers was not only Ptolemaic, and subject throughout to God’s Providence; it was also an animate universe, invested with occult powers, inhabited by demons and spirits, and often thought to control men’s lives by stellar influences and to be itself subject to control by the power of witchcraft and of magic. The cosmos that emerged in the seventeenth century, as a product of the scientific procedure of constructing exact hypotheses capable of being tested by precisely measured observations, was the physical universe of Rene Descartes (1596-1650). “Give me extension and motion,” Descartes wrote, “and I will construct the universe.” This universe of Descartes and the new science consisted of extended particles of matter which moved in space according to fixed mathematical laws, entirely free from interference by angels, demons, human prayer, or occult magical powers, and subject only to the limited manipulations of scientists who, in Francis Bacon’s phrase, had learned to obey nature in order to be her master. In this way, the working hypotheses of the physical scientists were converted into a philosophical world view, which was made current by many popular expositions, and – together with the methodological principle that controlled observation, rather than tradition or authority, is the only test of truth in all areas of knowledge – helped constitute the climate of eighteenth century opinion known as the *Enlightenment*.

‘Renaissance’ and ‘Humanism’: Their Origin

In 1860, Jakob Burckhardt articulated the significant concepts of ‘Renaissance’ and ‘humanism’, in his book on cultural history, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Burckhardt is confirming to the view that Renaissance is an age of revival of commerce and urban life which laid the foundations for a secular and even anti-religious vision of life. This new vision glorified the individual which was strongly

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reinforced by the rediscovery of the pagan literature of the Antiquity (the classical age). The new secular and individualistic values, which were somewhat incompatible with Christian beliefs, constituted a new worldly philosophy of life known as 'humanism', drawing its main ideas and inspiration from ancient Greece and Rome. Humanism subsequently became the inspiration for questioning the moral basis of the feudal and Christian inheritances in Europe.

Renaissance Humanism

Humanism is a term that the historians emphasized on from the nineteenth century, though the terms existed in the writings of Renaissance itself – the term was 'humanistic studies' (*studia humanitatis*), implying academic subjects favoured by humanists. By the first half of the fifteenth century, the term 'humanist' referred to people who taught academic subjects like grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy. These people were members of a professional group who taught humanities and liberal arts – (humanitas, a classical word earlier used by Cicero as a substitute for the Greek Paideia, or culture). Cicero was of the opinion that only human beings were capable of attaining knowledge about their own selves, about their culture and can be artistic. Therefore, this is a special branch of study that only human beings can perform. Renaissance humanism, which is a glorification of the human, as the study of man has taken place of the erstwhile biblical themes, conceived itself as 'a new philosophy of life.' This new belief in the study of human beings for the sake of it that created a historical consciousness that emerged first in the thoughts of leading 14th century poet, Petrarch, who is popularly known to us for the sonnets that he has written and the form of sonnet that is popularized after him.

He, along with the other Renaissance scholars, believed that it is essential that there is a true restoration of civilizational values, after so many years of darkness (the Middle Ages). This idea was a result of the historical consciousness which enabled them to distinguish their time as an age of light (in the sense of enlightenment) from the preceding one of darkness (that is, the Medieval Age, when everything was under the purview of church and learning meant learning about the biblical themes and nothing else).

Moreover, what we perceive distinctly about their age is that there is a sense of novelty which is mixed or interwoven with a conscious imitation of the works of the ancient Greek and Roman writers (classical writers, in the sense that Renaissance is a reawakening of the classical scholarship/ learning). Thus, renaissance is a strange amalgamation where a certain consciousness of the newness was juxtaposed against the classical antiquity to produce a new thought of 'humanism'. The poet Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304-74) was its first great figure, the real founder of the new culture, who tried to bring back to life the inner spirit of ancient Roman civilization. His love for ancient Latin literature was united with a repudiation of the inherited medieval culture. He transformed classicism

into a weapon in a struggle to regenerate the world and to create a distinctive new culture built on the solid foundation of a lost but retrievable antiquity.

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Secularism – its beginning

The Renaissance is also viewed as a beginning of a loosening control of religion (Christianity) over human life in Europe. In other words, it is Renaissance which paved the path for secularism as the focus of study shifted from the God to Man. It is not that God was not important anymore; but unlike Medieval Age, God and theology were not the only subject-matters of learning. Human beings and their actions became the centre of attraction and created a new focus of learning – humanism. Humanism, as pointed out in the last section, challenged the conventional authorities of learning, including scholastic theologians.

As mentioned earlier, this challenge to theological studies was not meant to doubt Christianity, but its primary aim was to study human being and their materialistic living conditions which were in many ways 'subversive to the teachings of the Christian church. But one should remember here that during Elizabethan Age the people those who were looking at their materialistic life and were willing to get things for wealth, glory and fame were not deeply irreligious. It was a time of social change – as society was moving from the feudal structure to a capitalist one. There were changes happening at every aspect of people's life and these changes were so grand that they affected people and their psyche.

Many scholars, like Raymond Williams, point out that the age was the fittest for tragedies to be written as the capitalistic trend pulled people to rise up in the social ladder, whereas feudal mindset pulled them back. In such an age where there were push and pull factors both working at the same time, where they were in opposite directions, it was bound to be a society where tragedy would strike and strike well with the audience, as we see it happening in England during this period when dramatists like Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare and other wrote famous tragedies. At the same time, their works glorified the secular life.

It can be said that the glorification of secular life was literary reflection of changing social attitudes. The contribution of classical studies in the glorification of human nature was very evident. There are many such renaissance intellectuals who tried to do so, but one of such significant intellectual figures was a young prince of Medici family, Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola. Mirandola's most famous work, '*Oration on the Dignity of Man*', published in 1496 deals with the theme of human dignity by suggesting that of all God's creation man received complete freedom to choose his own place in the Great chain of being. By his own free choice man creates himself either in a spiritual fashion or in the manner of a beast. His view of human nature did not look towards divine grace but celebrated worldly achievement.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the scholars, the artists, the architects, the musicians and the writers, all those who shaped the culture of Humanism,

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began to experience a more general sense that their society had entered upon a new age, an age which has removed the 'darkness' of the preceding centuries: the 'Renaissance'. Increasingly, study of human (Humanism) and cultural climate of the Renaissance produced texts which showcased an expanding attention to man. Texts sought to expose what man was and could do both as an individual and as a member of society. To men like Machiavelli pursuit of glory was a perfectly human virtue.

Realism vs. Moralism

Apart from the pursuit of glory, the self-development of an individual personality through cultivation of 'arts and sciences' emerged as another social ideal allowing a great flowering of creative activity. Plutarch had presented before the humanists a vision of man in society whose achievements were results of their pursuit of glory and entwined with a certain conception of virtue.

The idea was attractive and powerful because of its intense realism. Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), a Florentine scholar, who, in his famous 1513 tract *The Prince*, describes the role of man in that segment of society which is called politics. Machiavelli, too, was secular and a realist; and he showed that the will to power was a dominant motive in human action though often covered with nice words of religious and ethical nature. Upon a closer look it revealed itself as pure self-interest; in which he found nothing wrong. Machiavelli's praise of cunning of a ruler in the larger interest of the society is because of his interest in what men did in the public sphere.

If the striving for power was perfectly acceptable to Machiavelli, to some others, like Thomas More, it was a source of much mischief. To put it simply the Renaissance experienced the development of what may be labelled as realistic ethics, suggesting a situation where values became relative and contradictory calling upon man to look for the appropriate measure to distinguish between good and bad against the background of a significant transformation of social life.

The new ideal of man presumes a larger amount of freedom of action which the medieval Christian community did not allow. Desiderius Erasmus, one of the most famous of these north European humanists, in a series of treatises, tried to lay down the rules for an educational system that despite its Christian foundation came to be animated by the critical spirit of Humanism. Indeed, one should not forget that, contrary to what often has been suggested, most people living the culture of Renaissance and humanism did not display a 'heathenish', pagan spirit but remained firmly tied to a view of man and the world as, essentially, redeemable only by a Christian God.

1.3 THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE: VERSE

The poetry or verse of the Renaissance has all the freshness and vigour of a youthful race. English poetry is interesting more for its promise than for the performance.

The poetry of the age opens with the publication of the volume known as *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). One of the chief writers of this age, Thomas Wyatt, esquire to the King, travelled to Italy on several occasions and was the first to introduce the Sonnet into England. He was born in 1503. He adhered strictly to the Petrarchan model with such fine effect which was used at a later date by Milton and still more recently by Rossetti.

Sir Philip Sidney was also one of the famous sonneteers of the age. His chief works are *An Apologie for Poetrie*, written in 1591, renamed as *Defense of Poetrie* (which is considered to be the first critical writing in the English Tradition). The *Arcadia* appeared in 1590 in an unfinished state and appeared again in 1598 as a complete. The *Astrophel and Stella* sonnets appeared in 1593 numbering one hundred and eight and eleven songs which deals with the theme of Petrarchan Love where the poet-lover loves the lady from distance and is not able to declare his love for her; but it does not deter him from writing poetry in his love. In *Astrophel and Stella*, we see Philip Sidney caught between his role as a Petrarchan lover, as a poet, as a courtier and presents the dichotomy of his existence in the form of sonnet.

Edmund Spenser was born about 1552 and died in 1599 on January 16 in Kings Street; Westminster. His publications include: *The Shepherd's Calendar*, *Prothalamion*, *Epithalamion*, *The Fairie Queene*, etc. *The Faerie Queene* realistically conveys Christian dogmas. It is an outline of the Reformation in England. In the form of an allegory, it recounts the conflict which was going on between two groups – Protestant England headed by Queen Elizabeth and the Catholic forces represented by the Queen of Scots. Spenser had great abhorrence for the Catholic religion. There are a host of other poets writing at the age. Even William Shakespeare with his Sonnets made a significant contribution to the age.

Whereas, Petrarchan love found its expression in the sonnets, we also see that Metaphysical love poetry and Metaphysical religious poetry flourishing. John Donne and Andrew Marvell in their love poems championed the notion of “make hay while the sun shines” whereas Henry Vaughan, John Donne and others presented the religious themes in their poems. In hyperbolic language and in farfetched metaphysical conceits the metaphysical poets provided a distinctive colour to the Renaissance poetry. Samuel Johnson, talking about “Metaphysical Wit” said “The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and, to show their learning was their whole endeavor ... (their) wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be more rigorously and philosophically considered as a kind of “discordia concors;” a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike. Of wit, thus defined, they have more than enough. The most heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; nature and art are ransacked for illustrations, comparisons, and allusions; their learning instructs, and their subtlety surprises; but the reader commonly thinks his improvement dearly bought, and, though he sometimes admires, is seldom pleased.”

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1.4 THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE: DRAMA

The drama of the age is a comparably the greatest cultural practice of the time. It is in Elizabethan age that drama found an expression in bountiful terms. The greatest of the English dramatist, William Shakespeare, is a product of this age. Apart from Shakespeare there are host of other dramatists who made the age proud by their dramatic creations. Some of them are –

- **John Lyly's** best-known dramas *Alexander and Compaspe* probably played for the first time on New Year's Eve 1581: *Sapho and Phao* – 1584
- **George Peele**, an actor as well as a writer of plays for had written *The Arraignment of Paris* 1584; *Edward I* 1593; *The Battle of Alcazar*, 1594, *The Old Wives' Tale* 1595, *David and Fair Buthsheba* 1599, *The Hunting of Cupid* 1591, *Polyhmnia* 1590, *The Fall of Troy* 1589 and *A Farewell to Norris and Drake* 1589.
- **Thomas Kyd** – A dramatist and a translator, who achieved great popularity with his first work *The Spanish Tragedy*. His chief works are *Cornelia*, *Teronima*, *The Rose Triumphs of Love* and *Fourteen Salyman* and *Persoda* are supposed to have emanated from his pen.
- **Robert Greene** – achieved distinction in the vigorous characterization and could handle better a love story was born about 1560. His plays comprise *Orlando Furioso*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bunguy*, *Alphonus Kings of Aragan*, etc. His most effective play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, deals with partly with the tricks of the Friar, and partly with a straightforward romantic love story.
- **Christopher Marlowe** was educated at the King's school Canterbury. In 1587 his first play *Tamburlaine* was produced and took the public ear at once by reason of its impetuous force, its splendid command of blank verse and its sensitiveness to beauty. It was succeeded by the *Tragical history of Doctor Faustus*. *The Jew of Malta*, a play rich, in fine episodes and with glorious opening, but lacking the grip and imaginative appeal of the earlier plays. *Edward II*, his last play, is from the technical point of view also his best. In 1593 Marlowe was here slain in a drunken brawl by a beauty serving man. All the above dramatists are also known as University Wits as their plays are influenced by their education of the classical works of literature.

Elizabethan Theatre

Elizabethan theatre derived from several medieval theatrical traditions, such as the mystery plays, based on biblical themes, that were a part of the religious festivals in England and other parts of Europe during the Middle Ages, the morality plays that evolved out of the mysteries; and the plays by University Wits that attempted to recreate the Greek tragedy. The Italian tradition of Commedia Dell'arte (artistic

comedy) as well as the elaborate masques frequently presented before the court also helped in the shaping of public theatre. But the Elizabethan theatre was different from the Medieval Age dramas as the theatre came out of the purview of the church to become secular and dealt with themes which are not typically religious as that of the Medieval Age. Shakespeare, and the playwrights of his time, took stories from English and European history, and from other poems and plays. In the sixteenth century, plays were first performed in the yards of inns (hotels) with a stage set up against a wall. Groups of actors used to travel around the country performing plays in inns and in the houses of the rich. In 1576, three theatres were set up in London. One was at Blackfriars and the other two, “The Theatre” and “The Curtain”, were erected in Shoreditch fields. The City of London authorities, primarily Puritans, were generally hostile to public performances, but its hostility was overmatched by the Queen’s taste for plays. Theatres sprang up in suburbs, accessible across the Thames River to city dwellers, but beyond the authority’s control. All the theatres of London during the Elizabethan era had individual differences; yet their common function necessitated a similar general plan. The public theatres were three stories high and built around an open space at the centre. Usually polygonal in plan to give an overall rounded effect, the three levels of inward-facing galleries overlooked the open center, into which jutted the stage — essentially a platform surrounded on three sides by the audience, only the rear being restricted for the entry and exit of the actors and seating for the musicians. The upper level behind the stage was used as a balcony. Since Elizabethan theatre did not make use of lavish scenery, instead left the stage largely bare, with a few key props, the main visual appeal on stage was in the costumes. Costumes were often bright in colour and visually entrancing. Costumes were expensive and so the actors usually wore contemporary clothing regardless of the time period of the play. Occasionally, a lead character would wear a conventionalized version of the more historically accurate garb, but secondary characters would nonetheless remain in contemporary clothing. Moreover, the Elizabethans did not have elaborate props for stage. Stage was primarily bare, and the backdrop of the play was left for the audience to imagine. Mostly a placard was hung on the stage door to suggest where the scene is set. A flag was unfurled to suggest that the play has started. After some music, an actor through the prologue would give the gist of the setting of the play to make the audience understand the backdrop in which the play is about to be performed. If the play lacked a prologue, then in the opening scene(s) the backdrop of the play is referred to make the audience know where the play is set. If the Royalists promoted literature and theatre, then there was a faction in England called Puritans who had a strong dislike for theatre, as theatre was seen as an immoral place. Though Queen Elizabeth herself was a great admirer and promoter of theatre, still women were not allowed to act in plays in the Elizabethan era. The women characters were mostly played by boys who used to cross-dress as females.

William Shakespeare is widely regarded as the greatest dramatist of all time and occupies a unique position in the world of literature. The prophecy of his

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contemporary, the poet and dramatist Ben Jonson, that Shakespeare “*was not of an age, but for all time,*” has come true and probably will always be true.

The parish register of Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, shows that he was baptized there on April 26, 1564; his birthday is conventionally celebrated on April 23. His father, John Shakespeare, was engaged in various kinds of trade and appears to have suffered some fluctuations in prosperity. His mother, Mary Arden, of Wilmcote, Warwickshire, came from an ancient family and was the heiress to some land. Thus, Shakespeare belonged to an affluent family, but not to a family who are close to art and literature.

Shakespeare studied in the Grammar School, Stratford where he acquired some knowledge of Latin and Greek. He did not have the benefit of university education. His father had suffered losses in business, in order to help his family, Shakespeare had to give up his studies. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway of Stratford, and they had two daughters — Susanna and Judith and one son, Hamnet. How Shakespeare spent the next eight years or so, until his name began to appear in London theatre records, is not known. There are many stories; some of them being — earning his living as a schoolmaster in the country; of going to London and gaining entry to the world of theatre by minding the horses of theatre goers, etc. But these stories have no strong proofs to assert their validity, and at the same time it is of no concern to us as we are more interested in knowing about his dramatic works and his presence in the Elizabethan theatrical world.

The first reference to Shakespeare in the literary world of London was made in 1592, when a fellow dramatist, Robert Greene, talked about him in a pamphlet. It is not clear how his career in the theatre began; but from about 1594 onward he was an important member of the company of players known as the Lord Chamberlain’s Men (called the King’s Men after the accession of James I in 1603). Shakespeare took to theatre full-time sharing in a cooperative enterprise and was intimately concerned with the financial success of the plays he wrote. For twenty years Shakespeare dedicated himself industriously to his art, writing thirty-seven plays, one hundred and fifty-four sonnets and two longer narrative poems — *Venus and Adonis* and *Rape of Lucrece*.

Dramatic Works of William Shakespeare

The Early Plays: The record of Shakespeare’s early theatrical success is obscure. His brilliant two-part play on the Wars of the Roses, *The Whole Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, is among his earliest achievements. *The Comedy of Errors* had hilariously comic situations. *Titus Andronicus* is a tragedy in the high Roman fashion. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was a new kind of romantic comedy. *The Taming of the Shrew* is famous for its wit. *Love’s Labour’s Lost* is a witty and satirical observation on the society. *Romeo and Juliet* combines a tragic situation with comedy and gaiety.

The Histories: For his English history plays, Shakespeare primarily drew upon Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, which appeared in 1587, and on Edward Hall’s

earlier account of *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548). From these and numerous secondary sources he inherited traditional themes: the divine right of royal succession, the need for unity and order in the realm, the evil of dissension and treason, the cruelty and hardship of war, the power of money to corrupt, the strength of family ties, the need for human understanding and careful calculation, and the power of God's providence, which protected his followers, punished evil, and led England toward the stability of Tudor rule. After the last group of English history plays, Shakespeare chose to write about Julius Caesar, who held particular fascination for the Elizabethans. After six- or seven-years Shakespeare returned to the Roman theme again in, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*.

The Great, or Middle Comedies: The comedies written between 1596 and 1602 have much in common. With the exception of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, all are set in some "imaginary" lands—Illyria, Messina, Venice and Belmont, Athens, or the Forest of Arden, the sun shines as. In these plays, the lovers are young and witty. The action involves wooing; and its conclusion is marriage. Whether Shakespeare's source was an Italian novel (*The Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado About Nothing*), an English pastoral tale (*As You Like It*), an Italian comedy (the Malvolio story in *Twelfth Night*), or something of his own invention (probably *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and parts of each), he portrayed remarkable mastery in theatre.

The Great Tragedies: Shakespeare's greatness is nowhere more visible than in his tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Kings Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*. The tragedies deal with divergent themes and have distinctiveness of their own.

The Dark Comedies: *Troilus and Cressida*, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* are known as dark comedies for their distempered vision of the world. They are questioning, satiric, intense, and very dark in respect to the comic essence.

The Late Plays: *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry VIII*, written between 1608 and 1612, are commonly known as Shakespeare's "late plays," or his "last plays." One of the common characteristics of these plays is that, although they portray tragic or pathetic emotions, events move toward a resolution of difficulties in which reconciliations and reunions are prominent.

Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616. He was buried in the same church where he was baptised. On his tombstone, the following lines are inscribed:

*"Good Friend for Jesus' sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here;
Blest be the man who spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones."*

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Ben Jonson was another leading dramatist of the age. His chief works include: *Every man in his Humour* (1596), *Volpone* (1605) *Epicoene* or *The Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), *Caroline* (1611), *The Kings's Men; Bartholomew Fair* (1614). He is more a classicist than romantic. Unlike Shakespeare, he deals with human life in section rather than as a whole: being content to satirize men and women. In his dramas, he is a moralist first and foremost; afterward the artist. In *Every man in his Humour*, he has first struck the anti-romantic note and sought to establish a satirical comedy of manners framed in a definite plan. In *Volpone*, he glories less in the hoarding of his treasure.

The other chief dramatists of this age are **George Chapman** works – *the Blind Begger of Alexanderia* (1596), *Two Comedies All Fools* (1599), *The Gentleman Usher; Two French Tragedies Buddy D' Ambais* (1613), *The Admiral of France, The Odyssey* (1616), *The Hymns* (1624). **John Webster** (1580 – 1625) was another significant dramatist of the age whose plays *The White Devil* (1612), *The Duchess of Malfi* (1614), *The Devil's Case* (1623), *Appius of Virginia* (1654) were very popular in his age. John Webster is thought to be a master of revenge tragedy.

Though drama was very popular in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Age, but at the same time, as we have discussed there were also oppositions to the theatrical practices on moral grounds from the Puritans as they carried on writings pamphlets for banning of theatre as they thought theatre not only a centre of transgressive activities, but also a meeting place for whores and their customers (Stephen Gosson) and also as a place where excessive violence is portrayed which had a negative effect on the audience, etc. Following such tirades against theatre, theatre was ultimately banned in England in 1642, only to come back again in 1660 with the restoration of Charles II to the British throne after which under French influence English plays took a different turn to create some famous Restoration Comedies.

Drama till 1642

Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson are the giants of English Renaissance drama. The major Jacobean plays are listed here. Under Charles I, Public theatres flourished and they kept on blooming until 1642 when Parliament banned theatres. Authors were sometimes anonymous because they could not express their thoughts in public due to which plays were sometimes printed and other times not. Few were prominent playwrights like Thomas Heywood (1570-1632) who claimed to have created two hundred plays and Philip Massinger (1583-1649) fifty-five. Thomas Dekker, Sir Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher and John Ford also wrote abundantly.

Comedy

The comedy of this age perpetuated and turned into the comedy of manners of the 18th century. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597) is Shakespeare's one 'citizen comedy', a genre whose archetype is Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599).

This is to express a jolly shoemaker as a mayor of London, with some emotions and without any satire. Sharp jokes have imbalanced serious expectations; Dekker's protagonist says to his wife that one of her maids '*hath a privy fault: she farteth in her sleep*'. Such humour is found in Dekker's work, stories by Thomas Deloney in *The Gentle Craft* (1597). This 'citizen' convention did not only fulfil the popular comedy of the 18th century, but also Dickens and modern situation comedy; it relies on stock characters and laughable situations. *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1611, revived in the rebuilt Globe in 1997), by Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), is more satiric, with Yellowhammer, a goldsmith, and Sir Walter Whorehound, a gentleman rake. Beaumont's highly theatrical Knight of the Burning Pestle makes fun of the simplicity of well-to-do grocers at the theatre, who send their trainee up onto the stage to be as gentle a knight as any they see there. Jonson hated the comedy of the town due to its artlessness and became uninfluenced with the Court masque. High and low comedy had reached the Globe, but the fame of drama consented theatre audiences to part away. Masque was composed of beautiful verse, music, gods and goddesses and an allegory which depicted hierarchy. These dramas were remunerated well; like one of the performances of Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (1634) cost £12,000. But the currency spent on design: sets, clothes, backgrounds. The designer was the first British neo-classical architect, Inigo Jones (1573-1652). He had created the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall, from which Charles proceeded to his death. Jonson's masques had apparent lyrics and were highly ethical, they were copied by Milton. But a masque was the godfather of modern opera and ballet, different kind of show which does not always require intelligent focus.

Tragedy

Jacobean tragedy continuously followed Kyd's style of *The Spanish Tragedy* of a generation earlier. The best plays of John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, John Marston and Thomas Middleton are sometimes read together with Shakespeare's tragedies. More often, the revenger, a person of unidentified talent, is taken to avenge a personal forgery which generally involves both murder and sexual honour. Evil offences are terribly punished subsequently virtue, its oppressors, and the revenger got see an end. Like films about the mafia, the revenge play has a particular kind of recipe to show the details of revenge tragedy.

Few important works by significant playwrights of the age are-

- Thomas Dekker's most famous play was *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599)
- Thomas Heywood's best-known play was *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603)
- John Marston's most popular play was *The Malcontent* (1604)
- George Chapman's best-known work *Bussy D'Ambois* (1607)
- Cyril Tourneur's most famous play was *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611)

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- John Webster's best-known play was *The White Devil* (1609), *The Duchess of Malfi* (1612-13)

John Fletcher (1579-1625) had collaborated with Shakespeare in, *Henry VIII* (1613) and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-14); had done multiple dramas with Beaumont, Thomas Middleton (1580-1627), *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), *The Changeling* (1622, with Rowley), *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *A Game at Chess* (1624), *Women beware Women* (1620-7) Philip Massinger (1583-1649), *The Fatal Dowry* (1618), *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) *Sir Francis Beaumont* (1584-1616), *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), *The Maid's Tragedy* (1610, with Fletcher) John Ford (1586-after 1639), *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* (1633). The story revolves around the incestuous love of Giovanni and his sister Annabella. She gets ready to marry her suitor Soranzo when she discovers herself to be pregnant. But the secret of lovers' is revealed thus lead to overcome the plan of revenge which was earlier plotted by Soranzo now exceeded by Giovanni's encounter of Annabella and then Soranzo. And the irony is Giovanni himself is executed by Soranzo's hired killers. If we compare Hamlet, which has surpassed the Revenge formula, is a great play.

The popular among revenge tragedies is Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, with a powerful heroine in its widowed Duchess. She marries secretly with her steward that later makes her brothers a Duke and a Cardinal angry. Both the brothers try to turn their sister insane. When their clever barbarity fails, she accepts execution peacefully. The Duke who was her twin brother, states after she has been murdered: 'Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.' The revenge plays are welcomingly frightening, but their staying period of forty years became so famous that it proposes an imagination with malevolence of humans which calls for explanation. The dilapidated notions of human temperament were replaced by four religious divisions in forty years. If comedy is considered to be meant for society to represent the wall to conventional social virtues from new mercantile values, then tragedy is entirely marked with metaphysical nature. Theology can only be a correct answer here: Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) pondered man to be good but he come out to be stupid, whereas Martin Luther (1483-1546) discovered man as bad but full of cleverness. The source of Jacobean tragedy could be pessimistic that was why few of us take it as serious as they are. There is brilliance and interest in human aim in *The Changeling* by Middleton, with a subplot by William Rowley. Beatrice-Joanna, a heiress, contacts De Flores, a villain to murder her unwanted fiancé Alonzo. The murderer then asks her as his reward. Annoyingly, he replies: '*Push! You forget yourself! / A woman dipp'd in blood and talk of modesty!*' She accepts the attractiveness of the repulsive De Flores, and knuckle under (give permission unwillingly) to him. The few scenes are expressed as comic which were part of subplot in 'Bedlam (the Bethlehem mad-house)'. Middleton is an intelligent and prodigious playwright; whose secular realism turn out to be very extraordinary.

Let Us Sum Up

In this unit, we went through the historical development of England during the Elizabethan era which led to the development of poetry and drama to a sublime level making it one of the most significant age of the history of English literature. It is to be understood that only the works of William Shakespeare was enough to ascertain a tag of greatness to the age, but the age saw stalwarts in every sphere of literary activities and excelled beyond one can think.

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Check Your Progress

1. What does the term 'Renaissance' apply to?
2. What did the humanistic revival sometimes result in?
3. What was the main aim of the challenge to theological studies?
4. Name some publications of Edmund Spenser.
5. When was the first reference to Shakespeare made in the literary world?
6. List any three important works by playwrights of the Elizabethan Age.

1.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The term "Renaissance" – meaning "rebirth" or "reawakening", applies to the socio-political and cultural development that happened all over Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
2. The humanistic revival sometimes resulted in pedantic scholarship, sterile imitations of ancient works and styles, and a rigid rhetoric and literary criticism.
3. The challenge to theological studies was not meant to doubt Christianity, but its primary aim was to study human being and their materialistic living conditions which were in many ways' subversive to the teachings of the Christian church.
4. Edmund Spenser's publications include: *The Shepherd's Calendar*, *Prothalamion*, *Epithalamion*, *The Fairie Queene*, etc.
5. The first reference to Shakespeare in the literary world of London was made in 1592, when a fellow dramatist, Robert Greene, talked about him in a pamphlet.
6. Some important works by Elizabethan playwrights are:
 - Thomas Dekker's most famous play was *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599)
 - Thomas Heywood's best-known play was *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1603)
 - John Marston's most popular play was *The Malcontent* (1604)

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1.6 SUMMARY

- The period of reign of Queen Elizabeth in British throne (1558—1603) which is usually termed as the Elizabethan age or the Elizabethan Era is often used synonymously for Renaissance or for ‘The Early Modern Period’ of English literature and culture.
- The focus of study shifted from god to man as ‘man’ became the centre of literary and cultural concern.
- The Reformation led by Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a successful heresy which struck at the very basis of the institutionalism of the Roman Catholic Church. This early Protestantism was grounded on the individual’s inner experience of spiritual struggle and salvation.
- The cosmos of many Elizabethan writers was not only Ptolemaic, and subject throughout to God’s Providence; it was also an animate universe, invested with occult powers, inhabited by demons and spirits, and often thought to control men’s lives by stellar influences and to be itself subject to control by the power of witchcraft and of magic.
- By the first half of the fifteenth century, the term ‘humanist’ referred to people who taught academic subjects like grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy.
- It is Renaissance which paved the path for secularism as the focus of study shifted from the God to Man. It is not that God was not important anymore; but unlike Medieval Age, God and theology were not the only subject-matters of learning.
- Apart from the pursuit of glory, the self-development of an individual personality through cultivation of ‘arts and sciences’ emerged as another social ideal allowing a great flowering of creative activity.
- Desiderius Erasmus, one of the most famous of these north European humanists, in a series of treatises, tried to lay down the rules for an educational system that despite its Christian foundation came to be animated by the critical spirit of Humanism.
- Edmund Spenser was born about 1552 and died in 1599 on January 16 in Kings Street; Westminster. His publications include: *The Shepherd’s Calendar*, *Prothalamion*, *Epithalamion*, *The Fairie Queene*, etc.
- **Robert Greene** – achieved distinction in the vigorous characterization and could handle better a love story was born about 1560. His plays comprise *Orlando Furioso*, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bunguy*, *Alphonus Kings of Aragan*, etc.

- It is not clear how Shakespeare's career in the theatre began; but from about 1594 onward he was an important member of the company of players known as the Lord Chamberlain's Men (called the King's Men after the accession of James I in 1603).
- The record of Shakespeare's early theatrical success is obscure. His brilliant two-part play on the Wars of the Roses, *The Whole Contention betwixt the two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, is among his earliest achievements. *The Comedy of Errors* had hilariously comic situations.
- *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry VIII*, written between 1608 and 1612, are commonly known as Shakespeare's "late plays," or his "last plays."
- Under Charles I, Public theatres flourished and they kept on blooming until 1642 when Parliament banned theatres. Authors were sometimes anonymous because they could not express their thoughts in public due to which plays were sometimes got printed and other times not.
- Jacobean tragedy continuously followed Kyd's style of *The Spanish Tragedy* of a generation earlier. The best plays of John Webster, Cyril Tourneur, John Marston and Thomas Middleton are sometimes read together with Shakespeare's tragedies.
- The popular among revenge tragedies is Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, with a powerful heroine in its widowed Duchess.

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1.7 KEY WORDS

- **Mercantilism:** It is the economic theory that trade generates wealth and is stimulated by the accumulation of profitable balances, which a government should encourage by means of protectionism.
- **Theology:** It is the systematic study of the nature of the divine and, more broadly, of religious belief.
- **Occult:** It is a category of supernatural beliefs and practices which generally fall outside the scope of religion and science, encompassing such phenomena involving otherworldly agency as mysticism, spirituality, and magic.
- **Metaphysical Poetry:** It is a highly intellectualized poetry marked by bold and ingenious conceits, incongruous imagery, complexity and subtlety of thought, frequent use of paradox, and often by deliberate harshness or rigidity of expression.
- **Humanism:** It is a philosophical stance that emphasizes the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively.

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1.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Name some prominent writers of the Elizabethan Age.
2. What knowledge of the classics did the Renaissance scholars revive?
3. Write a short note on Christopher Marlowe's work.
4. Write a brief note on the development of poetry during the Renaissance.
5. Which medieval theatrical traditions did Elizabethan theatre derive from?
6. Write short notes on –
 - (a) Elizabethan Sonneteers
 - (b) Elizabethan Stage
7. What do the comedies written by Shakespeare between 1596 and 1602 have in common?
8. Why were theatrical practices opposed by the Puritans?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Elaborate upon 'The New Learning' of the Renaissance period.
2. Discuss the characteristics of poetry of the Shakespearean Age.
3. Examine the dramatists of the Shakespearean Age and their works.
4. Discuss the histories written by Shakespeare.
5. Elaborate upon the plot of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*.

1.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE: PROSE

*The Age of
Shakespeare: Prose*

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Prose Writers of the Shakespearean Age
- 2.3 Prose Writers of the Jacobean Age
- 2.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Readings

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Two significant prose writers emerged on the scene during the Shakespearean Age who later went on to provide inspiration to Shakespeare for his plays. Two of the most important prose writers of the age were John Lyly and Thomas Nashe. John Lyly developed a new manner of writing that came to be known as euphuism.

The prose of the Jacobean Age is characterized by an emphasis on God and religion in addition to an intense contemplation on a variety of subjects. Some of the notable writers of this age are Sir Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton, Robert Burton among many others. The writers of these two ages have been discussed in this unit.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyze the major writers of the Renaissance and their works
- Discuss the prose writers of the Jacobean Age

2.2 PROSE WRITERS OF THE SHAKESPEAREAN AGE

We have come across the basic ideas of the Renaissance in the last unit which probably has given you the notion of how the age progressed in terms of poetry and drama. Because of William Shakespeare, the University Wits and Ben Jonson as well as the Poets like Sidney and Spenser, the age is more known for poems and drama, but prose works of the age are also of equal significance as prose

developed as a genre more significantly in the age as it happened in case of poems and plays.

Francis Bacon

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Francis Bacon was born on January 22, 1561 in London, England. Bacon served as Lord Chancellor and attorney general of England. He had to resign amid the alleged charges of corruption. His significant work was philosophical. Bacon practiced Aristotelian ideas, commenting for an empirical, inductive approach, called as the scientific method that is the foundation of modern scientific inquiry. His father was Lord Keeper of the Seal whose name was Sir Nicholas Bacon. His mother's name was Lady Anne Cooke Bacon who was his father's second wife and daughter to Sir Anthony Cooke. He was a humanist who was tutor of Edward VI. When he was counsel and statesman in his career, Bacon frequently wrote for the court. In 1584, he composed his first political memorandum, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*. In 1592, to make the anniversary of the queen's coronation memorable, he noted down an entertaining speech in eulogy of knowledge. The year 1597 defined Bacon's first publication, a collection of essays dedicated to politics. The collection was further stretched and republished in 1612 and 1625. In 1605, Bacon published *The Advancement of Learning* in an unsuccessful attempt to recover followers for the sciences. In 1609, he returned from political and scientific genres when he composed *On the Wisdom of the Ancients*, his analysis of ancient mythology.

Bacon then went back to writing about science, and in 1620, released *Novum Organum*, presented as Part Two of *The Great Saturation*. In 1622, he composed a historical work for Prince Charles, its title was *The History of Henry VII*. Bacon also wrote *Historia Ventorum* and *Historia Vitae et Mortis* in the same year. In 1623, he released *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, a continuation of his view on scientific reform. In 1624, his works *The New Atlantis* and *Apothegms* were written. *Sylva Sylvarum*, which was written in 1627, was the last of his written works. Although Bacon's body of work filled with a fairly wide range of subjects, all of his writing has one thing in common: It displayed Bacon's longing to influx antiquated systems.

Bacon's great claim to prominence is not that he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of 12, not that he was Lord Chancellor of England under James I, nor even that he has been reputed the real writer of Shakespeare's plays, but that he was a philosopher of the first rank and the effective founder of the modern, experimental, scientific, approach to understanding.

Earlier to Bacon, 'learning' largely meant remembering the classics, especially Aristotle, and agreeing to every dictate of established religion. In *The Advancement of Learning*, he contrasted that the only knowledge of significance was that which could be found by observation- 'empirical' knowledge is placed in the natural world. He achieved the idea of state funding for experimental science

and the creation of an encyclopaedia. In *Novum Organum* (1620), he restated the task of natural science, as a way of improvising human power over nature, and in *The New Atlantis* (1626), explaining a utopian state exploiting scientific knowledge. The expression “Knowledge is power” is dedicated to him.

Thomas More

Thomas More is popular for his 1516 book *Utopia* and for his untimely demise in 1535, after denying acknowledging King Henry VIII as head of the Church of England. He was canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935. Thomas More composed *Utopia* in 1516, which was the forerunner of the utopian literary genre. More did a duty as an important counselor to King Henry VIII of England, serving as his key counselor in the early 1500s, but after he refused to follow the king as head of the Church of England, he was tried for treason and executed (he died in London, England, in 1535). More is famous for coining the word “**Utopia**,” in reference to an ideal political system in which policies are governed by logic. He was canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935 and has been remembered by the Church of England as a “**Reformation martyr**.”

Many historical records suggest that Thomas More was born in London, England, on February 7, 1478, although some scholars believe the year of his birth to be 1477. He attended St. Anthony’s School in London, one of the best schools of his day, and as a youth served as a page in the household of John Morton, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of England (and future cardinal). Morton is said to have thought that More would become a “marvellous man”. More went on to study at Oxford University, where he seems to have spent two years mastering Latin and formal logic, writing comedies, and studying Greek and Latin literature.

More became close friends with Erasmus during the latter’s first trip to England. It was the starting of a lifelong comradeship and professional bonding, and the pair worked on Latin translations of Lucian’s works during Erasmus’ second visit. On Erasmus’ third visit, in 1509, he stayed in More’s home and wrote *Praise of Folly*, dedicating it to More. More is assumed to have written *History of King Richard III* (in Latin and in English) between 1513 and 1518. The work is considered the first masterpiece of English historiography (the study of history, or the study of a particular historical subject), and, despite remaining income plate, influenced further historians, including William Shakespeare. In 1516, More published *Utopia*, a work of fiction mainly expressing a pagan and communist island on which social and political customs are purely governed by logic. The depiction of the island of Utopia originates from a mysterious wanderer to favour his position that communism is the mere cure for the egoism found in both private and public life—a direct jab at Christian Europe, which was seen by More as divided by self-interest and greed.

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Utopia covered such far-reaching topics as theories of punishment, state-controlled education, multi-religion societies, divorce, euthanasia and women's rights, and the resulting display of learning and skill established. More was a foremost humanist. *Utopia* also became the forerunner of a new literary genre: the utopian romance.

In 1520, reformer Martin Luther released three works which depict his principles of salvation, which, according to Luther, could be achieved through elegance alone; the series absconded certain Catholic practices and attacked others. In 1521, King Henry VIII replied to Luther with the help of More, in his *Defence of the Seven Sacraments*. By this time, More had become treasurer of England's exchequer, but he also served as "Henry's intellectual courtier," secretary and confidant, and, in 1523, he was elected speaker of the House of Commons.

Thomas Nashe (1567–1601)

Nashe's exercise in euphuism is shown in *The Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589). *The Anatomy of Absurdity* is a quite safe and controlled work for Nashe. Its style is more euphuistic than any other of his works. Euphuism was the prose style made famous by John Lyly in the decade just prior to when Nashe brought *The Anatomy of Absurdity* to London. Its major features involve an obsessive pursuit of antithesis, and parallelism. In defense of art, Nashe renders the first of his many anatomies of Puritanism. The Puritans, he tells, are snobbish, ignorant, and subversive. They are against learning and scare commonwealths with their insubordination. Critics willingly say that *An Almond for a Parrot* welcomes trademarks of Nashe's mature invective style. In *An Almond for a Parrot*, as in *The Anatomy of Absurdity*, Nashe merges joy and sobriety. The mirth is clear from the opening address to the clown Will Kempe, in which the target is not so much Martin as the typical epistle to a noble or courtly patron.

But his career was made with the publication of *Pierce Penniless His Supplication to the Devil* (1592). *Pierce* was not just Nashe's most reputed work; it came to be his thinking, much more so than the hero of his proto-novel, *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594), completed in June of 1593. Years later, Nashe would agree that much of his writing was useless except *Pierce Penniless* which had been successfully published. The only extant example of this manuscript industry is Nashe's erotic poem in the vein of Ovid's *Amores*, "The Choice of Valentines," attributed to the "Lord S"—either the earl of Southhampton or Ferdinando Stanley. The couplets of this poem chronicle the speaker's visit to a prostitute's stoppage, where his failure to maintain an erection leads his mistress to find an artificial substitute. It was, however, Gabriel Harvey—the Cambridge scholar and doctor of law from Saffron Walden—rather than any mistress who gave Nashe his best opportunity to demonstrate machismo in print."

The year 1593 was a landmark for Nashe, for he composed two other major works: *The Terrors of the Night* and *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. Both

have typical histories. The initial one was started in February, when Nashe was meeting Robert Cotton. But it was not published at that time, might be because it was rumoured with a controversial witch trial. Nashe extended some material to the pamphlet in 1594, and in October it was registered again and soon published.”

The Unfortunate Traveller is remembered as Nashe’s chief work. He dedicated the work to the Earl of Southampton. His narrator, Jack Wilton, is self-conscious about the story-about whether readers will appreciate it, about how the relationship between narrator and the characters goes on. “The Choice of Valentines,” an erotic poem of tentative date, and an epithet sent to William Cotton in 1596 were preserved in some manuscript. The letter declares that Nashe still is overcoming by the official censure of *Christ’s Tears*, struggled in his attempts to create something for the theater and the press, caught between London audiences and country friends, and mirthfully obscene. For much of the 1590s, Nashe appears to have been poor. In *Have with You* he even humiliates Harvey’s charge that lack of money has landed him in the Fleet.”

Nashe’s final satire on Gabriel Harvey, *Have with You to Saffron Walden*, is a satiric biography, filled with a fictive epithet from Harvey’s tutor, which deals with Harvey’s birth, and a portrait. Written in banishment from the *Isle of Dogs* scandal, *Lenten Stuff* insists that seriousness is the best course to take for some proser. The satire-dedication to a barber, the eulogy of red herring, and the funny retelling of Hero and Leander mark a fiction which is playful. The word *lenten* in the title refers to the season when Nashe began to write the text. In 1598, during Lent, he was working upon his last chief pamphlet, *Lenten Stuff*, an explanation of Yarmouth with a satire for its chief resource, the red herring.”

2.3 PROSE WRITERS OF THE JACOBEOAN AGE

As there were poets who ignored the strife of the day and took refuge in thoughts of God and religion, so there were prose writers who delighted in pensive contemplation and took a quiet interest in quaint and unusual subjects. Some writers derive their main charm from the detached atmosphere of their works and the obsolescent ring of their style.

Sir Thomas Browne

Sir Thomas Browne was a Doctor of Medicine and a man of Letters. In 1635, he had already written *Religion Medici*, a confession of faith which circulated in manuscript among his friends. In 1643, he published the first authorized edition of the book. It is an interesting work for its display of scholarship and for its rich and dignified style. He also wrote *Pseudopodia Epidemica*, a treatise on vulgar errors and misconceptions and *Hydropathical (Urn Burial)* which was occasioned by the discovery of urns buried in Norfolk.

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Izaak Walton

A friend of John Donne is still famous for his *Complete Angler*, a treatise on angling which captivates the reader for the kingliness of its author's personality. While teaching his readers the secrets of angling, he comments on a peaceful and quaint way upon weather and scenery and on many other subjects of general speculation. In spite of the disturbances and wars of the time, the book first published in 1653 passed through five editions in the author's lifetime because of its strong appeal to the meditative of mind of the age. Walton is also frequently noted for his biographies of John Donne and George Herbert.

Robert Burton

Robert Burton wrote a single lengthy treatise on the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, anatomy in this case meaning simply a 'study' or 'analysis'. It is an eccentric book which starts with a tentative inquiry into the causes and remedies of melancholy. Burton's was the first attempt to analyse a mood which was becoming more and more common and fashionable and was to bear up the future development of literature.

The Preachers

This was also the age of the great preachers. Two at least among deserve to be mentioned here.

Jeremy Taylor

He was chaplain to Archbishop Laud and Charles I, was taken prisoner by the Puritan forces and was made a bishop after the Restoration. He had a place in the history of English literature for the noble simplicity and splendid diction of his prose. Most remarkable among his works are, *The Liberty of Prophesying*, a plea in favour of religious tolerance, *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying*.

Richard Baxter

Richard Baxter was a military chaplain, theologian and member of clergy attached to the Chapel during the civil war. He has left nearly 170 volumes mainly on events of his days. His best works are *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* and *Reliquiae Baxterianae* a lengthy autobiography.

Let Us Sum Up

In this unit, the focus was to know about the prose writers of the age of Shakespeare. Though Shakespeare did not engage in writing prose works, but the age also excelled in prose and the evidence of it can be seen from the works of Francis Bacon and others.

Check Your Progress

1. Which ideas did Bacon practice?
2. When did Bacon compose his first political memorandum?
3. What is Thomas More famous for?
4. What does the depiction of the island of Utopia originate from?
5. What are the major features of euphuism?

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2.4 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’ QUESTIONS

1. Bacon practiced Aristotelian ideas, commenting for an empirical, inductive approach, called as the scientific method that is the foundation of modern scientific inquiry.
2. In 1584, Bacon composed his first political memorandum, *A Letter of Advice to Queen Elizabeth*.
3. More is famous for coining the word “Utopia,” in reference to an ideal political system in which policies are governed by logic.
4. The depiction of the island of Utopia originates from a mysterious wanderer to favour his position that communism is the mere cure for the egoism found in both private and public life—a direct jab at Christian Europe, which was seen by More as divided by self-interest and greed.
5. The major features of euphuism involve an obsessive pursuit of antithesis, and parallelism.

2.5 SUMMARY

- Bacon practiced Aristotelian ideas, commenting for an empirical, inductive approach, called as the scientific method that is the foundation of modern scientific inquiry.
- The year 1597 defined Bacon’s first publication, a collection of essays dedicated to politics. The collection was further stretched and republished in 1612 and 1625.
- Earlier to Bacon, ‘learning’ largely meant remembering the classics, especially Aristotle, and agreeing to every dictate of established religion. In *The Advancement of Learning*, he contrasted that the only knowledge of significance was that which could be found by observation- ‘empirical’ knowledge is placed in the natural world.

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- More is famous for coining the word “Utopia,” in reference to an ideal political system in which policies are governed by logic. He was canonized by the Catholic Church as a saint in 1935 and has been remembered by the Church of England as a “Reformation martyr.”
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- More was a foremost humanist. *Utopia* also became the forerunner of a new literary genre: the utopian romance.
- In 1520, reformer Martin Luther released three works which depict his principles of salvation, which, according to Luther, could be achieved through elegance alone; the series absconded certain Catholic practices and attacked others.
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- The year 1593 was a landmark for Nashe, for he composed two other major works: *The Terrors of the Night* and *Christ's Tears over Jerusalem*. Both have typical histories.
- Nashe's final satire on Gabriel Harvey, *Have with You to Saffron Walden*, is a satiric biography, filled with a fictive epithet from Harvey's tutor, which deals with Harvey's birth, and a portrait.
- Sir Thomas Browne was a Doctor of Medicine and a man of Letters. In 1635, he had already written *Religion Medici*, a confession of faith which circulated in manuscript among his friends.
- Robert Burton wrote a single lengthy treatise on the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, anatomy in this case meaning simply a ‘study’ or ‘analysis’. It is an eccentric book which starts with a tentative inquiry into the causes and remedies of melancholy.
- Most remarkable among Jeremy Taylor's works are, *The Liberty of Prophesying*, a plea in favour of religious tolerance, *The Rules and Exercises of Holy Living and Holy Dying*.

2.6 KEY WORDS

- **Utopia:** It is an imagined community or society that possesses highly desirable or nearly perfect qualities for its citizens.

- **Euphuism:** It is a peculiar mannered style of English prose. It consists of a preciously ornate and sophisticated style, employing a deliberate excess of literary devices such as antitheses, alliterations, repetitions and rhetorical questions. Classical learning and remote knowledge of all kinds are displayed.
- **Proto-novel:** It is a fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters.
- **Epithet:** It is a word or phrase, accompanying or occurring in place of a name and having entered common usage

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2.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a brief note on the development of prose writers of the Elizabethan Age.
2. Name the works composed by Bacon in 1622.
3. What did Bacon say about knowledge in *Advancement of Learning*?
4. Which far-reaching topics did Utopia cover?
5. Write a short note on the works of Thomas Browne.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyze the major themes of Thomas More's works.
2. Discuss any three prose writers of the Jacobean Age.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 THE AGE OF MILTON

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 John Milton
- 3.3 The Metaphysical Poets
- 3.4 The Cavalier Poets
- 3.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.9 Further Readings

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

Often John Milton is thought to be an epitome of Renaissance poetry, though he wrote at a time when the Elizabethan Age had come to an end. Though the canonizers of literature try to divide literary ages in water-tight compartments, but it is not always possible. In this unit, we will be engaging ourselves with the development of the poetic sensibility in the post-Renaissance times. We will be engaging ourselves primarily with works of John Milton and also with the Metaphysical and Cavalier poets.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyze John Milton as a poet
- Discuss the important Metaphysical Poets and their works
- Examine some remarkable Cavalier Poets

3.2 JOHN MILTON

Milton's prose might be read less if he had not created *Paradise Lost*. The first morals of politics and religion became a subject of debate in Parliament, at open-air meetings, and in tracts. None was fascinated to principles more than Milton, although he said abusive words to opponents. He became conspicuous when he argued that Scripture allowed the putting away of a wife found to be incompatible. Then, there was an attack on episcopacy, *The Reason of Church Government* (1642), in which he had a confession which says an '*inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study (which I take to be*

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my portion in this life), joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die.' He decided 'to become an interpreter and connector of the best and safest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect.' Satan's address to the Sun was a poem, written in 1642, and then came *Paradise Lost* in 1667. The short epic *Paradise Regained* and the tragedy *Samson Agonistes* published in 1671.

The only prose which had fled away from the heat of criticism is *Areopagitica*, called after the Areopagus. It is the abode of Ares where the Athenian parliament met. This was written as a speech for the freedom of unlicensed printing to the Parliament of England and is laid down in the form of a classical oration, starting with a quotation of Euripides: 'This is true liberty, when free-born men,/Having to advise the public, may speak free ...'. *Areopagitica*, however, it does not support free speech but a free press. He finishes with a view of England as *Samson*: 'Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks.' *Areopagitica* used to gaze under the frame of a classic liberalism, predicting religious toleration and people's toleration. Its advocacy ascends its event. But Milton would not consent Catholics to publish, and he never opposed the censorship after publication: 'if[books] e found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectual remedy.' Malicious books would be burnt in fire, and their printers and authors would be punished as cropped ears or slit noses. Parliament was motionless; For Cromwell, Milton acted as a censor. *Of Education* was still read by public among his other prose sections. *A Latin On Christian Doctrine*, his work which was found in 1823 in Office of Censor, translated this work and became ready to read in 1825, which indicated his unorthodoxy that was gloomily seen in *Paradise Lost* in a crystal-clear mode. After twenty-five years poet got to fulfil his plan of 1642. There was a drama known as *Adam Unparadis'd*, written by him and later he edited it to make *Paradise Lost*, and also edited *Samson*, but he resumed entirely to poetry, merely after Cromwell's demise in 1658. His reasons turned out to be fail, the millennial *Rule of the Saints* predicted in Revelations had not emerged to the world, the English had come back to their regal and Bishopric vomit. He had lost his vision in the year 1652, his wife and only son died in 1653, a daughter who passed away in 1657, and his most loved second wife died in 1658. When he reached 50, he had guided the public, in useless manner because people could not change their mind. There prevailed his poetic expertise. During the *Civil War*, suddenly Milton changed his professions from writing poetry to reforming prose and made his eloquent powers stronger. In his poetry of later years, he acted less with the 'false surmise' of the classical poems which had polished his youth and produced his style. He mythologized his work in the later years. After the Restoration and allegations which was charged off, he represented himself as 'In darkness and in dangers compassed round,/And solitude; yet not alone', for he was

visited by the Heavenly Muse. These lines are taken from the *Invocation to Paradise Lost, Book VII*. There was resonance in Invocations to Books I, III and IX producing a myth of the agonised bard as a blind saint, or as a nightingale, who ‘*in shadiest covert hid, /Tunes her nocturnal note*’.

He represented himself with the trustworthy angel *Abdiel*: ‘*Among the faithless, faithful only he; / Among innumerable false, unmoved, /Unshaken, unreduced, unterrified*’ (Paradise Lost covers the Renaissance notion that poetry should form a lucrative pattern of heroic quality. Believing as a humanist ideal in logic and in the literal role of the word, Milton resumed his argument back into poetry, earlier it was from poetry to prose. In the European discourse of the Renaissance, these were the last words to represent Renaissance features. If we talk about the Fall, he tried a more complex work: ‘*to justify the ways of God to men*’. He has retold the story of ‘Man’s first disobedience’ so as to depict the justice of Providence. The consequence is, in its scope, art and power, the greatest of English poems. Dr Johnson was no admirer of religion, politics or personality of Milton, finished his Life thus: ‘*His great works were performed under discountenance, and in blindness, but difficulties vanished at his touch; he was born for whatever is arduous; and his work is not the greatest of heroick poems, only because it is not the first.*’ Paradise Lost is a package of splendour and energy, and of artistic design. It covers something which was most of worth knowing about the universe and history. Milton as a blind bard managed minute details of six books apart.

Paradise Lost starts with the fall of the angels, Satan’s scheme was to kidnap God’s newly produced species, and a Heavenly prophesy of the upcoming life. In Book IV we encounter with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Raphael informs Adam about Satan’s revenge, the battle in Heaven, the fall of the angels, the formation of the universe, and of Man and of his urged mate, and detains him of the terror. In Book IX, Satan conceives Eve, and Adam decides to meet death with her; the Son conveys God’s degradation and promises redemption. In Book X, Satan pretends his victory, but he and his devil angels are converted into serpents. In book XI and XII, Raphael depicts the sorrows of mankind until the Redemption, after that Adam will have ‘*a paradise within thee, happier far*’. The ‘heroic poem’ epitomizes the correct conduct. There are various heroisms: Adam and Eve, like the Son, displays ‘*the better fortitude / Of patience and heroic martyrdom*’ - not the individual bravery of Achilles or the soldier like duty of Aeneas, nor yet the heroism of the Italian romantic epics. The glorious appearance of Satan and first speeches changes into jealousy and rebellion.

So, by holding hand in hand they tread ahead, the loveliest pair, that was ever seen in history by meeting in such a beautiful way. Adam, the most kindhearted of men since born - His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve. In Book IV, Eve states that Paradise in absence of Adam would be bitter. In Book IX the Fall details the account in Genesis. Eve, has chosen to stay alone in garden, is cheated

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by the serpent's mischievous arguments. She requests Adam to eat. 'Not deceived', instead Adam joins her out of love:

How can I live without thee, how forgo Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined, To live again in these wild woods forlorn?

Eve makes Adam to commit sin but also to lament; blaming herself for the Fall, she suggest to finish her life. Milton categorised the sexes not only conventionally ('He for God only, she for God in him') but also allegorically - Adam shows intellect, Eve shows sense. He appreciates cosmology, she chooses gardening. Although the sexes are unequal, the appearance of sexual love and of marriage is full of positive and newness. It is the first good marriage in English literature. When Adam and Eve are ordered to expel from the Garden of Eden:

Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon. The world was all before them, where to choose Their place of rest, and Providence their guide: Thus hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, Through Eden took their solitary way.

Milton's conclusions express his expertise of poetry, syntax and sense. The individual humans, who has lost God and angel guests, are 'forlorn' yet hand in hand; roaming yet advised; require rest yet unbound to choose. The balance depicts in this line, as Milton said poetry should be, '**simple, sensuous and passionate**'. Milton's Christian humanism relies on human reason, and for him 'Reason also is choice'. Correct reason without any restrictions chooses to identify the truths of God. Eve freely resolute not to heed Adam's reasoned warning; Adam self-consciously chooses to end his life with her; the Son freely chooses to die for Man. Milton states that '*just are the ways of God, / And justifiable to men*', yet *made God justify himself and blame mankind*. 'Whose fault?' asks the Father, 'Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me / All he could have; I made him just and right, / Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall' The point is apt, but so are the crossing patterns. In this Alexander Pope says, 'God the Father', 'turns a school divine' (an academic theologian). To epitomise God, the Father is securing his own defence was a fault. Donne describes Mysteries, are like the sun, 'dazzling, but plain to all eyes'. Milton describes this dazzling. The intricate scene of the Son's promotion to 'Vice-Gerent', which incites Satan's revolt, is a big mistake. To show '*what the eye hath not seen and the ear hath not heard*' is probably not possible: in Milton the life of paradise is very much like that of Homer's Olympus: '*Tables are set, and on a sudden piled / With angels' food, and rubied nectar flows ... They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet / Quaff immortality*.' Dante presents it much better. The follies are well neigh of Milton's capability of motive. Paradise Lost does in dense manner what the Mystery cycles had performed in their dramas. Its Bible story is didactic, as the Renaissance desired, and filled with picturesqueness, just in the

design of Italian ceiling painters. The splendour and magnificence of *Paradise Lost* hit even those readers who are unaware of the Bible and its stories.

The Age of Milton

Paradise Regain'd is not about the Redemption but about the strong desire in the desert. The Son's refusal of Satan's scheme of (pagan) knowing about Athens remains out in a dry landscape. *Samson Agonistes* is a tragic play to be read, not to act and such plays are called Closet drama. ('*A dialogue without action can never please like a union of the narrative and dramattick powers*' - Johnson.) Its design is Greek, with chief character and chorus; its theme the destiny of Israel's champion, 'eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves'. Samson says: 'Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed/As of a person separate to God/Designed for great exploits; if I must die/Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out?'

O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon, Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse Without all hope of day!

O first-created beam, and thou great word, Let there be light, and light was over all; Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree? The sun to me is dark And silent as the moon, When she deserts the night Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Milton's self-revenge made tragedy and scripture convert into autobiography. For example, Dalilah does fraud with Samson to the Philistines reminiscing the first wife, Mrs Milton (there is resemblance in Delilah and Milton's first wife). Subsequently the oppressed protagonist pulls down the temple, killing all his enemies at once: 'the world o'erwhelming to revenge his sight' (Marvell). The ending chorus, both Greek and Christian, starts: '*All is best, though we oft doubt/ What the unsearchable dispose/Of highest wisdom brings about*'.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the only prose of Milton that fled away from the heat of criticism.
2. What professional change did Milton make during the Civil War?
3. What does Raphael inform Adam about in *Paradise Lost*?

3.3 THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

Some of the metaphysical poets are as follows:

- **John Donne:** Donne's development as a poet is representative of the gradual change in taste and Ideals that took place in England during his lifetime. In Donne's poems, the change in tone and subject is allied with a definite change in style and prosody. The marvellous music of the early Elizabethans gave place to a certain roughness of form designed to fit sterner subject, passions becomes interwoven with reasoning and love evokes

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images of death. He was born in London of a family with strong Roman Catholic tradition, studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and had the gay and lively youth characteristic of the Elizabethan courtier. He went with the Earl of Cadiz in 1596 and distinguished himself as a soldier. In 1633, his poems came in public after his demise with various kinds of writings of elegies, satires, songs and sonnets through which he began his literary career. These poems represented a reaction both in form and subject against the poetry of his contemporaries, in them; Donne broke away from the conventional themes of pastoral poetry and sang of love in a cynical and sensuous mood. He hated cadences which were regular and harmonious and also the classical smoothness and formal perfection. Instead of the usual metaphors and similes or comparisons, he introduced fantastic metaphors and extravagant exaggeration called '**conceits**' for example, **love is compared to a spider which dropping into the wine of life, tams it to poison; and to devouring fish ; or to a cannon ball that kills whole ranks etc.**

In spite of such insanity, Donne's most prominent poems are remembered for their astonishing amalgamation of passion and idea for psychological view, and for profundity of analysis. In 1615, Donne became a Protestant and entered the Church of England where he rose rapidly to be Dean of St. Paul's. In his later life, he wrote poetry on themes of repentance, death and Judgement distinguished by profundity of erudition and ingenuity. His religious poems often reach astounding heights of intensity and his **sermons** are among the best written in the 17th Century and wonderfully reflect the spirit of the age. Donne himself and a number of poets of the 17th Century, who wrote according to the new standards set by him, are generally known as '**metaphysical Poets**' a term invented by Dryden and adopted by Johnson. The fashion inaugurated by Donne appeared also in the literature of Spain and Italy and its imaginative experienced by John Donne affected other poets after him. These were mainly metaphysical poets such as Henry Vaughan, George Herbert and Richard Crashaw.

- **George Herbert:** He was educated at Cambridge and took holy orders late in his life. He was a friend of Donne's and wrote under the influence of his style and mood. He is chiefly famous for his hymns and sermons. Almost the whole of Herbert's poetical production is included in *The Temple*, a collection of poems published after his death in 1634.
- **Richard Crashaw:** Was the son of an antipapal preacher but experienced a religious crisis after reading the life of St. Theresa and become a Catholic. After the puritan revolution, he was obliged to fly from his own country and go to Paris. Here the poet Abraham Crowley introduced him to Queen Henrietta Maria, wife of Charles I, who had taken refuge at the court of

France. Through her influence, he obtained a benefice in Loreto in Italy where he died. His main poetical work is *Steps to the Temple*, a collection of religious poems which acknowledges the influence of Herbert in their title. While Herbert, as a Protestant, is mainly inspired by moral earnestness and quite piety, Crashaw's main source of inspiration is religious fervour and glowing passion.

- **Henry Vaughan:** Was born in North Wales fought for the King's cause, and when lost went to spend the rest of his life in his native country as a country physician. Under the influence of Herbert, he wrote a collection of religious poems called **Salix Scintillas**'. Though much of his poetry makes hard reading there are things of high value among his poems and he is noticeable above all for his keen love of nature.

Check Your Progress

4. What did the marvellous music of the early Elizabethans give place to?
5. Which cadences did Donne hate?
6. On which themes did Donne write poetry in his later life?
7. What is Richard Crashaw's main poetical work?

3.4 THE CAVALIER POETS

While the religious poets were concerned mainly with thoughts of God and religion, the cavalier poets wrote in a lighter vein. But even in their most frivolous and licentious poems, we can feel that the poetic impulse and the vigorous joy of living of the Elizabethans had been largely replaced by the meditative and philosophic taste of the age.

- **Robert Herrick:** He was an admirer of Ben Jonson and, as a young man, joined the group of poets who went on to be called the 'tribe of Ben'. He is notable for his lyrical facility and for his Epicurean and Pagan nature, upon which however the religious terror of the time cast dark shadow. Herrick has left us a collection of secular verse, in which he sings of brooks, birds and bowers' and of the life of simple village people, modeled on the poems of Horace. In another collection which he called *Noble Numbers*, he dealt with religious subjects.
- **Thomas Carew:** He was a follower of Ben Jonson, but also felt the influence of Donne. His best pieces are: a **court masque** entitled **Coeburn Britannicum**, which has a historical interest for having been produced in 1634 with gorgeous magnificence a counter- demonstration to a recent Puritan attack on the theatre, and **A Rapture**, an amatory poem.

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- **Sir John Suckling:** He is chiefly remembered for a few delineate small poetry songs though he also wrote some plays. He was a courtier and a soldier and fought for the king.
- **Richard Lovelace:** Like Suckling, he practiced poetry as a part of the courtier's education. He was imprisoned in the Commonwealth and wrote poems to beguile the tedium of his captivity. His songs were quite famous among which *To Lucasta, Going to the Warres* is full of the spirit of Chivalry and is faithful to the ideals of love and knighthood in the tradition of Sir Philip Sidney.
- **Edmund Waller:** He took an active part in the struggle between king and Parliament and after having been a member of the opposition, he became a Royalist and organized a plot (Waller's ploy) to seize London for Charles I (1643). He was imprisoned and then punished but could return to England in 1651. With his verse of a polished simplicity, he represented a race against the metaphysical school. Among his earlier poems, the best known are *On a Giselle* and *Go lovely hose*.
- **John Denham:** In his main poem, *Cooper's Hill*, he combined personal reflection with descriptions of the English rural scenery.
- **Andrew Marvell:** Andrew Marvell can be classed neither with the mystics because he did not actually deal with the religious subjects nor with the Cavaliers because he served in the **Republican Party**. He was Milton's **assistant in the Latin Secretary ship** to the council and tutor to Cromwell's ward, William Dutton. The bulk of his poems was published only in 1681 and his satires only in 1689 while staying at Nunn Appleton in Yorkshire as a tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax, he wrote poems in Praise of Gardens and rural life of which the best known are *The hill and grove at Billborow*, *Appleton House* and *The Garden*. His political production includes the *Horatian Ode* upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland (1650) and the *Elegy* upon the Death of the protector. He also wrote lines in praise of Paradise Lost and vigorously defended Milton. His satires were written mainly after the Restoration when he entered Parliament are the poetical counterpart of his violent parliamentary attacks on the King's ministers and Charles II himself.

Let Us Sum Up

Milton is the epitome of English poetry as he is the only poet to have been able to compose an epic and make English poetry reach the heights of the Greek and Roman literature. During the time, Milton was writing, other poets, especially the Metaphysical Poets also reached much poetic loftiness with their metaphysical conceits.

Check Your Progress

8. List the best works of Thomas Carew.
9. Which elements did John Denham combine in *Cooper's Hill*?
10. Name the best known poems of Andrew Marvell on rural life.

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3.5 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1. The only prose of Milton which had fled away from the heat of criticism is *Areopagitica*, called after the Areopagus.
2. During the Civil War, Milton changed his professions from writing poetry to reforming prose and made his eloquent powers stronger.
3. Raphael informs Adam about Satan's revenge, the battle in Heaven, the fall of the angels, the formation of the universe, and of Man and of his urged mate, and detains him of the terror.
4. The marvellous music of the early Elizabethans gave place to a certain roughness of form designed to fit sterner subject, passions becomes interwoven with reasoning and love evokes images of death.
5. Donne hated cadences which were regular and harmonious and also the classical smoothness and formal perfection.
6. In his later life, Donne wrote poetry on themes of repentance, death and Judgement distinguished by profundity of erudition and ingenuity.
7. Richard Crashaw's main poetical work is *Steps to the Temple*, a collection of religious poems which acknowledges the influence of Herbert in their title.
8. The best works of Thomas Carew are: a **court masque** entitled *Coeburn Britannicum*, which has a historical interest for having been produced in 1634 with gorgeous magnificence a counter- demonstration to a recent Puritan attack on the theatre, and **A Rupture**, an amatory poem.
9. In his main poem, *Cooper's Hill*, Denham combined personal reflection with descriptions of the English rural scenery.
10. Andrew Marvell wrote poems in Praise of Gardens and rural life of which the best known are *The hill and grove at Billborow*, *Appleton House* and *The Garden*.

3.6 SUMMARY

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- Milton became conspicuous when he argued that Scripture allowed the putting away of a wife found to be incompatible. Then, there was an attack on episcopacy in *The Reason of Church Government* (1642).
- Areopagitica was written as a speech for the freedom of unlicensed printing to the Parliament of England and is laid down in the form of a classical oration, starting with a quotation of Euripides: ‘*This is true liberty, when free-born men, / Having to advise the public, may speak free ...*’.
- In his poetry of later years, Milton acted less with the ‘false surmise’ of the classical poems which had polished his youth and produced his style. He mythologized his work in the later years.
- Paradise Lost starts with the fall of the angels, Satan’s scheme was to kidnap God’s newly produced species, and a Heavenly prophesy of the upcoming life.
- Milton’s conclusions express his expertise of poetry, syntax and sense. The individual humans, who has lost God and angel guests, are ‘forlorn’ yet hand in hand; roaming yet advised; require rest yet unbound to choose.
- **Paradise Regain’d** is not about the Redemption but about the strong desire in the desert. The Son’s refusal of Satan’s scheme of (pagan) knowing about Athens remains out in a dry landscape.
- In Donne’s poems, the change in tone and subject is allied with a definite change in style and prosody.
- Donne broke away from the conventional themes of pastoral poetry and sang of love in a cynical and sensuous mood.
- In spite of such insanity, Donne’s most prominent poems are remembered for their astonishing amalgamation of passion and idea for psychological view, and for profundity of analysis.
- While Herbert, as a Protestant, is mainly inspired by moral earnestness and quite piety, Crashaw’s main source of inspiration is religious fervour and glowing passion.
- Like Suckling, Lovelace practiced poetry as a part of the courtier’s education. He was imprisoned in the Commonwealth and wrote poems to beguile the tedium of his captivity.
- Andrew Marvell can be classed neither with the mystics because he did not actually deal with the religious subjects nor with the Cavaliers because he served in the **Republican Party**.

3.7 KEY WORDS

- **Liberalism:** It is a political and moral philosophy based on liberty, consent of the governed and equality before the law.
- **Cosmology:** It is a branch of astronomy concerned with the studies of the origin and evolution of the universe, from the Big Bang to today and on into the future.
- **Metaphysical Conceit:** It is a complex, and often lofty literary device that makes a far-stretched comparison between a spiritual aspect of a person and a physical thing in the world.

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3.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the *Areopagitica*.
2. Which Renaissance notion does *Paradise Lost* cover?
3. What does Milton's Christian humanism rely on?
4. What is Robert Herrick notable for?
5. Write a short note on Edmund Waller's political career.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Elaborate upon the plot of *Paradise Lost*.
2. Discuss the early life of John Donne.
3. Analyze the works of any three cavalier poets.

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UNIT 4 THE AGE OF DRYDEN: VERSE, DRAMA AND PROSE

*The Age of Dryden: Verse,
Drama and Prose*

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Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 John Dryden
- 4.3 The Restoration Theatre
- 4.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.8 Further Readings

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The Age of Dryden, also referred to as the Restoration Period, was an era marked by remarkable changes in literary, political and social fields. Restoration covers the entire period of King Charles II's reign. Literature of this period is highly varied as it contains works such as *Paradise Lost*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Treatises of Government* and so on. The Comedy of Manners became quite popular during this age. This period is characterised by a rise in neoclassicism, rejection of Puritanism, imitation of the ancients, opening of the theatres and social and political conflict. These developments were reflected in the literature of the age as well. An analysis of the verse, theatre and prose of this period has been undertaken in this unit.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine John Dryden as a poet
- Discuss the Restoration Comedies and Tragedies
- Analyze other writings of the Restoration Age

4.2 JOHN DRYDEN

John Dryden is thought to be the most representative poet of the Restoration Age (1660 – 1700), an age which marks the end of the Puritan Regime in England as Prince Charles II was restored to the English throne. Charles II, during his exile

*Self-Instructional
Material*

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from England from 1442 to 1660 had been in France. So, when he ascended the throne, he and his courtiers, who were in love with French manners and fashion, influenced the literary production and criticism of the age by fashioning it in French ways. The French critical parameter was influenced by the Neo-Classical thought which was derived from Italy in the Sixteenth century. But unlike the Italians, the French were very rigid and systematic in their critical outlook.

It is generally assumed that John Dryden was Neo-Classical in his outlook, though he was not as rigid as the French. For the Neo-classical, one of the fundamental principles was that the poets, writers and critics should follow the ancient masters, primarily Aristotle. Aristotle's *Poetics* was *The Bible* for them. Though Dryden admired and respected Aristotle, and made an elaborate analysis of Aristotle's *Poetics*, he did not agree to everything that Aristotle had propounded. Dryden was an excellent poet and dramatist who could understand the nature of poetic and dramatic creativity in the Restoration age very well.

Dryden as a Poet

Dryden emerged as England's great speaking voice in poetry, as the master of verse argument. It took him time to discover where his true genius lay and for long, he strained towards a rhetorical wit poetry, and mastering verse argument. He took to discovering a rhetorical wit poetry in which grandiloquence and ingenious conceits were conscientiously employed but were far from the organically employed *Annus Mirabilis*, which like so many of Dryden's earlier poems, shows this fault. In many of the quatrains, the first two lines give the description and the last two add a simile to make the story more poetic. The appended comparisons show a somewhat mechanical determination to be poetic. When Dryden strove after writing, he was liable to fall into absurdity or at least into frigidity. When he strove after high eloquence, as in so many of his heroic plays, he was often absurd though, sometimes impressively rhetorical. The paradox which he was involved in was one shared with his age which, at the same time, cultivated artificial heroics and demanded that poetry should reflect the ease and flexibility of a gentleman's conversation.

The heroic phase of his literary career was reflected in the preface to *Troilus and Cressida*. To speak justly of this matter, it's neither height of thought that is discommended, nor pathetic vehemence, nor any nobleness of expression in its proper place. But it is a false measure of all these, something which is quite apparent. It is an extravagant thought, instead of a sublime one. It is roaring madness, instead of the vehemence, and a sound of words instead of sense. The exposure of the style of the heroic play proceeded his turning to those great satirical narrative poems in which he first revealed his status as a poet. He was a master of the verse compliment and could combine suppleness with gravity in a way that complimentary verse requires. He has written in a tradition of verse compliment that goes back to Jonson in English poetry. In addressing particular people on particular occasions, he was peculiarly at home.

Dryden's elegies are less numerous than his poems of compliment to the living, but these include one of his finest occasional pieces, the poem, 'To the memory of Mr. Oldham'. Here Dryden almost transcends the necessary limits of his kind of good verse to achieve a note of sadness of desideratum to the living that is often associated with the Victorian poets, yet the control, the dignity, the adroit use of classical illusion, the total direction of the poem toward its subject, rather than inward self-pity toward the grieving poet, remove it far from the Victorian elegiac mode.

In his prologues and epilogues, Dryden first achieved the combination of familiarity and dignity that distinguished so much of his best verse. This was the kind of occasional poetry which he found peculiarly congenial and used the couplet here with complete assurance. He could be ironical, critical, apologetic, humorous, indecent or topical in a variety of ways and he chose the most suitable actor or actress to speak each type. These verses show Dryden operating in the midst of a society which knew, and the tone of social knowingness which is characteristic of the phase of his writing now becomes important in English poetry for the first time and remains so well into the eighteenth century.

The greatest achievement of Dryden was his satirical and argumentative verse. *Absalom and Achitophel* was a contribution to debate on public affairs in the form of verse satire. Dryden had been poet laureate and Historiographer Royal since 1670. But even apart from the fact that he had an official position, his reason and instincts were all on the side of legitimism and settled government, so that agitation would be excluded from succession to the throne. His heir and brother James, on the grounds that he was a Roman Catholic and to encourage Charles's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth to assert his claims, found Dryden on the Tory side, supporting legality and the true succession. Protestant agitation in favor of the exclusion of James, Duke of York, from the succession was led by the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Buckingham. The famous portrait of Shaftesbury as Achitophel is a picture of a complex and tortured character. The attack on Shaftesbury's son is a needless piece of cruelty, overall, the impression is one of twisted brilliance of genius.

Check Your Progress

1. What was one of the fundamental principles for the neo-classical writers?
2. Which paradox was Dryden involved in?
3. What was the greatest achievement of Dryden?

4.3 THE RESTORATION THEATRE

The puritan experiment in Government did not survive long. The Cromwell died in 1658. Less than two years later, in May 1660, Charles II returned from exile

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amid popular acclamation. The shouting and joy expressed by all is past imagination.

The reaction against puritan manners and morals was inevitable. It was all the more violent because many of the returned Cavaliers had spent their exile in France and become experts in French wit and French gallantry and because the king himself, an indolent sensual possessed with both wit and cunning, encouraged an atmosphere of wit and set the tone of wit, if not in all the literature of the period, then at least for a certain segment of it, notably dramatic comedy.

The period takes its name from the restoration of the Stuart line to the throne in 1660. The end of the commonwealth is known as the Restoration period. It is regarded as lasting until 1700. The urbanity, wit and licentiousness of the life centering on the court was in sharp contrast to the high seriousness and sobriety of the earlier puritan regime, is reflected in much of the literature of this age. The theaters came back to vigorous life after the revocation of the ban placed on them by the puritans in 1642. Dryden, Congreve and Wycherley developed the distinctive comedy of manners called the Restoration comedy and Dryden Otway and other playwrights developed the even more distinctive form of tragedy called heroic drama. Dryden was the major poet and critic as well as one of the major dramatists. Other poets were the satirists, Samuel Butler and the Earl of Rochester, other notable writers in prose were Samuel Pepys and Sir William Temple.

Comedy

Restoration comedy is known by the doubtful spirit of the age and is therefore in deep contrast with the romantic comedy of the Elizabethans. It was deeply influenced by the continental convention (Moliere and Calderon) and hugely reflected the dissipated court life. Wit, Polish and intellectual control were the necessary features of the new comedy, which has only desired to entertain, never to instruct. Apparently, as far as the plot is concerned, it can be said that under impression of French models, some of the playwrights of comedies of this period culminated a taste for sexual intrigues which frequently led them to gross sensuality and immorality.

It is a tradition almost universally accepted to show the very frame of mind of each character by a telling name (Sir Flopping Flutter for foppish type, Colonel Bully for an overbearing Officer Squire Sullen for an unsociable grave natured man etc.). The sense of comedy was hugely based on the study of these 'types' or Johnsonian humours. This kind of comedy, where focus is laid upon the social foibles of the characters rather than on the humour of the plot and such circumstances are usually called comedy of manners.

The existence of the Puritan reached to a series of attacks on the Restoration Drama. Most popular among these is the pamphlet *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* by Jeremy Collier, a rebellious parson, in which Congreve and Vanbrugh were attacked. This produced a sensation at that time but had no long-term influence.

Sir George Etherege

He was among the first to build the new fashion. He was possibly a courtier well acquainted with the trivial and licentious manner of the upper classes which he paints gracefully in his comedies. His three plays *The Comical Revenge*, or *Love in a Tub* (1664), *She would if She could* (1668) and *The Man of Mode or Sir Flopping Flutter* (1676) are the first examples of the comedy of manners, and commendable for their simple brilliant dialogue and for their light elegance though somewhat lacking in plot.

William Wycherley

He produced a few plays marked by harsh humour, total indecency and by dextrous spirit of satire. At his best, however, he exhibited a clear vision of human follies and noticeable wit in handling dialogue. His best comedies are *Love in a Wood*, *The Country wife* and *The Plain Dealer*.

William Congreve

He was by far the most popular of the Restoration Comedy writers. His comedies *The Old Bachelor*, *The Double Dealer*, *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World*, still remembered as written out of self-interest and in an outspoken manner, are however, without any harsh realism of Wycherley and remain unbeatable for clarity of wit, hard polish and skilful characterization.

Other prominent comic playwrights of the Restoration were: George Farquhar, Thomas Shadwell and Sir John Vanbrugh, perhaps more eminent as an architect, who created simpler colloquial style and whose plays included *The Relapse or Virtue in Danger* and *The Provok'd Wife*.

Tragedy

Tragedy during the Restoration is majorly expressed by heroic drama which according to Dryden, '**ought to be an imitation of a heroic poem with love and valour as its chief ingredients**'. This form of play, of course, also taken from French models (Corneille, Racine) and taken many of the plots from French prose Romances. Though these tragedies were generally created in rhymed heroic couplets, this was not necessary to the concept, for after 1680, that lyrical form was almost totally substituted by blank verse (Dryden's *All for Love* and Otway's *Venice Preserved*). The chief traits of the heroic dramas were: (a) the great emphasis laid upon valour, beauty and love; (b) overindulgence in bombastic tirades; and (c) avoidance of ultimate disaster. Because of this last trait, the plays of the period doubtfully be called tragedies. The major playwrights of heroic dramas beside Dryden were:

- **Thomas Otway:** He has written a masterpiece, *Venice Preserved*, a dark drama filled with dramatic force. It has a character called **Senator Antonio** who resembles **Shaftesbury** and the main plot has a similarity with the **Gun powder plot**.

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- **Nathaniel Lee:** He led an atrocious life which was spoiled by alcoholism and insanity. Among his tragedies, **Sophonisba**, **The Rival Queen** and **Mithridates** are the best-known works by him.
- **Nicholas Rowe:** Rowe achieved the designation of Poet Laureate in 1715. His famous dramas are **Tamerlane** and **The Fair Penitent**.

Let Us Sum Up

The Restoration Age began in 1660 when Charles II was restored to the Throne of England after his days of banishment in France. The age saw much influence of the French culture and literary practices in English literary activities. It was an age which excelled in theatre after the Puritans banning of theatre for about eighteen years from 1642 to 1660.

Check Your Progress

4. Who led the protestant agitation in favour of the exclusion of James?
5. Name the playwrights who developed the comedy of manners and heroic drama.

4.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. For the neo-classical writers, one of the fundamental principles was that the poets, writers and critics should follow the ancient masters, primarily Aristotle.
2. The paradox which Dryden was involved in was one shared with his age which at the same time cultivated artificial heroics and demanded that poetry should reflect the case and flexibility of a gentleman's conversation.
3. The greatest achievement of Dryden was his satirical and argumentative verse.
4. The Protestant agitation in favour of the exclusion of James, Duke of York, from the succession was led by the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Buckingham.
5. Dryden, Congreve and Wycherley developed the distinctive comedy of manners called the Restoration comedy and Dryden Otway and other playwrights developed the even more distinctive form of tragedy called heroic drama.

4.5 SUMMARY

- John Dryden is thought to be the most representative poet of the Restoration Age (1660 – 1700), an age which marks the end of the Puritan Regime in England as Prince Charles II was restored to the English throne.

- It is generally assumed that John Dryden was Neo-Classical in his outlook, though he was not as rigid as the French. For the Neo-classical, one of the fundamental principles was that the poets, writers and critics should follow the ancient masters, primarily Aristotle.
- The exposure of the style of the heroic play proceeded Dryden's turning to those great satirical narrative poems in which he first revealed his fall status as a poet.
- *Absalom and Achitophel* was a contribution to debate on public affairs in the form of verse satire. Dryden had been poet laureate and Historiographer Royal since 1670.
- The urbanity, wit and licentiousness of the life centering on the court in sharp contrast to the high seriousness and sobriety of the earlier puritan regime, is reflected in much of the literature of the Restoration age.
- Restoration comedy is known by the doubtful spirit of the age and is therefore in deep contrast with the romantic comedy of the Elizabethans. It was deeply influenced by the continental convention (Moliere and Calderon) and hugely reflected the dissipated court life.
- Sir George Etherege was among the first to build the new fashion. He was possibly a courtier well acquainted with the trivial and licentious manner of the upper classes which he paints gracefully in his comedies.
- William Congreve's *The Old Bachelor*, *The Double Dealer*, *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World*, are still remembered as written out of self-interest and outspoken, are however, without any harsh realism of Wycherley and remain unbeatable for clarity of wit, hard polish and skilful characterization.
- Tragedy during the Restoration is majorly expressed by heroic drama which according to Dryden, 'ought to be an imitation of a heroic poem with love and valour as its chief ingredients'.

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4.6 KEY WORDS

- **Neo-Classicism:** It was a Western cultural movement in the decorative and visual arts, literature, theatre, music, and architecture that drew inspiration from the art and culture of classical antiquity.
- **Grandiloquence:** It is a style or manner of speaking that uses complicated language in order to attract admiration and attention, especially in order to make someone or something seem important:
- **Legitimism:** It refers to support for a sovereign or pretender whose claim to a throne is based on direct descent.
- **Puritans:** These were English Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries who sought to purify the Church of England of Roman Catholic practices,

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maintaining that the Church of England had not been fully reformed and should become more Protestant.

- **Comedy of Manners:** It is a genre of realistic, satirical comedy of the Restoration period that questions and comments upon the manners and social conventions of a greatly sophisticated, artificial society.

4.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Dryden's 'To the memory of Mr. Oldham'.
2. Why was Dryden found on the Tory side?
3. Why did the puritan experiment in government not survive long?
4. How was life centering on the court different from the earlier puritan regime?
5. State the main feature of Congreve's comedies.
6. List the chief traits of heroic dramas.
7. Write a critical note on the Restoration Theatrical practices.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Elaborate upon Dryden's genius in *Absalom and Achitophel*.
2. Discuss the features of Restoration comedy.
3. Analyze the major playwrights of heroic dramas beside Dryden.

4.8 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK II

PERIODS OF POPE AND JOHNSON

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UNIT 5 THE AGE OF POPE: VERSE, DRAMA AND PROSE

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Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Augustan Reflective Poetry
- 5.3 Major Literary Figures of the 18th Century
- 5.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Words
- 5.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.8 Further Readings

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Consequent to the Restoration age, rationality and reason became the governing realms of thought in England and the Age of Enlightenment came into being in which critics such as Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson wrote and brought about a newer way of looking at the world. Satirical representation became the governing mode of writing and the age saw many social satires being written. In this unit, we will be discussing the Augustan Age in detail.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss Augustan Reflective Poetry
- Analyze the major writers of the age

5.2 AUGUSTAN REFLECTIVE POETRY

To think of Augustan poetry as primarily satirical in its theme and treatment of subject would be a one-sided assertion. In reality, there is a line of reflective poetry that runs from late 17th century (such as Nahum Tate) till Oliver Goldsmith and William Cowper. The only problem is that in the wake of satirical poetry where the depiction of evil is spectacular, it seems to pale out. Yet, in presenting an idealized picture of a rural life that is very peaceful, which then becomes the basis of reflection, it continues with the same theme to be found in satire, the impulse to comment upon human existence. It

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is no coincidence that the overwhelming literary influence of the age is the Roman poet Horace, who was accomplished in both satire of the urban societies as well as in poetry of rural meditation. Further, the primary thrust of criticism has been to look upon the Augustan age as one rooted in urbanity and social etiquette, ignoring an equal longing for solitude that was to be found in the Romantics themselves. If there is acknowledged longing for solitude in the nature of rural countryside, it was seen as retirement from practical business to ideal contemplation.

However, for the Augustans a retreat to the countryside meant replacing ambition with usefulness. Thomas Parnell, the dear friend of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift and considered as the earliest example of reflective poetry, observes in his *The Hermit* that one is not fully equipped for his vocation until he has come out into the world and learned that injustices are all a part of God's purpose of mankind. Also, what is seen in the poems of Thomas Parnell (*Night Piece*), Thomas Gray (*The Bard*) and William Collins (*Ode on the Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*) is nature's powerful sombreness. Irrespective of whether the reflections offered are minute and practical ones or a wide gaze about the condition of mankind, they are always such that they will find an instant resonance with the reader. The Augustan reflective poetry does not attempt to shock them by presenting a deeply individualistic view of it.

Rather, it points out to the reader what is common between the poet and the reader, deliberately ignoring what separates the poet and the reader (which was not to be found in the Romantic poets). While doing so, the poet also understood and included a strong sense of tradition, a perception of the relevance of past literature to contemporary themes. They not only valued their own efforts at composing poetry but also the Greek and Latin roots from which it was derived, for there was a subtle relationship which the poet established between the experiences of the past and his own days, thereby creating a sense of timelessness. Favourite amongst them was Horace, perhaps because he was a poet of general themes. His odes written on non-political subjects dealt with general themes such as pleasures of friendship, of rural solitude, the folly of ambition, the impermanence of human happiness, etc. All such themes have formed the basic topics of reflection for poets in every age. Further, the fact that he uses a delicate but commonly used language gives his rumination a stamp of permanence, thereby making him a poet in accord with society, even rendering poetically what is potentially poetic in others. His awareness of how much personal emotion can be included without disturbing the balance is something that was inculcated as Augustan poet's faculty of 'judgment'.

5.3 MAJOR LITERARY FIGURES OF THE 18TH CENTURY

Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

Pope can be called as the only poet representing the ethos of his age. After Milton, it was he who mastered the heroic couplet. However, unlike Milton who used it to

compose the greatest modern epic, Pope used the heroic couplet to gently satirize the frivolities of his age. However, his skill was honed not through a classical or university education. Since he was Catholic by birth, the Test Acts forbade Catholics to attend schools and universities, amongst other civil and political restrictions imposed upon them. Thus, he started his literary career with limited access to formal education. He was schooled at home by Catholic priests and then he attended a couple of Catholic schools in London. However, once his family moved to Binfield, Berkshire, Pope educated himself through self-study of classical authors such as Homer, Virgil, Horace, Juvenal, and others. In particular, it was the restoration poet John Dryden who had a huge impact upon the development of Pope's poetic sensibilities. Further, Pope's poor physique also contributed in developing his emergence as a man of letters. His deformed physique did not allow him to engage in much physical activity and he, then, devoted his mental abilities to reading and writing.

- **Pastorals (1709):** Pope started his literary career by writing and circulating manuscripts of four pastorals (on four seasons). Not only were these written in the classical style of Virgil's *Eclogues*, Pope also borrowed the names of his shepherds from the same. They were first published in the sixth part of Jacob Tonson's *Poetical Miscellanies* and brought him instant renown.
- **An Essay on Criticism (1711):** This was Pope's first major poem composed using the heroic couplets. The couplet was rhyming verse written in iambic pentameter and was first popularised by John Milton through his epic *Paradise Lost*. The poem is full of epigrams such as "A little learning is a dangerous thing," "To err is human, to forgive, divine," and "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread". They have roots in classical authors such as Horace and Quintilian. *An Essay* is, in fact, an example of Horatian satire in which one gently and mildly criticizes social vice, although in a humorous vein. Using this, Pope criticizes the excessive commercialization that has come about in contemporary literature. This undermined crucial literary ideal of the age that is expressed in lines like "A little learning is a dangerous thin, Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring." The classical reference to the Pierian spring where the muses came to drink highlights that to imitate classical authors such as Homer, Virgil, Horace, Aristotle, etc. were the only standards of beauty that one should aspire for. Even the critics should adhere to a law so that they, in turn, could guide literature to worthy ends. Such a literary effort helped Pope find favour with other notable literary figures such as Richard Steele and Joseph Addison. The fact that their paper *The Spectator* was aimed at correcting public morality through witty rebuke pushed him to contribute to their paper. He contributed *The Messiah* (1712) and other works.
- **The Rape of the Lock (1712):** Pope wrote this mock-epic poem in order to mediate in a quarrel between two families over what he considered a trivial, incident of theft of a lock of hair. However, he uses the occasion to highlight his own literary prowess as well as to satirize the obsessions of the

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fashionable world of the 18th century English society. Thus, instead of Arabella Fermor becoming immortal through Belinda, it is Pope who ends up becoming immortal through his composition of this literary masterpiece.

Pope first anonymously published this poem in two cantos in 1712. The revised edition with five cantos was published in March 1714. In a parody of the classical epic *Iliad*, Pope opens the poem with a “dire offence”, the theft of a lock of hair of a gentle belle Belinda. The theft of the lock of hair is shown as a violation as serious as that of the abduction of Helen of Troy by Paris. This sets up the confrontation between the two families. Pope further creates a parody of the classical gods and goddesses by introducing “sylphs” as the guardian angels of different individuals. Further, he creates another parody of Achilles’ shield in the anecdote to Belinda’s petticoat, and similarly parodies Homeric speeches in those of the poem’s characters. In Umbriel’s journey to the Cave of Spleen, we find a parody of both Odysseus and Aeneas’s journey to the Underworld. Similarly, Thalestris’ speech invokes the courtly ethic. However, it only ends up reminding Belinda of the damage to her honour. Sir Plume is then goaded into challenging the Baron to recover Belinda’s honour but he makes a mess of it, thus reinforcing Pope’s satire of contemporary gentleman. In the end, Pope goes on to satirize his age’s preoccupation with the outwardly appearances when he makes Belinda say “Oh, hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize / Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!” Belinda would rather suffer a breach of integrity than a breach of her appearance. The final edition with Clarissa’s speech (rather advice) on good sense and good humour was published in 1717.

- **Translation of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*:** Pope translated the *Iliad* between 1715-1720 and the *Odyssey* in 1726 (with the help of William Broome and Elijah Fenton). These were a commercial success and brought him much needed money, making him fully independent of any requirement for patronage. He dedicated these translations to William Congreve, his Whig friend and a major contemporary literary figure. Samuel Johnson was deeply affected by reading Pope’s translations and called it the greatest translation ever achieved in English or any other language.
- ***Dunciad* (1728-43):** John Dryden’s satire *MacFlecknoe* is the inspiration for one of Pope’s most famous works. Like Dryden, Pope chose the mock-epic form to depict a personified Goddess of Dullness and how she is at war with reason. It is also a parody of Virgil’s *Aeneid* though Pope celebrates a war, rather than a victory. The goddess of Dullness appears on Lord Mayor’s day and sees that the king of Dullness has died. Pope then lists a number of “dunces”, contemporary literary figures referred only through their initials, and she chooses Lewis Theobald, the editor of *Shakespeare Restored*, from amongst the rest. He is declared as the king of Dunces and the chosen agent of the Goddess of Dullness. In honour of his coronation,

the Goddess then organizes heroic games. After their successful completion, he is transported to the Temple of Dullness. There he has visions of the things to come in the future.

The satire goes beyond Theobald and attacks political and cultural degradation that had set in. The political attack is specifically directed at the Whigs and booksellers that brought out partisan Whig publications. The cultural attack is more general and is directed at those who don't write for literary merit but only for money. *The Dunciad* was written in three different versions beginning 1728, 1729 (*Dunciad Valorum*), 1732 and finally in 1742. The final version of the poem was written in 1743 and comprised of four books, instead of three. In this edition, Pope replaced topical references to Theobald and replaced them to refer to the career and character of the new poet laureate Coley Cibber. Cibber is in fact described as the anti-Christ of wit.

- ***An Essay on Man (1733-34)***: It is a poem written by Pope using heroic couplets and comprises of four epistles. The central premise of this philosophical poem is to undermine the 18th century anthropocentric worldview that aimed to impose its own order on nature. The view had come to dominate the early 18th century debate on *nature as it is* (embodiment of God's laws in nature) and *nature as it should be* (man improving nature through a scientific study of it). Pope, in a variation of the argument presented by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*, attempts to "vindicate the ways of God to Man". Pope argues that since man cannot understand God's purpose in placing man in the Great Chain of Being, he must accept that "Whatever IS, is RIGHT". He highlights that while nature may be chaotic and harsh, the inner logic working inside it was a reflection of God's will. Thus, and while man should study nature through science, he should not become intoxicated with the power to alter nature. Instead, man should devote its endeavours to a study of himself. Voltaire and Rousseau both immensely admired the poem. However, Voltaire lost his belief in it and went on to satirize the poem's ideas in his novel *Candide* (1759).
- ***An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot (1738)***: This satirical poem was an addition to the introduction to *Imitations of Horace*. Pope originally wrote it as a memorial to his friendship with his physician friend Dr Arbuthnot. However, he uses the occasion to satirize Joseph Addison (Atticus in the poem) and John Hervey (Sporus in the poem), two men who had been Pope's opponents and rivals throughout his career. Two lines of the poem that have become famous are "damn with faint praise" and "who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?"
- ***Moral Essays (1731-35)***: The text is a series of four poems on various ethical topics. It is also known as 'Epistles to Several Persons' and include *Epistle to Burlington* (1731), "Of the Use of Riches", *Epistle to Bathurst* (1733) "Of the Use of Riches", *Epistle to Cobham* (1734) "Of the

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Samuel Johnson (1709-1784)

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He is one of the most famous literary figures of the second half of eighteenth century. He was born in Lichfield, Staffordshire and was educated at the local grammar school. He spent some time at Oxford University, but lack of finances forced him to leave prematurely. He drifted into a career in writing when he couldn't find a teaching job. In 1735, he married Elizabeth Porter, a widow who was 20 years senior to him. This decision was primarily based upon his belief that the acrimony between his parents was due to his mother's lack of learning. Hence, since Elizabeth was both attractive and intelligent, he readily settled down with her. However, his literary career still went nowhere, and he had to move to London in 1737, after failing in running of a school. There he wrote on a variety of subjects, slowly building his reputation as a literary critic, a poet, essayist, biographer and lexicographer. This finally landed him with his most famous project, the “Dictionary of English Language”, a task which took him eight years and six assistants to complete. By now, he was famously being referred to as “Dr Johnson”. Other than the “Dictionary”, he also became renowned for creating a critical edition of the works of William Shakespeare. Further, he contributed a lot of literary criticism for *The Rambler*, *The Idler* and *The Adventurer*. His biographical pieces on 52 contemporary poets also received critical acclaim. In 1762, he was awarded a government pension that allowed him to move more freely. His social circle also expanded and now he became friends with artists and writers such as Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith and David Garrick. After his death in 1784, James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1791) cemented his place as a literary genius of his age.

- **London (1738):** Before Johnson wrote this poem, he admired and imitated the Augustan poet Alexander Pope. He even translated Pope's *Messiah* into Latin. This poem, then, follows in the tradition of Augustan poets, who imitated classical poets in order to adhere to an established standard of linguistic and thematic beauty. The poem, thus, imitates the Roman poet Juvenal's third satire. The character ‘Thales’ decides to leave London for Wales, finding the crime, corruption and squalor of the poor too much for his sensibilities. These qualities are embodied in the characters of Malice, Rapine, and Accident who conspire to destroy the inhabitants of London. A careful reading would reveal that the poem is not to be read as a pastoral bias for the countryside over the city of London. In a way, it is an attack of the policies of Whig party headed by Robert Walpole, something that did not find favour with many readers.
- **Life of Mr Richard Savage (1744):** Even though Johnson characterized biographies as “mournful narratives”, he went on to write a substantial number of biographies of poets of his age. This was Johnson's first major biographical work. In a way, it was only a partial account of the life of Johnson's friend

Richard Savage, himself a London poet. Further errors crept in since the life was reconstructed with the help of narrative provided by a friend. However, Johnson remained as objective as he could while narrating the life of his friend, not hiding his flaws. Yet, he portrayed the character of Savage as wronged, thereby increasing the reader's admiration for him.

- ***The Vanity of Human Wishes (1749)***: This poem is an imitation of tenth satire of Juvenal. Like Juvenal, the poem focuses upon the futility of human efforts towards achieving greatness, that the world and worldly life is unable to offer permanent and complete satisfaction. However, unlike Juvenal Johnson concludes that Christian values are extremely important for living properly. Further, and unlike Juvenal, Johnson also sympathizes with his poetic subjects. The poem is written in closed heroic couplets.
- ***The Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets (1779)***: When it came to writing biographies, Johnson differed with the long dead Plutarch on the portrayal of the protagonist. Plutarch emphasized that the life narrative of an individual should aim to praise the protagonist and to teach morality to its readers. Johnson believed that the biography should focus upon accuracy and if the protagonist had any negative traits, then they too should be incorporated in the narrative so that the reader takes a lesson from it. Further, these narratives should not be only of those who were significant characters in the society and should include other lesser known individuals. Thus, with these ideas in his mind, Johnson went on to write a collection of 52 biographies of poets who died during his time. These biographies were not just life narratives of greater and lesser poets alike but were also critical appraisals of the poets themselves. However, not all the appraisals are trustworthy and are often marred by prejudice.
- ***Irene (1726-1749)***: It was the only play written by Johnson, in neoclassical style. It dramatized the love of Sultan Mehmed II for a Christian slave Irene, who was captured in Constantinople. Though the play never received critical acclaim, it proved to be a commercial success.
- ***The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia (1759)***: Johnson had translated *A Voyage to Abyssinia* by Jeronimo Lobo in 1735 and used this as the basis of writing this "philosophical romance." It is a tale of a young man Rasselas travelling with his honourable teacher, who encounters and examines human suffering in order to determine what is the root cause of happiness. The question that Rasselas eventually encounters is whether humanity essentially capable of attaining happiness?
- ***A Dictionary of the English Language (1755)***: This work was a result of the eighteenth-century endeavours to systematize human knowledge and to provide education to a wider audience than the elite. The dissatisfaction with the dictionaries of the period forced a group of London book sellers to commission Johnson to produce a dictionary. He took around nine years to publish the work.

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Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

Thomas Gray was a poet, a letter writer, an English professor, and a classical scholar. However, his first love was not literature but botany. His uncle Robert, who was also his first teacher, introduced him to empirical sciences and since then he spent time on reading and observing. He started his literary career in 1742, with the publication of “Sonnet on the death of Richard West.” Though he did not write much poetry in his literary career (he wrote only thirteen poems) whatever he wrote brought him critical acclaim, making him the foremost poet of the English language of the day. He was offered the post of poet laureate in 1757 which he declined. He might not have been a conscious part of ‘The Graveyard School of Poetry’. Yet, he shared the ideas about death and the final sublimity of death with other poets (Oliver Goldsmith, William Cowper, Christopher Smart) working towards the same end.

- ***Elegy written in a Country Graveyard (1751)***: Gray originally started the poem in 1742 but finally completed it in 1750. It was published by Robert Dodsley in 1751 and became an immediate sensation. Readers loved its calm, reflective stoicism. As a result, it was imitated, quoted, pirated and translated into both Latin and Greek. In 1759, during the Seven Years War, British General James Wolfe is believed to have recited the poem to his officers. Many of its phrases were assimilated into different cultural mediums. For example, Thomas Hardy used ‘far from the madding crowd’ as the title of one his famous novels. Similarly, a 1957 anti-war movie directed by Stanley Kubrick was named ‘Paths of Glory.’
- ***Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes (1774)***: The poem was a mock-elegy written in the event of death of Horace Walpole’s cat. Perhaps he wanted to mock human sentimentality by describing it in exaggerated terms. He also uses the occasion, though, to drive home a moral point. He warns young women to be wary of (sexual) temptation or else suffer the same fate as Selima, the cat, who drowned after getting tempted by the glittering goldfish. Some lines that have become proverbs include “a fav’rite has no friend”, “know one false step is ne’er retrieved” and “nor all, that glisters, gold”.
- ***Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College (1747)***: The major theme of this Horatian ode is how to mould one’s conduct knowing the inevitability of suffering, death and unhappiness. Gray suggests that it must be endured with fortitude, self-control and restraint. Yet, Gray tones down this theme in order to help children enjoy whatever bliss of paradise their brief period of youth allows them to enjoy.
- ***Pindaric odes***: Gray wrote two Pindaric odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*. The second poem is more interesting since it tells of a Welsh poet cursing the Norman king Edward I after his conquest of Wales and prophesies the downfall of House of Plantagenet. Interestingly, the poet hurls himself to his death from the cliff at the end of the poem.

Other Minor Poets

James Thomson (1700-1748): He was a British poet and playwright who started as an ordinary child without any literary gifts. However, the encouragement of the poet and Presbyterian minister Robert Riccaltoun and the Whig Sir William Bennet helped him on to write poetry.

William Cowper (1731-1800): Cowper was a poet of English language. He started studying Latin language since an early age and continued reading, interpreting, composing and translating it for the remainder of his life. However, after the death of his mother at the time of his birth, he became a man of weak mental temperament. Hence, he suffered from depression and insanity. He even tried committing suicide thrice in 1763. His stay at Huntingdon with the family of Morley Unwin and his wife Mary helped him regain some of his vigour. He enjoyed their company so much that he moved to Olney with them. There he met John Newton, a captain of slave ships. After Morley's untimely death in a fall from his horse, he grew fond of his widow. She even nursed him when he experienced a second attack of insanity in 1773. On recovering in 1776, he moved from Olney to London, and then later to Buckinghamshire and Norfolk. Her death in 1796 brought him further gloom. He died in 1800 after suffering briefly from dropsy. As a literary artist, he was known primarily as a writer of hymns. However, along with Thomas Gray, he has been considered as the herald of eighteenth-century Romantic Movement. His writing of everyday scenes of rural life is something that both Wordsworth and Coleridge admired.

Major Works

- ***Olney Hymns* (1779):** The suggestion to write hymns was given to Cowper by John Newton, who himself had devoted his life to the gospel. He wrote these hymns to promote the cause of the Evangelical movement amongst the rural poor parish folk of John Newton.
- ***John Gilpin* (1782):** During the time of his severe depression, William Cowper heard the story of a draper called John Gilpin who rides a runaway horse from Lady Anna Austen. He liked it so much that he converted it into a verse comic ballad. It was first published anonymously in 1782 and republished in 1878, with illustrations by Randolph Caldecott.
- ***The Task* (1785):** In the preface to the poem Cowper described in the following manner how the poem originated:
“A lady, fond of blank verse, demanded a poem of that kind from the Author, and gave him the SOFA for a subject. He obeyed; and, having much leisure, connected another subject with it; and, pursuing the train of thought to which his situation and turn of mind led him, brought forth at length, instead of the trifle which he at first intended, a serious affair – a Volume.”
(Advertisement to *The Task*)

Thus, what emerged was a poem in six books, written in blank verse as requested. Even though the first subject was chosen for the poet, the

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remaining subjects are those that naturally occurred to him in his reflections. It begins with a mock-Miltonic passage and then goes on to ruminate upon subjects as varied as “The Sofa”, “The Timepiece”, “The Garden”, “The Winter Evening”, “The Winter Morning Walk” and “The Winter Walk at Noon”. Goldwin Smith, a critic, was impressed by the Evangelical spirit of the poem and was forced to quip “As *Paradise Lost* is to militant Puritanism, so is *The Task* to the religious movement of its author’s time.”

- Translation of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (1791) from Greek into English.

Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774)

He was an Irish poet, novelist, essayist, and playwright. However, he originally did not start as a writer. Instead, he pursued studies for a medical degree at a medical school in Edinburgh. Though he couldn’t get the degree, the title “Dr.” got stuck to his name. He started his literary career as a hack writer for Ralph Griffith’s *Monthly Review*. Despite this lowly profession, he soon became famous amongst London’s aristocratic and intellectual elites. His graceful, lively and readable style soon made him more than a hack writer and in no time, he was writing essays for *The Bee* and other periodicals. His first noticeable work was *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759). His friends included Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and James Boswell.

- ***The Traveller* (1764):** It was the first work to which he put his name. The poem was written in heroic couplets. The theme of the poem is philosophical; the poet attempts to discuss the causes of happiness and unhappiness in the nations of the world (Italy, Switzerland, France, Holland and America).
- ***The Deserted Village* (1770):** This pastoral poem idealized the rural life that was slowly witnessing transformation owing to pressures from political and economic changes. The focus of the poem is the narrator’s village, Auburn, where he spent his boyhood. It carefully details how the law of enclosure pushed small, private farmers to sell their farms and leave their agrarian livelihood and emigrate to the squalor of urban centres in England and America. The rural topography is also changed with landscaped gardens replacing the lush agricultural fields. In fact, the pursuit of wealth is the underlying energy in his rural village, something that he despised since it did not bring either prosperity or happiness. Instead luxury brought corruption, a belief the Tories shared with him.
- ***The Vicar of Wakefield* (p. 1766):** The circumstances in which the novel was published is unique. Samuel Johnson, Goldsmith’s friend, sold the novel for sixty pounds to help Goldsmith avoid arrest for non-payment of rent. Though the novel was not published for another two years, it gained instant renown when it was published. The novel is a story of village life as narrated by the vicar Dr Primrose, and the trials and tribulations endured by his family. These include loss of almost all of their wealth, the seduction of their daughter Olivia Primrose, destruction of their home by fire, and the

incarceration of the vicar. The primary authorial intent is idealization and sentimentalization of rural life. However, there is a possible ironic reading of the same, since excessive sentimentalism and belief in the innate goodness of man is shown as incompatible in contemporary times.

- ***The Good-Natur'd Man (1768)***: The play is a comedy written in five acts. It found favour more as a written text than as a performance.
- ***She Stoops to Conquer (1773)***: This play is yet another comedy written in five acts. As to the type of comedy, the general consensus was that the play is a comedy of manners, in which the comedy is a result of the differences between the society's standard polite behaviour and the true behaviour of the characters. However, readers can also sense a mocking of the morality structures found in contemporary sentimental comedies. The play found both critical and commercial success.
- ***The Citizen of the World, or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher (1762)***: This was not exactly a periodical, but a series of letters written by Oliver Goldsmith and first published in *The Bee*. It was later published in the *Public Ledger*. Goldsmith used the persona of a Chinese traveller Lien Chi to provide an ironic and moral commentary upon mannerisms in contemporary British society.

Let Us Sum Up

As stated, the age of Pope and Johnson, also known as the age of Enlightenment, was the time when reason and rationality were the governing words of the times and consequently satirical representation was the primary mode of writing. Both Pope and Johnson brought about neo-classical outlook to the literary endeavours and wrote satires which are still valued for their correction of taste and their efforts to bring about social changes which would make the society better.

Check Your Progress

1. What did a retreat to the countryside mean for the Augustans?
2. What did Horace's odes written on non-political subjects deal with?
3. Why did Pope write *The Rape of the Lock*?
4. What is the central premise of *An Essay on Man*?
5. What does *The Vanity of Human Wishes* focus upon?
6. Why did Cowper write hymns?

5.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. For the Augustans a retreat to the countryside meant replacing ambition with usefulness.

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2. Horace's odes written on non-political subjects dealt with general themes such as pleasures of friendship, of rural solitude, the folly of ambition, the impermanence of human happiness, etc.
3. Pope wrote this mock-epic poem in order to mediate in a quarrel between two families over what he considered a trivial, incident of theft of a lock of hair.
4. The central premise of this philosophical poem is to undermine the 18th century anthropocentric worldview that aimed to impose its own order on nature.
5. The poem focuses upon the futility of human efforts towards achieving greatness, that the world and worldly life is unable to offer permanent and complete satisfaction.
6. Cowper wrote hymns to promote the cause of the Evangelical movement amongst the rural poor parish folk of John Newton.

5.5 SUMMARY

- It is no coincidence that the overwhelming literary influence of the age is the Roman poet Horace, who was accomplished in both satire of the urban societies as well as in poetry of rural meditation.
- What is seen in the poems of Thomas Parnell (*Night Piece*), Thomas Gray (*The Bard*) and William Collins (*Ode on the Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands*) is nature's powerful sombreness.
- Unlike Milton who used it to compose the greatest modern epic, Pope used the heroic couplet to gently satirize the frivolities of his age.
- Pope started his literary career by writing and circulating manuscripts of four pastorals (on four seasons). Not only were these written in the classical style of Virgil's *Eclogues*, Pope also borrowed the names of his shepherds from the same.
- Pope first anonymously published *The Rape of the Lock* in two cantos in 1712. The revised edition with five cantos was published in March 1714. In a parody of the classical epic *Iliad*, Pope opens the poem with a "dire offence", the theft of a lock of hair of a gentle belle Belinda.
- Like Dryden, Pope chose the mock-epic form to depict a personified Goddess of Dullness and how she is at war with reason in *Dunciad*. It is also a parody of Virgil's *Aeneid* though Pope celebrates a war, rather than a victory.
- Pope originally wrote *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* as a memorial to his friendship with his physician friend Dr Arbuthnot. However, he uses the occasion to satirize Joseph Addison (Atticus in the poem) and John Hervey (Sporus in the poem), two men who had been Pope's opponents and rivals throughout his career.

- Even though Johnson characterized biographies as “mournful narratives”, he went on to write a substantial number of biographies of poets of his age. *Life of Mr Richard Savage* was Johnson’s first major biographical work.
- *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) was a result of the eighteenth-century endeavours to systematize human knowledge and to provide education to a wider audience than the elite.
- Thomas Gray started his literary career in 1742, with the publication of “Sonnet on the death of Richard West.” Though he did not write much poetry in his literary career (he wrote only thirteen poems) whatever he wrote brought him critical acclaim, making him the foremost poet of the English language of the day.
- The major theme of the Horatian ode *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747) is how to mould one’s conduct knowing the inevitability of suffering, death and unhappiness.
- Cowper was a poet of English language. He started studying Latin language since an early age and continued reading, interpreting, composing and translating it for the remainder of his life.
- *The Task* begins with a mock-Miltonic passage and then goes onto ruminate upon subjects as varied as “The Sofa”, “The Timepiece”, “The Garden”, “The Winter Evening”, “The Winter Morning Walk” and “The Winter Walk at Noon”.
- Oliver Goldsmith’s first noticeable work was *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759). His friends included Edmund Burke, Samuel Johnson, David Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and James Boswell.
- *The Vicar of Wakefield* is a story of village life as narrated by the vicar Dr Primrose, and the trials and tribulations endured by his family. These include loss of almost all of their wealth, the seduction of their daughter Olivia Primrose, destruction of their home by fire, and the incarceration of the vicar.

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5.6 KEY WORDS

- **Heroic Couplet:** It is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used in epic and narrative poetry, and consisting of a rhyming pair of lines in iambic pentameter.
- **Epigram:** It is a short but insightful statement, often in verse form, which communicates a thought in a witty, paradoxical, or funny way.
- **Stoicism:** It is a school of Hellenistic philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium in Athens in the early 3rd century BC. It is a philosophy of personal ethics informed by its system of logic and its views on the natural world.

5.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Thomas Parnell's observation in *The Hermit*.
2. How did Pope start his literary career?
3. Write a short note on Pope's parody of classical gods and goddesses in *The Rape of the Lock*.
4. What are the political and cultural attacks in *Dunciad* directed at?
5. What is the major theme of *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*?
6. Under what circumstances did *The Vicar of Wakefield* get published?
7. In what ways was the Age of Enlightenment dominated by the poets such as Samuel Johnson and Alexander Pope?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Critically analyze Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*.
2. Analyse Pope's translation of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.
3. Examine any two poems by Thomas Gray.
4. Discuss any three poems of Oliver Goldsmith.

5.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 6 THE AGE OF JOHNSON: GENERAL PROSE

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Structure

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Prose in the Age of Johnson
- 6.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 6.4 Summary
- 6.5 Key Words
- 6.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 6.7 Further Readings

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In the eighteenth century along with poetic creations and certain sporadic developments in the world of theatre, it was an age which developed into a great period for prose writings. It is an age when the novel as a genre found its origin and firm footing which will be dealt with in the next unit. In this unit, we will be primarily focusing on the prose writings of the eighteenth century, especially the journals and periodicals.

6.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine the prose writers of the eighteenth century
- Analyze the periodicals and journals of the eighteenth century

6.2 PROSE IN THE AGE OF JOHNSON

Let us discuss some prose writers of the age.

Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746)

Hutcheson was an Irish philosopher and professor of moral philosophy in University of Glasgow. He started out as a Presbyterian preacher but later he realized that a prior knowledge of God was not necessary to have a knowledge of good and evil. This realization pushed him to go on a quest to revamp contemporary moral philosophy and, in the process, heralded Scottish Enlightenment. He started by stating that our five external senses are not the only ones we rely upon. They are supplemented by internal senses that include a sense of beauty, of being a part of a community, a sense of morality, of honour and of the ridiculous. Of all these

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senses, he considered moral sense as the most important determinant in the system of ethics. Further, moral judgment could not be based purely upon reason and was based upon whether the action was agreeable or disagreeable to one's moral sense. He divided moral philosophy into four parts: ethics and virtue; private rights and natural liberty; familial rights; and state and individual rights. He had abandoned the psychological view of moral philosophy since he found motives to be too fickle a basis for a philosophical system. Instead, he hypothesized a dedicated 'sixth sense' to explain morality. This idea claimed that man is pleased by the prospect of utility of an idea and that governed his choice of course of action. Detailed ideas on moral philosophy within this matrix are enumerated in his works *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations upon the Moral Sense* (1728), and *A System of Moral Philosophy* (1758). His system of moral philosophy inspired the moral sentimentalism of his student David Hume and Adam Smith.

David Hume (1711-1776)

In the eighteenth-century debate between Nature and Reason, the Anglo-Scottish philosopher, essayist, economist and historian Hume is considered as a defender of Nature against Reason. He desired to not merely destroy the primacy of pure reason, but also to show that "it is a good thing to trust instinct, to give oneself up to Nature, without being duped by any logical illusion" (*Growth of Philosophical Radicalism*, Halevy, p 11). Thus, he gave up on all inherited certainties about matter, soul, God, Nature, etc. He retained only those which withstood the test of Newtonian scientific empirical system. Hume clubbed this knowledge with Lockean emphasis upon the role played by the human mind in organizing knowledge about the world we lived in. The central argument of his new epistemology was a relativist theory of reality that understood the real world as only an experience of it, which differed from person to person.

- ***A Treatise of Human Nature* (1738):** Hume's subtitle to this work was quite interesting: 'An Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects'. He rigorously applies the principles of the very tradition that he wanted to undermine. Thus, he declared to carry out an empirical observation of the psychology of his human reasoning and create, in the process, a Newtonian system of morals. He begins with undermining any inherited theological presuppositions. Instead, he bases his knowledge on 'experience', that which is 'given,' and our 'perceptions'. He divides these perceptions into sensations, passions, emotions and ideas. "All probable reasoning is nothing but sensation. 'Tis not solely in poetry and music, we must follow our taste and sentiment, but likewise in philosophy." (Bk I, pt. iii, sec. 8) These sensations are then ordered in to complex ideas using the Lockean principle of association, by resemblances, through the relationship of cause and effect, and contiguity of time and place. However, because Hume is not able to explain what is the cause of these sensations, and it is not

clear whether they “arise immediately from the object, or are produc’d by the creative power of the mind, or are deriv’d from the author of our being” there is a hint of moral relativism that we see in contemporary times.

- ***An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals (1751)***: In this text, Hume describes his theory of ethical behaviour. Like Hutcheson, ethical behaviour for Hume was rooted not in reason but in moral sentiment. It was not rational thinking that results in ethical behaviour; instead ethical behaviour is a result of positive sentiments experienced by an individual. Reason could show people how to achieve the desired goal. However, it could not determine what they should be. “Morals excite passions and produce or prevent actions. Reason itself is utterly impotent in particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason” (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, 458).

David Hartley (1705-1757)

Hartley is chiefly remembered for his elaboration of the concept of Association of Ideas. In his principal work *Observations on Man, his Frame, his Duty, and his Expectations* (1749), he explains the phenomena of emotions, of reasoning, of voluntary and involuntary actions. He uses the principle of association to explain not only the mechanism of all our mental processes, but also the evolution of moral characters from childhood to manhood, and the development of moral sense out of simple sensation.

- ***Observations on Man (1749)***: This work puts forward Hartley’s main **doctrine of vibration** and **doctrine of association**. In the first part, Hartley propounds that sensations are the result of vibrations that occur in the nervous system of the body. Moderate vibrations resulted in a feeling of pleasure whereas strong vibrations resulted in the experience of pain. In the second part, he elaborates his theory of association. Association took place in two ways: (i) it was a result of vibrations caused by external stimuli, and (ii) the heat and movement of arteries in the body caused vibrations. The nature of vibrations experienced are determined by a mix of the individual’s past experience and the circumstance of the moment. The ideas corresponding to the idea of sensations, then, becomes associated with each other.

Adam Smith (1723-1790)

Smith was not just a philosopher but also an economist and a writer. He was one of the key figures of Scottish enlightenment and his ideas about political economy shaped the ‘free market’ theory of economy. He was born and brought up in Scotland by his widowed mother. He entered the University of Glasgow at age 14 and later joined Baliol College, Oxford. His ideas on social and moral philosophy are best summed up in the following two works that he wrote after returning to Glasgow:

- ***The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759)***: David Hume, whom Smith met during the series of public lectures that he delivered at Edinburgh, believed in a ‘sixth sense’ to explain morality. Smith rejected this approach. Instead,

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he relied upon psychological motives in order to create a system of moral philosophy that was more pluralistic. He moved away from the “moral sense” tradition of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume and instead emphasized the principle of sympathy. It was a feeling with the passion of others that operated through a logic of mirroring that helped him sympathize with the person whom he was watching. Yet, this did not help him form moral judgments beyond a limited sphere of activity that centred around his self-interest. He wrote, “How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortune of others and render their happiness necessary to him though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it.”

- ***The Wealth of Nations* (1776):** This work forms an important basis of classical economics and the ideas propounded in it run through the thoughts of thinkers such as Karl Marx, David Ricardo, John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman. Keeping in mind the nascent industrial revolution sweeping England, Smith conceptualizes significant ideas such as free-market economy, division of labour and productivity. Many might cringe upon the mention of free-market economy where economic activity goes unchecked and unrestrained. However, Smith articulated that *rational* self-interest in a free-market economy can lead to economic well-being. This, in turn, was to be brought about by developing a sense of ethics and charity in the individual. However, while charity was an act of virtue it could not, by itself, provide the essentials for living. It needed the mechanism of self-interest in order to remedy this shortcoming, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we can expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.”

Edmund Burke (1729-1797)

Burke was an Irish statesman, philosopher, author, and political theorist. He is considered as the philosophical father of modern conservatism and philosophical anarchism. He was politically affiliated to the Whig Party and between 1766 and 1794, he served as a Member of Parliament of House of Commons.

- ***A Vindication of Natural Society* (1756):** The full title of the text is long— “*a View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Artificial Society*”. Yet, it encapsulates the primary argument of the book that artificial (i.e. political) society suppresses the natural goodness in man. In fact, it can be only brought out if man is placed in a natural society. For Burke, it is not the cultivation of rational mind (which creates only artificial rules to guide natural manners) but virtues (which themselves are a result of “unalterable relations that Providence has ordained that everything should bear to every other”) need to be formed as the basis of manners in the society. Also, religious institutions once reformed of superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny need to be safe guarded in order to ensure morality and stability in the state.

- ***A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1757)***: This text gives an account of Burke's theory of aesthetics. In the treatise, he advocates for the separation of the beautiful and the sublime. According to him, the beautiful is that which is well-formed and aesthetically pleasing, whereas the Sublime is that which has the power to compel and destroy us.

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Popular Periodicals and Journals of 18th century

The refusal of the House of Commons to renew the Licensing Act of 1695, in a way, resulted in the emergence of periodicals. It forced publishers to empty these journals and periodicals of all political news, thereby increasing the safety of their publication from political censure and making it profitable in the process. In fact, the success of Addison and Steele were great because of the fact that they kept the tastes and requirements of their male and female readers in mind. However, the primary focus, as professed by Addison in the tenth number of *The Spectator*, was to amuse the readers with such "writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice." The essentially moral intention of the essayist is also incorporated in the same number when Addison writes:

"It was said of Socrates, that he brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-table and in coffee-houses." (*The Spectator*; No. 10)

Boswell, too, had remarked in the 'Hypochondriac' essays that a periodical paper of *instruction and entertainment* was one of the happiest inventions of British origin (emphasis added). Steele wrote in the dedication included in the first volume of *The Tatler* that the purpose of the paper was to expose "the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour."

Since then, there was a remarkable proliferation of essays in eighteenth century England. From the number of journals produced in the first half of eighteenth century it could be said that it was the most prolific form of writing available in bookseller stores and coffee houses. It provided an avenue for the finest writers of varied talent to show their literary skills. As to the audience, the writers and publishers of these periodicals and journals understood that women made up a large proportion of their reading public. Thus, attention was paid to the interests of the 'fair sex.' This resulted in a great deal of improvement in the status and education of women. Samuel Johnson commented in *The Rambler* that the women now provided an adequate audience to a scholar at a tea-table.

The language of the periodical writers also underwent a change. In fact, they invested a lot of time and energy to make their language come as close as the language used in common talk. Since these essays were to be found almost everywhere, it had a positive impact upon the prose style of the eighteenth century as a whole. A writer who had been subjected to writing periodical essays was less likely to indulge in literary pretension and use of meaningless jargon elsewhere.

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Overall, it resulted in clarity, simplicity and literary good manners in the prose of the eighteenth century.

- ***The Tatler* (1709):** Richard Steele began this journal in order to cater to literary and social interests of his times. The paper was published on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. He used the pseudonym “Isaac Bickerstaff, Esquire” to comment upon literary and social gossip. Other contributors who used the same pseudonym included Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison. It was closed down since running a Whig publication when there was a sustained Tory attack became difficult.
- ***The Female Tatler* (1709-10):** The authorship of this periodical is unknown, though it is certain that a woman was its author. She used the pseudonym “Mrs. Crackenthorpe, a Lady that knows everything”. The ‘author’ aimed at amusing and instructing female audiences of the time. It had a relatively short run of around 10 months.
- ***The Spectator* (1711):** This journal was founded after Richard Steele had liquidated *The Tatler*. With *Spectator*, Steele aimed to “enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality.” It was published daily from 1711 to 1712. While it catered to the interest of the nouveau riche class of traders and merchants, it found favour with almost everybody, especially women. He notes in number 10, “But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world”. Due to its wider reach, and as noted by Jurgen Habermas, the paper played an important role in the shaping of public discourse in the 18th century. It provided its readers with topics on which a well-reasoned discussion could take place, and also equip them to carry out polite conversations in their social engagements.
- ***The Examiner* (1710-14):** It was a newspaper promoting Tory perspectives and was edited by Jonathan Swift. Swift’s *A Conduct of the Allies* was published in the paper.
- ***The Guardian* (1713):** It was a short-lived newspaper that was started by Steele and published in London. It featured contributions from his friend Joseph Addison, Alexander Pope, a minor English poet and man of letters Thomas Tickell and the English poet and politician Ambrose Phillips.
- ***The Review* (1704-1713):** It was a thrice-weekly newspaper that Defoe published and edited between 1704 to 1713. The paper contained a humorous section ‘Advice from the Scandalous Club’ which light-heartedly dealt with the controversial aspects of contemporary social life. It also gave Defoe an insight into his reading audience’s interests and allowed him to practice catering to them.
- ***The Gentleman’s Magazine* (1731):** It was a periodical that reviewed and popularized current literature. It is considered as the first modern magazine. Its motto was “E Pluribus Unum”, meaning “out of many,

one". Thus, it chose the best essays and articles from other publications and published them in the magazine. However, after the joining of Dr Johnson, the magazine started publishing original writing as well as parliamentary reports.

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- ***The Female Spectator (1744-46)***: This monthly periodical was run by Eliza Heywood. It was the first magazine written by a woman and specifically for a female readership. In the history of periodicals written for women, John Dunton's *Ladies Mercury* (1693) and the *Female Tatler* (1709) preceded it. They dealt with issues related to women that included reading, education, marriage, children and conduct.
- ***The Rambler (1750-52)***: It was a bi-weekly periodical published by Samuel Johnson. Written in an elevated prose style, the periodical aimed to "join both profit and delight." It, thus, focussed on social, religious, political, literary and moral issues of the time. Johnson used the periodical to promote neoclassicism and this resulted in inclusion of excellent literary criticism of its day. However, probably due to its didactic nature, it did not sell well. In the final essay Johnson had to accept that he has "never been much of a favourite to the publick." Yet, it left every other periodical behind, except the *Spectator*, when it was published in the volume form.
- ***The Monthly Review (1749-1845)***: It was founded by the Non-conformist bookseller Ralph Griffiths. This English periodical was the first to offer book reviews written by the publisher along with his wife Isabella Griffiths.
- ***The Critical Review (1756)***: The periodical was a response to *The Monthly Review* and was ideologically affiliated to Tory ministry and the Anglican Church. Tobias Smollett was its first editor, from 1756 till 1763. It mostly contained lengthy book reviews.
- ***The Idler (1758-60)***: *The Idler* wasn't exactly a journal, but a series of essays written primarily by Samuel Johnson and published in the weekly *Universal Chronicle*.
- ***The Bee (1759)***: It was a short-lived literary magazine started by Oliver Goldsmith. It was primarily a medium for Goldsmith to publish his best literary essays, including *The Citizen of the World*.
- ***Town and Country Magazine (1769)***: It was a literary magazine started by Alexander Hamilton. The initial issues contributed to the political debates of the times, but the magazine essentially thrived on public interest in the increasing number of lawsuits that were brought by upper class men and their wives' lovers. It published stories on the transcripts of adultery trials that people found very enthralling to read.
- ***The Lady's Magazine (1770)***: It was a women's magazine that published articles on poetry, fiction, music, fashion, and social gossip. It was extremely successful and ran until 1847.

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- ***The Watchman* (1796):** It was a short-lived periodical started and published by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. It appeared every eight days in order to avoid tax. It contained poems, essays, news stories, reports on Parliamentary debates, and book reviews.

Let Us Sum Up

Prose, especially journals and periodicals, were very popular in the eighteenth century apart from the novel which developed as a significant genre in the age. We will be dealing with novels in the next unit.

Check Your Progress

1. State the parts in which Hutcheson divided moral philosophy.
2. List the ways in which association took place as per Hartley's theory of association.
3. What was the purpose of *The Tatler* as per Steele?
4. What was *The Critical Review* a response to?
5. Which topics did *The Lady Magazine* publish articles on?

6.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Hutcheson divided moral philosophy into four parts: ethics and virtue; private rights and natural liberty; familial rights; and state and individual rights.
2. According to Hartley, association took place in two ways: (i) it was a result of vibrations caused by external stimuli, and (ii) the heat and movement of arteries in the body caused vibrations.
3. Steele wrote in the dedication included in the first volume of *The Tatler* that the purpose of the paper was to expose "the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour."
4. The periodical was a response to *The Monthly Review* and was ideologically affiliated to Tory ministry and the Anglican Church.
5. It was a women's magazine that published articles on poetry, fiction, music, fashion, and social gossip.

6.4 SUMMARY

- Hutcheson was an Irish philosopher and professor of moral philosophy in University of Glasgow. He started out as a Presbyterian preacher but later he realized that a prior knowledge of God was not necessary to have a knowledge of good and evil.

- In the eighteenth-century debate between Nature and Reason, the Anglo-Scottish philosopher, essayist, economist and historian Hume is considered as a defender of Nature against Reason.
- Like Hutcheson, ethical behaviour for Hume was rooted not in reason but in moral sentiment. It was not rational thinking that results in ethical behaviour; instead ethical behaviour is a result of positive sentiments experienced by an individual.
- Smith moved away from the “moral sense” tradition of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume and instead emphasized the principle of sympathy.
- Keeping in mind the nascent industrial revolution sweeping England, Smith conceptualizes significant ideas such as free-market economy, division of labour and productivity.
- For Burke, it is not the cultivation of rational mind (which creates only artificial rules to guide natural manners) but virtues (which themselves are a result of “unalterable relations that Providence has ordained that everything should bear to every other”) need to be formed as the basis of manners in the society.
- Steele wrote in the dedication included in the first volume of *The Tatler* that the purpose of the paper was to expose “the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour.”
- *This Spectator* was founded after Richard Steele had liquidated *The Tatler*. With *Spectator*, Steele aimed to “enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality.”
- *The Rambler* was a bi-weekly periodical published by Samuel Johnson. Written in an elevated prose style, the periodical aimed to “join both profit and delight.”
- The Bee was a short-lived literary magazine started by Oliver Goldsmith. It was primarily a medium for Goldsmith to publish his best literary essays, including *The Citizen of the World*.

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6.5 KEY WORDS

- **Epistemology:** It is the theory of knowledge, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between justified belief and opinion.
- **Sentimentalism:** It is a practice of being sentimental, and thus tending toward basing actions and reactions upon emotions and feelings, in preference to reason.
- **Conservatism:** It is a political and social philosophy promoting traditional social institutions.

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- **Anarchism:** It is a political philosophy and movement that is sceptical of authority and rejects all involuntary, coercive forms of hierarchy. Anarchism calls for the abolition of the state, which it holds to be undesirable, unnecessary, and harmful.

6.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What does Hartley use the principle of association for?
2. Write a short note on *The Tatler*.
3. What did the initial issues of *Town and Country Magazine* contribute to?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss Hartley's doctrines of vibration and association.
2. Analyse the ideas expressed by Burke in *A Vindication of Natural Society*.
3. Examine any two popular periodicals of the 18th century.

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UNIT 7 THE AGE OF JOHNSON: NOVEL

NOTES

Structure

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 The Rise of the Novel
- 7.3 Jonathan Swift (1667-1745)
- 7.4 Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)
- 7.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Key Words
- 7.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 7.9 Further Readings

7.0 INTRODUCTION

With the growth of capitalist market and the coffee house culture, not just the periodicals and journals found themselves to be popular, but it also got to the point when novel as a genre came into being in the eighteenth century. The first novel published was Richardson's *Pamela* – an epistolary novel (written in the form of letters). Usually it is thought that the women readers are crucial in the development of the novel though many feel that the rise of the middle class and the rise of the novel happened simultaneously. The capitalists venturing into book publishing is also a crucial factor. All these paved the path for the rise of the genre of novel in the eighteenth century and gradually becoming the most popular genre within a century.

7.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the rise of the novel as a genre
- Discuss the genre of sentimental novel
- Examine some important works of Jonathan Swift

7.2 THE RISE OF THE NOVEL

Restoration prose was marred by a tendency to be expressive, embellished, rhythmic and passionate. The language used was a mix of the marketplace and the Biblical, with imported words thrown here and there. Since much of it was addressed to

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the ruling (considered the intellectual) elite, they could get away with it. However, the prose directed at the new emerging class was to be written in an easy, conversationalist style with themes that could be easily understood by them. Such a need was already being pursued by those who were writing scientific literature and their supporters. However, it is only by the time of Joseph Addison that the new prose was beginning to emerge. This, in turn, benefitted the rise of the periodical essays, journals and pamphlets who were addressing a common, varied, middle-class audience. Thus, *The Tatler* (1709-11) and *The Spectator* (1711-14) not only benefitted from this demand from the reading public but also went on to simplify the prose with its emphasis upon use of simpler words, the logical and coherent organization of the best ideas of its day, written in a form of good manners.

Soon, periodicals and journals became the most widely published and consumed works of the century. The most notable ones were *Guardian* (containing the best essays of Addison, Steele and Berkeley), Richard Steele's *The Englishman* (1713-14), Addison's *Freeholder* (1715-16), Fielding's *Champion* (1739-42) and *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752), Johnson's *Rambler* (1750-52) and his 'Idler' essays published in *The Universal Chronicle* (1758-60).

The development of the prose also resulted in transformation of personal expressions such as diaries, memoirs, letters, biographies and autobiographies. Flushed with funds and time, people were ruminating and travelling and writing about themselves and their thoughts or the places that they had travelled to. The most important development that took place was in the form of the novel. While fiction had been around for a long time in the form of legends and myths, the emergence of invented stories dealing with life and written in prosaic language was essentially a eighteenth century phenomenon. The conditions were also perfect—a reliable prosaic language had emerged since the early eighteenth century, there was a sufficient number of readers who were interested in reading long but organized works rendering everyday life and the belief in artistic and intellectual merit of the authors.

On the continent, Rabelais and Cervantes had already established the legitimacy of the genre of prose fiction (or novel). In Augustan England, it started with the likes of Daniel Defoe who heralded novel in the form of travel literature, Swift emulating it in his *Gulliver's Travels*, and Samuel Richardson transforming the art of letter writing into the epistolary novel form. All of them used a large coherent plan, real-life material borrowed from contemporary social conditions, a stretched-out story of the hero's life and narrative devices such as coincidences and digressions. The most important development in prose fiction was that of character and plot. The plot was not simply episodic but one that was an artistic unification of cause and effect. The characters too are picked up from everyday middle-class social life—Colonel Jack is a waif, Moll Flanders in a Newgate-born criminal, Crusoe is a sailor wrecked on an island, etc. What is interesting is that in the early examples of authors such as Defoe, the entity organizing plot is chance, and not some grand design.

On the contrary, in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1742) and *Clarissa* (1747), the plot is far too contrived and pushes a specific idea of behaviour in the world. In *Amelia* and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753), he gave to his audience a sentimental comedy. With Henry Fielding, we see the rise of the picaresque novel in which the heroes are rogue characters of lowly station in life, with less-than-ideal character traits (*Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749)). Fielding was succeeded by Tobias Smollett whose *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751), *Humphry Clinker* (1771) took the genre of the picaresque novel even further. The most controversial novelist of the eighteenth century is Laurence Sterne whose novel *Tristram Shandy* redefined the experience of reading a novel with excessive digressions and the lack of a clear plot. It is as if the author refused to be tied by the conventions of a specific genre. Other noticeable examples include *Rasselas* (1759), *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), *Castle of Otranto* (1764), *Man of Feeling* (1771), and Fanny Burney's *Evelina* (1778).

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The Sentimental Novel

As the eighteenth century advanced, it was realized that the 'Nature' of man was not reason. On the contrary, it was his instincts, emotions and sensibilities that governed his cognition and behaviour. Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) is suppressed and, later, superseded by Rousseau's *je sens, donc je suis* (I feel, therefore I am). Feeling, and not reason, thus becomes the basis of existence. Sentimentalism in 18th century poetry and prose was a reaction to the dryness of reason that had come to abound thought. Jonathan Swift in his satire *Gulliver's Travels* as well as *A Modest Proposal* had shown what could be the logical conclusion of socio-political and economic policies based upon reason.

Sentimentalism, argued for basing one's actions not exclusively on the basis of rational thought, but on feelings and emotions. Such a basis of morality and ethics could be seen in the ideas of Anthony Ashley Cooper, the 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713) (*An Inquiry Concerning Virtue, or Merit*), Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) ('*An Inquiry Concerning the Original of Our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good*' and '*An Essay On the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, With Illustrations Upon the Moral Sense*' (1728)), David Hume (1711–1776) ('*An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*' (1751)), and Adam Smith (1723–1790) ('*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*' (1759)). On the continent, it was Jean Jacques Rousseau and his idea of the natural, moral goodness of the man. They proclaimed, that our moral judgments, like our aesthetic judgments, are not a result of Reason at all and instead proceed from an inner feeling or sentiment that cannot be analysed.

Edmund Burke, too, affirmed that 'politics ought to be adapted, not to human reason, but to human nature, of which reason is a part, and that by no means the greatest part'. Thus, they advocated the legitimacy, even primacy, of the emotional response to a given incident. In fact, to be able to show emotions and feelings was seen as a show of character and experience, extremely capable

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of shaping social life and relations. The narrative of such novels and plays was, then, constructed around the emotional responses of the characters and, in a way, they attempted to evoke an emotional response from the audiences too. The plot revolved around scenes of distress and tenderness, promoting action based on (rational) emotions. Some said that such narratives were disproportionately sentimental. The sentimental novel evolved into the “novel of sensibility” in which the characters possessed a more pronounced ability to sense and respond to delicate sensations, something that became the basis of the late eighteenth century Romantic Movement.

7.3 JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

Swift was born and brought up in Dublin by his uncle after his father died a short time after his birth and his mother left for England soon after. His uncle served as his benefactor, sending him to Trinity College, Dublin where he earned his graduation and as he was studying further, the Glorious Revolution forced him to move to England. There, he found security in the household of a distant relative of his mother Sir William Temple. While living there, he acted as Secretary to Temple and helped him compose his memoirs and essays. The rich library there allowed him to attain intellectual maturity and he completed his MA from Oxford University in 1692. Later, he also earned a Doctorate in Divinity from Trinity College in 1702. Between 1691 and 1694, he composed a number of poems. However, his literary genius came to fruition only when he switched from poetry to satire.

The primary quality of Swift’s writing is that he did not write for literary goals but to address contemporary issues. For him, the act of writing was aimed towards improvement of action, and thoughts leading to an action. He developed the genre of satire towards this aim, and while he dabbled in Horatian, Menippean and Juvenalian satire, he chose Juvenalian satire as the chief carrier of his ideas. He has been described as a severe sceptic, rather than a Tory, Whig, religious or empiricist writer. In the debate upon the Ancients versus the Moderns, he was on the side of the Ancients. While he was won over to the Tory side by Robert Harley and became their chief pamphleteer and political writer, his political sympathies remained with the Whigs since he did not believe in the old Tory theory of the Divine Right of Kingship. For Swift, political power was derived from people was a whole and thus contemporary England, with its constitutional monarchy, was the most suitable form of political government. Yet, Swift took up the task of editing the Tory journal *The Examiner*. His pamphlet *The Conduct of Allies* (1711) concretised public opinion about peace with France and he was rewarded with the post of Dean of St Patrick’s cathedral in Dublin. He retired to Ireland but developed a renewed interest in political and social affairs around 1720. Most of his pamphlets published around that time satirize social and economic problems besotting Ireland, many of which were a result of English policies for Ireland.

- ***A Meditation upon a Broomstick (1701)***: The inspiration to write this parody lay in Swift's time spent reading Robert Boyle's *Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects* (1665) during his tenure as secretary to William Temple. However, unlike Boyle who saw a religious aspect to the things that he described, Swift initially draws up a moral comparison but later adopts a misogynist and misanthropic tone.
- ***The Battle of the Books (1704)***: This short piece was a part of the introduction to Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*. It was Swift's response to the contemporary debate over who possessed greater merit-, the ancients or the moderns. It portrays an epic battle between books that have come alive in King James' Library. However, the underlying arguments are being traded between authors and ideas of the past and modern times.
- ***An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity (1712)***: It is yet another satirical essay in which Swift targets contemporary frenzied attacks on Christianity coming from different new-emerging schools of religious thought. He warns that abolition of Christianity/ Anglicanism would lead to rise in Presbyterianism or Catholicism. Even if Christianity is to be abolished, it should be abolished only after England has won her wars over her Christian/religious adversaries.
- ***A Tale of a Tub (1704)***: It is a keen and coarse satire on the irreligion of Christian churches. Swift writes this burlesque history of Christianity in the form of an allegorical tale of three brothers who have been asked by their father to take care of a coat he's given them. The brothers represent the three different churches of Christianity- Peter represents the Catholic Church, Martin represents the Church of England and Jack represents all Protestant denominations of the Church which Swift saw as the followers of John Calvin. The tale narrates how they find their coats (representing the practices of Christianity) to be out of fashion and then how, without excessively violating their father's will (as inscribed in The Holy Bible), they can make it 'fashionable'. The three brothers, however, fall into bad company and begin altering their coats by adding ornaments. Peter is, then, given the charge of being the arbitrator of the will. He begins to rule by authority until Jack rebels against his rule. Jack then attempts his own excessively literal interpretation of his Father's will. He rips the coat to shreds to restore it to its 'original' shape, thinking that inner illumination will guide him in this endeavour. Only Martin is left with a coat that resembles what his Father bequeathed.

Much of the tale is taken up by the numerous digressions upon contemporary literary writings, political affairs, Biblical exegesis, religious ideas, and medicine. The most consistent satire in the tale is on the habit of misreading. The tale as well as the digressions highlight the single-most important human flaw—over-figurative and over-literal reading, whether it be of the Bible, poetry or prose. The narrator

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is obsessed with seeking the mechanical knowledge of things that are spiritual, spiritual qualities to things that are physical, and substitute readings to everything.

- ***Gulliver's Travels* (1726):** While it is thought of as an example of children's literature, in reality this work is a parody of the genre of travel-writing that had become prolific in early 18th century England. It is also a severe attack on the political parties of his time. Further, Swift uses the genre to cleverly satirize human nature as well. In Book 1, on his voyage to Lilliput, he satirizes the optimistic notions about human capability. In Book 2, he goes on to satirize some of the new scientific institutions of his times, including the Royal Society of England. He satirizes the idea of scientific study and technological progress when he shows the ridiculous ends to which the scientific experiments at Laputa are being deployed. In the tale of his voyage to Brobdingnag his misogyny is on full display. Gulliver hates how Brobdingnagian women play around with him the way they please and becomes increasingly spiteful of them. The final tale of voyage to the land of Houyhnhnms reveals his misanthropy. He develops an antipathy for the Yahoos, a race that is 'like' him and which has culturally and intellectually degenerated. In fact, due to the horse-race exhibiting more reason than the Yahoos, Gulliver starts identifying with them more than the Yahoos.

- ***A Modest Proposal* (1729):** Due to the intentionally grotesque arguments of this satire, Swift did not claim its authorship at the time of publication. The essay indirectly attacked British policies towards Ireland that were damaging it economically. Through a sustained irony, the essay suggested that the poor of Ireland can improve their economic woe by feeding their children to the elite of the English society.

"... a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled, and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragout."

(*A Modest Proposal*)

- ***Drapiers Letters* (1724-25):** These were a series of seven political pamphlets written between 1724-25 by Swift under the pseudonym of M.B. Drapier. Their outright aim was to awaken and shape public interest in the affair of an award of a letters patent given to a hardware manufacturer William Wood to mint copper coins.
- ***Journal to Stella* (1710-13):** These were a series of letters written by Swift to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley between 1710 and 1713. The letters incorporate Swift's reactions to a number of contemporary political and social events, especially the period when a Tory ministry headed by Robert Harley was replacing the Whig and was attempting to bring some conclusion to hostilities between France and England.

7.4 DANIEL DEFOE (1660-1731)

Defoe was born in London, outside the circle of high-bred and polished fashion. His father James Foe was a prosperous butcher. In order to appear as belonging to the aristocracy, he added “De” to his father’s surname, and became Defoe. He was educated to the Dissenting ministry. He was a man of inexhaustible energy and engaged in several prosperous businesses (such as trade in hosiery, woollen goods and wine) before he took upon pamphleteering. His political affiliations started with an ill-fated support of Monmouth rebellion, but he received pardon for supporting the crowning of Queen Mary and her Dutch husband, King William. This resulted in him becoming a political target when Queen Anne came to the throne of England. He was pilloried and was even forced to continue working as a spy for the government, Whig and Tory alike. Apart from political pamphleteering and essays, his extensive writing career also produced novels. In fact, he is widely considered as the father of the novel form. However, he started his literary career as a journalist and his influence in shaping journalism is immense.

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- ***An Essay upon Projects (1697)***: Defoe’s business acumen was on display in this work. He uses the pseudonym Andrew Moreton, a middle-class old gentleman in which he proposed several economic and social improvements.
- ***The True Born Englishman (1701)***: This was his most successful essay written in verse. In it, he defended King William of Orange against xenophobic attacks from his detractors. However, it was not a perceived xenophobia but was rooted in William’s favouritism shown towards foreigners. By 1701, jealousy of foreigners was rampant in England. To counter this, Defoe argued in his preface that England as it existed was made up of settlers belonging to different European ethnic groups. Thus, the English cannot lay claim to racial superiority and show intolerance towards migrant settlers since the English population was itself made up of migrant settlers from abroad. Those who hated the idea that a Dutch king should not govern ‘true-born Englishmen’ should remember that they can’t claim to racial purity themselves.

“We have been Europe’s sink, the jakes where she

Voids all her offal outcast progeny.”

- ***The Shortest Way with Dissenters (1702)***: Defoe wrote this pamphlet in times when hostilities towards Dissenters were increasing. Defoe, being a supporter of religious freedom, did not like Queen Anne’s excessive intolerance for the Dissenter’s occasional conformity. While Defoe himself was not in favour of this practice of Dissenters, he did not like the handling of this matter by the Tories as well. Hence, he wrote this prose satire in the form of an irony which, once people realized, brought upon political punishment upon Defoe. In fact, it is the first amongst the many of Defoe’s

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pamphlets that undermined the viewpoints of Tories. He was fined, imprisoned, and made to stand in pillory on three occasions.

The pamphlet opens up with the fable of The Cock and the Horses. It then goes on to list the political events of the past where the Dissenters played an important role. It then lists what punishment, though lenient, were given by different monarchs. The pamphlet then goes on to give a series of arguments to favourably treat the Dissenters. However, the Speaker goes on to undermine them with increasing severity, giving a final call to take action against the Dissenters to save the church. It is important to note that there have been debates about the genre of this work, with good reasons. According to Miriam Laurenbaum, it lacks important features to make it a satire; instead, it is considered a hoax or banter and even ironic.

- ***The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719)***: Defoe was nearly 60 when he published this novel. Before he wrote this, he had established himself as a journalist and pamphleteer. In fact, whether he used verse or prose is something that his audience cared little for. They were not the cultivated patrons but ordinary middle class which had emerged as a significant reading market, and whose interest must also be served. is considered as the father of the novel form. An early pamphlet titled *The Apparition of Mrs Veal* had already showed his mastery at narrative realism. The literary importance of this work lay in the length to which Defoe went to provide convincing details about an incident and the range of knowledge (journalistic, business and political) that he displayed about a range of middle-class attitudes and ideas in minute detail. In *Robinson Crusoe* he fictionalized Alexander Selkirk's account of being marooned on an island. Yet, it is more than just a work of fiction. He celebrates Western civilization's material triumphs and the strength of its rational will to conquer the environment. Its anthropocentric worldview in which man is the centre of this world is regarded as romantic one. Defoe, the much-secularized Puritan, shows that if man has virtue, courage, patience, perseverance and mechanical ingenuity, he can overcome unsurmountable obstacles. Thus, Crusoe is shown as a capitalist hero and a coloniser who overcomes great difficulty in order to reach economic security. He establishes on the island his own model of a Christian society. It ends positively in order not to subvert any of the middle-class mercantile values that Crusoe upheld. He survives 28 years on the island, becoming rich off his 'investments.'

"I remained in Lisbon to settle my affairs. Within seven months, I received what I was owed from the survivors of the trustees; the merchants for whose account I had gone to sea.

I was now master, all on a sudden, of above £5,000 sterling in money, and had an estate, as I might well call it, in the Brasils, of above a thousand pounds a year, as sure as an estate of lands in England: and in a word, I was in a condition

which I scarce knew how to understand, or how to compose myself for the enjoyment of it.”

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(*Robinson Crusoe*)

Needless to say, but the novel was a phenomenal success and he cashed in on its success by writing *The Further Adventures* and *The Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe*.

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- ***Moll Flanders* (1722):** Defoe was not known as the writer of this novel until 1770, after his death. The novel is an example of picaresque novel that narrates the adventures of a rogue hero belonging to the lower classes of the society and trying to survive using their wits. It was partly based upon the life of Moll King whom Defoe met during his time in the New Gate prison. The underlying philosophy of the novel is that of the age. If life in a society was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short, then how to cope up and make the best of it. Moll Flanders, then, comes across as a thief, prostitute and an incestuous wife. She uses her con skills to swindle a number of men of their property. Though, most of her life is a reaction to the social conditions she finds she was born into, her life is also a search for love and identity along with social stability and acceptability.

“... every branch of my story, if duly considered, may be useful to honest people, and afford a due caution to people of some sort or other to guard against the like surprises, and to have their eyes about them when they have to do with strangers of any kind, for 'tis very seldom that some snare or other is not in their way. The moral, indeed, of all my history is left to be gathered by the senses and judgment of the reader; I am not qualified to preach to them. Let the experience of one creature completely wicked, and completely miserable, be a storehouse of useful warning to those that read.”

(*Moll Flanders*)

- *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720)
- ***Captain Singleton* (1720):** It is a novel that describes the life of an Englishman, Singleton, who was stolen from his family and raised by gypsies. After a remarkable overland journey through Africa, he eventually makes his way to the sea, working as a pirate in East Indies.
- The quasi-factual *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)
- *Colonel Jack* (1722)
- ***Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (1724):** Roxana is in a way a superior Moll Flanders. However, she is far too independent, pleasure-loving and adventurous, and thus not an ideal role model for women. She goes through a series of rich protectors, becoming rich herself in the process. Yet, for the middle-class sensibilities, this could not go unpunished. Her biggest sin was that she took her fortune for granted and did not appreciate the effort and hard work that had gone into accumulating it. When her Dutch husband

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discovers her deceit, he leaves her without any money, and her end is the exact opposite of Moll. Her death as a penitent while being in prison for debt affirms the Puritan ethic.

- ***The Complete English Tradesman (1726)***: In this work, Defoe highlights how trade is important for British economy and how the British trading system excels above the rest. Far from being incompatible with gentlemanliness, Defoe contends that the wealth of business sustains high place and distinction.

Let Us Sum Up

Starting from Richardson's *Pamela*, the genre of novel undertook a serious journey in the eighteenth century to become one of the most significant genres of the time. Within the publication of the first novel to the end of the nineteenth century, the reading public had significantly increased leading to a kind of greater emphasis on artistic creations in different genres novel leading to its popularity. In the next unit too, we will talk about how the novel developed in the early nineteenth century.

Check Your Progress

1. What did the development of prose result in?
2. Who is the most controversial novelist of the eighteenth century?
3. What was the primary quality of Swift's writing?
4. Where did Swift's inspiration to write *A Meditation upon a Broomstick lay*?
5. Which three churches do the brothers in *A Tale of a Tub* represent?
6. Whose life was *Moll Flanders* partly based on?

7.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The development of the prose resulted in transformation of personal expressions such as diaries, memoirs, letters, biographies and autobiographies.
2. The most controversial novelist of the eighteenth century is Laurence Sterne whose novel *Tristram Shandy* redefined the experience of reading a novel with excessive digressions and the lack of a clear plot.
3. The primary quality of Swift's writing is that he did not write for literary goals but to address contemporary issues.
4. The inspiration to write this parody lay in Swift's time spent reading Robert Boyle's *Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects* (1665) during his tenure as secretary to William Temple.

5. The brothers represent the three different churches of Christianity- Peter represents the Catholic Church, Martin represents the Church of England and Jack represents all Protestant denominations of the Church which Swift saw as the followers of John Calvin.
6. *Moll Flanders* was partly based upon the life of Moll King whom Defoe met during his time in the New Gate prison.

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7.6 SUMMARY

- Restoration prose was marred by a tendency to be expressive, embellished, rhythmic and passionate. The language used was a mix of the marketplace and the Biblical, with imported words thrown here and there.
- Periodicals and journals became the most widely published and consumed works of the century. The most notable ones were *Guardian* (containing the best essays of Addison, Steele and Berkeley), Richard Steele's *The Englishman* (1713-14), Addison's *Freeholder* (1715-16), Fielding's *Champion* (1739-42) and *Covent-Garden Journal* (1752), Johnson's *Rambler* (1750-52) and his 'Idler' essays published in *The Universal Chronicle* (1758-60).
- On the continent, Rabelais and Cervantes had already established the legitimacy of the genre of prose fiction (or novel). In Augustan England, it started with the likes of Daniel Defoe who heralded novel in the form of travel literature, Swift emulating it in his *Gulliver's Travels*, and Samuel Richardson transforming the art of letter writing into the epistolary novel form.
- As the eighteenth century advanced, it was realized that 'Nature' of man was not reason. On the contrary, it was his instincts, emotions and sensibilities that governed his cognition and behaviour.
- Sentimentalism, argued for basing one's actions not exclusively on the basis of rational thought, but on feelings and emotions.
- Edmund Burke, too, affirmed that 'politics ought to be adapted, not to human reason, but to human nature, of which reason is a part, and that by no means the greatest part'.
- The primary quality of Swift's writing is that he did not write for literary goals but to address contemporary issues. For him, the act of writing was aimed towards improvement of action, and thoughts leading to an action.
- *The Battle of the Books* was a part of the introduction to Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*. It was Swift's response to the contemporary debate over who possessed greater merit-, the ancients or the moderns. It portrays an epic battle between books that have come alive in King James' Library.

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- *Gulliver's Travels* is also a severe attack on the political parties of his time. Further, Swift uses the genre to cleverly satirize human nature as well. In Book 1, on his voyage to Lilliput, he satirizes the optimistic notions about human capability.
- In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe celebrates Western civilization's material triumphs and the strength of its rational will to conquer the environment. Its anthropocentric worldview in which man is the centre of this world is regarded as romantic one.
- Defoe was not known as the writer of this novel until 1770, after his death. The novel is an example of picaresque novel that narrates the adventures of a rogue hero belonging to the lower classes of the society and trying to survive using their wits.

7.7 KEY WORDS

- **Epistolary Novel:** It is a novel written as a series of documents. The usual form is letters, although diary entries, newspaper clippings and other documents are sometimes used.
- **Exegesis:** It is a critical explanation or interpretation of a text, especially a religious text.
- **Picaresque Novel:** It is a genre of prose fiction that depicts the adventures of a roguish, but "appealing hero", usually of low social class, who lives by his wits in a corrupt society. Picaresque novels typically adopt a realistic style.
- **Anglicanism:** It is a Western Christian tradition that has developed from the practices, liturgy, and identity of the Church of England following the English Reformation.

7.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. List some shortcomings of the Restoration prose.
2. Who started prose fiction in Augustan England?
3. Write a short note on the development of plot and characters in prose fiction.
4. Which single-most important human flaw does *A Tale of a Tub* highlight?
5. What do the letters in *Journal to Stella* incorporate?
6. Write a critical note on the rise of the novel as a genre.

Long-Answer Questions

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1. Discuss Swift as a novelist.
2. Discuss any two satires by Swift.
3. Elaborate upon Swift's satire in *Gulliver's Travels*.
4. Analyse the content of *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*.

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BLOCK III
PERIODS OF WORDSWORTH,
TENNYSON AND HARDY

UNIT 8 THE AGE OF
WORDSWORTH:
GENERAL PROSE
AND THE NOVEL

Structure

- 8.0 Introduction
- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 The Romantic Period (1798 – 1832/1837)
- 8.3 Gothic Novelists
- 8.4 The Jacobin Novelists
- 8.5 Other Major Novelists of the Romantic Age
- 8.6 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’ Questions
- 8.7 Summary
- 8.8 Key Words
- 8.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 8.10 Further Readings

8.0 INTRODUCTION

The Romantic Age was a literary and artistic movement that originated in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century which can primarily be described as a reaction to the Industrial Revolution. It laid emphasis on emotions and individualism, glorification of nature and the past, aesthetic beauty, vivid sensory descriptions, supernatural and spiritual elements, solitude and the self. It opposed and rejected the rationalism that was born out of the Enlightenment period and instead focused on medievalism. Moreover, the Romantics found solace in nature, far away from the noise and commotion of the industrialised cities.

The most notable of the Romantic poets are William Wordsworth, John Keats, Lord Byron, William Blake, Robert Burns and Mary Shelley among many others. This age also saw the emergence of the Gothic and the Jacobin novel that portrayed emotions like horror and terror. This unit provides an overview of the famous essayists and novelists of the Romantic Age.

8.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the development of the Romantic Age
- Discuss some important Romantic Essayists
- Examine the novelists of the Romantic Age, especially the Gothic novelists

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8.2 THE ROMANTIC PERIOD (1798 – 1832/1837)

The ideas behind the French Revolution – liberty, equality, fraternity, rights, democracy, etc. influenced the poets and writers of the Romantic age. The common man was the concern of the revolution and the common man also became the concern and subject matter of poetry of the Romantic poets. The Romantic Age began with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the year 1798. Often people believe that the Romantic Age came to an end in 1832 whereas some other scholars believe that it was with the accession to throne of Queen Victoria in 1837 that Romantic Age came to an end.

The Romantic Age today is known for six major male Romantic poets. They are – William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Blake, John Keats, P. B. Shelley and Lord Byron. But it is to be remembered that there were other poets writing during the same age such as Robert Southey; there were novelists such as Walter Scott, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe as well as Jane Austen; there were prose writers such as Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey and others.

Preface to Lyrical Ballads

Lyrical Ballads, published in 1798, heralded a new era in the history of English literature and with the publication of this volume of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the Romantic Era begins. These two poets met in 1795 and immediately recognized each other's calibre and joined hands to create something new in the field of literature. Their wishes came true with the publication of this volume of poetry *Lyrical Ballads*, which also had a short Foreword by William Wordsworth. The Second edition of the volume came out in 1800 with a Preface by Wordsworth. In 1802, another revised edition was published which had more significant additions.

The literary historians are of the view that the publication of this collection of poems, along with its preface, heralded a new era in the history of English literature. Every age is either a reaction to the age preceding it or a continuation of the earlier age with subtle changes. In the case of romantic age, we see, that it is a complete reversal of the Age of Reason. The term 'romantic' not only means a poetic creed in English literature, it connects a highly complicated set of attitudes and beliefs as well. Romanticism was largely a reaction against the prevailing Neo-

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Classical school of writing which laid great stress on form, structure and conventions of poetic diction. Thus, opposed to classicism and its sophisticated culture; the Romantics brought with them the “renaissance of wonder” where the natural world is revealed and vividly portrayed for the first time. This led to the idea of nature as an inspiring force, as felt by William Wordsworth and P. B. Shelley.

Romantic Essayists

Let us discuss some of the essayists of the Romantic Age.

Charles Lamb (1775 – 1834) is probably the most famous of all the British Romantic prose writers for his personal essays that he etched out in his famous books – *Essays of Elia* (1823) and *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833). These two books on Personal Essays are enough to create fame forever for Charles Lamb. *The Essays of Elia* were first published in the *London Magazine* and later compiled as a book and published. He is also a person from the Lake District and had a great friendship with the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Along with his sister, Mary Lamb, Charles Lamb wrote the famous *Tales from Shakespeare* in 1807 which is still read by children as a great piece of literature.

Lamb was part of a large circle of influential friends such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Hazlitt, Henry Brougham, Lord Byron, Thomas Barnes and Leigh Hunt. He and his sister had frequent visitors, their salon evenings consisting of playing cards, eating, drinking, smoking and discussing diverse matters. In 1819, at the age of 44, Lamb, who, because of family commitments, had never married, fell in love with an actress, Fanny Kelly, of Covent Garden and proposed marriage to her. Fanny Kelly refused Lamb and he died as a bachelor.

Essays of Elia is autobiographical in nature – his brother John is the James Elia in *My Relations*, his sister Mary Lamb is *Bridget Elia*; his father is the Lovel of *Old Benchers*; his aunt appears in *My Relations* and his maternal grandmother is portrayed in *Dream Children*.

Lamb’s style is the expression of his personality. Rickett writes: “His style is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical, not a mechanical mixture.” Lamb’s style is noticeable for its immense variety. Ainger points out that Lamb’s mind was so saturated with ancient writers that “the occurrence of a particular theme sends him back to those early masters who had specially made that theme their own. That is why he writes so differently on different themes. When he is reflective and fanciful as in *New Year’s Eve* and *Popular Fallacies*, his style resembles that of St. Browne; when fantastic as in *The Chapter on Ears* that of Burton; when witty as in *Poor Relations* that of Puller. He is also lyrical and poetical in *Dream Children*. In dealing with matters purely modern, as in *Newspapers Thirty-Five Years Ago*, his style is purely modern.

Thomas De Quincey (1785 – 1859)

*The Age of Wordsworth:
General Prose and the Novel*

Thomas De Quincey, the famous essayist from Romantic Age, is known for his writings such as *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822) and *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823). Thomas de Quincey was born in Manchester in 1785. Thomas De Quincey was educated at prestigious schools at Salford, Bath and Winkfield. His literary career started in 1821, with the first version of *The Confession of an Opium Eater*. In this work, he utilises his early experiences and exhibits his fantastic imagination. In *The Dialogue of Three Templars*, he displays that passion for logical analysis which is as distinctive on his genius as his fantasy. His descriptive and visualising power finds expression in *Suspiria de Profundis*.

Thomas De Quincey spent most of his life in the Lake Country, near Wordsworth and Coleridge, later in London, and finally in Edinburgh and the neighbourhood. He was appointed as an editor of a local Tory newspaper, *The Westmoreland Gazette*. However, his first major work was *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, which appeared in London Magazine in 1821. Apart from this, his other famous works were *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* and *Recollections of the Lake Poets* (a collection of biographical essays of the lake poets - Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey). *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts* (1827) reveals his grotesque humour. His other critical works are *Letters to a Young Man* (1823), *Joan of Arts* (1827), *The Revolt of the Tartan* (1840) and *The English Mail Coach* (1849).

Thomas De Quincey skilfully recreated the poetic prose of the seventeenth century. He successfully attempted to create a new style which combines the best elements of prose and poetry. Consequently, his prose works are often, like those of Milton, more imaginative and melodious than much of our poetry. His language is highly figurative. In the later part of his life, he published *The Logic of the Political Economy* (1844), a dissertation on David Ricardo's economic theory and *Suspiria De Profundis* (1845), the sequel to his *Confessions*, in which he documented his childhood, dreams and fantasies. From 1853 until his death, De Quincey worked with his *Selections Grave and Gay from Writing Published and Unpublished* by Thomas De Quincey. He died in Edinburgh on the 8th December, 1859.

William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830) was another famous essayist from the Romantic Age who is still read today. Hazlitt initially wanted to be a painter and soon realized that he wasn't great with painting and therefore shifted to literature and journalism. He came in close association with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Hunt and others and excelled the Romantic literature by his writings. His first book was published in 1805 – *A Study of the Principles of Human Action*. Fully endowed with the ability of soaring in an imaginative flight, as in his essays *On the Picturesque* and

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Ideal and *On a Sundial*, his dominating bias was however for a union of romantic temperament and classical vigour. The resulting essays, including *Common Sense on Fashion*, *On the want of Money* and *On Nicknames* have the fine-wrought grace of the golden mean. His prose displays the same discrimination between the vulgar and the otiose, for he had a Wordsworthian faith in the simple and the sincere. *The Round Table*, *Table Talk* and *The Plain Speaker* cover a variety of subjects ranging from art and philosophy to politics and prize fighting. These works helped to establish Hazlitt's reputation as the most versatile critic of his day. *The Spirit of the Age*, a work that is regarded as his critical masterpiece, contains valuable biographical sketches of these writers and of other contemporary intellectual leaders. Farther, Hazlitt lectured extensively on English drama: *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, *Lectures on the English Poets*, *Views of the English Stage*, *Essays on the English Comic Writers*, and *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*. Hazlitt's best essays were collected in *The Round Table* (1817), *Table Talk* or *Original Essays on Men and Manners* (1821-22) and *The Spirit of the Age* or *Contemporary Portraits* (1825). His essays reveal the wide range and variety of his interests. Howe remarks that Hazlitt "knew the meaning of words and strove increasingly to get the proper word for the proper place," Hazlitt is one of the masters of aphorism.

Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866): English writer Thomas Love Peacock, born in Dorset, was the son of Samuel Peacock, a glass merchant and Sarah Love. In 1819, he joined East India Company for a job. Peacock is best known for his essay *The Four Ages of Poetry* (1820), which provoked Shelley's famous *Defence of Poetry*. It was first published in the journal *Literary Miscellany* in 1820. In this essay, he wrote about the gradual origin and development of poetry in four ages: Age of Iron; Age of Gold; Age of Silver and Age of Brass. Poetry originated in the Iron Age, in which rude brads celebrated in rough numbers the exploits of ruder chiefs, in days when every man was warrior. The golden age was the age of the noblest poetic productions, when poetry tended to become retrospective. This was followed by the artificial silver age in which poets recasted or limited the poems of the age of gold. The Brass age was the age, of poetic decay and decline. The current brass era was marked, according to Peacock, by poems of Verbose and minutely detailed description of thoughts, passions, actions, persons and things. Peacock, in this essay, defined the poet as a semi-barbarian in a civilised community.

Apart from this essay, Peacock wrote several other works such as *Recollections of Childhood: The Abbey House* (1837), *Memories of Shelley* (1858-62) and novels such as *Melincourt* (1817) and *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). Peacock succeeded James Mill as chief examiner for the East India Company in 1836 and retired on a pension in 1856. He died on the 23rd January, 1866 at Lower Halliford.

Check Your Progress

1. How did the Romantic Age begin?
2. When did the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* come out?
3. Name Quincey's first major work.
4. What did Quincey publish in the later part of his life?

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8.3 GOTHIC NOVELISTS

The term “Gothic” as we understand it today in the context of the novels, is used to mean the novels which produce “horror.” Originally, it was meant to “relating to, or resembling the Goths (the barbaric German tribe that invaded the Roman Empire) their civilization, or their language.” The Gothic novels became very popular during the Romantic Age. In England, from 1790 to 1830, there were many Gothic novels which were published, and they were read by the masses.

The setting of the Gothic novels is very significant in the initial novels that were published where the atmosphere of horror and dread was produced through decaying, ruined scenery. Haunting castles and dungeons as well as hereditary curses and haunted houses as well as madness were the chief things that the Gothic novels dealt with. Gothic writers are interested in the breakdown of boundaries, in the exploration of what is forbidden in desire that should neither be spoken off nor acted upon. They are concerned above all with excess and transgression. David Punter in his famous essay “What is Gothic?” talks about three significant archetypes that are used in Gothic fiction. They are

- (i) the figure of Seeker after forbidden Knowledge,
- (ii) the wanderer
- (iii) the vampire (usually an anti-bourgeois figure)

The first Gothic novel was written by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Oranto* which was published in 1764. After Horace Walpole, there were many practitioners of the Gothic fiction, the chief ones among them are Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley.

Ann Radcliffe (1764 – 1823): Ann Radcliffe was born as Ann Ward and was later married to William Radcliffe, the owner and editor of *The English Chronicle*. She was childless and turned to fiction which was encouraged by her husband. Her works include—

- *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789)
- *A Sicilian Romance* (1790)
- *A Romance of the Forest* (1791)

- *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794)
- *The Italian* (1797)
- *Gaston de Blondville* (1826)

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Among these works, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is considered her best work which is a quintessential Gothic Romance having incidents of physical and psychological horror along with a persecuted heroine.

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775 – 1818): Matthew Gregory Lewis is another gothic novelist who is known for his works which deal with the horror of the human mind. He was educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford. His most popular novel is *The Monk* which was published in 1797.

Mary Shelley (1797 – 1851): Mary Shelley was the daughter of William Godwin (famous political writer of the Age) and Mary Wollstonecraft (often considered as the first feminist writer). Her mother died immediately after giving birth to her and therefore she did not have much interaction with her mother. Mary Shelley was married to the famous Romantic poet Percy B. Shelley and both of them are considered as the greatest of the writers of the Romantic Age. Her famous works include *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus* (1818), *Mathilda* (1819) and others.

Check Your Progress

5. What are Gothic writers interested in?
6. List the three significant archetypes that are used in Gothic fiction as per David Hunter.

8.4 THE JACOBIN NOVELISTS

The term “Jacobin” novels or novelists was first espoused by the famous critic Gary Kelly in *The English Jacobin Novel 1780 – 1805* (published in 1976) to refer to a group of novelists such as – Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Holcroft, William Godwin, Mary Hay, Robert Bage and others. Thomas Holcroft’s *Anna St Ives* is thought to be the first Jacobin Novel. The idea of the term “Jacobin” was taken from a journal named *Anti-Jacobin or Weekly Examiner* which was founded by Tory politician George Canning. The French term for the radical revolutionaries was *Jacobin* and the journal wrote against the extremist supporters of the French Revolution. In the context of the term “Jacobin Novels” it means, that the people who had radical ideas in their novels, they are usually considered under this term. The Jacobin novelists thus dealt with the revolutionary radical political ideas of the time.

Thomas Holcroft: (1745 – 1809): Thomas Holcroft was a person from not so well-off family and had his education primarily under the tutelage of his father who

taught him much of religious literature. But as he grew up, he was mature enough to understand the frivolity of such literature. Thereafter, he acted in various strolling companies until 1778. He wrote about a dozen plays and then shifted to writing novels. Today he is remembered primarily for his novels such as *Anna St Ives* (A Novel, 1792), *The Adventures of Hugh Trevor* (A Novel, 1794). Thomas Holcroft believed in social justice. He had a utopian notion of social justice which was presented in his novels such as *Anna St. Ives* where Anna, a member of the landed gentry took up the cause of the social reform and equality. He was a friend of William Godwin and was very much influenced by his revolutionary ideas.

Elizabeth Inchbald (1753 – 1821): Elizabeth Inchbald was an English novelist, playwright and an actress who made a significant contribution to the English stage. She was married to actor Joseph Inchbald in June 1772 and from then on took acting seriously. On 4th September 1772, she took up the role of Cordelia opposite her husband who was doing the role of Shakespeare's King Lear. Not only she acted, but she also started writing plays and wrote a whole lot of them. Though she wrote many plays, it is her novels for which she is known today. Her novels consist of *A Simple Story* which was published in 1791 and *Nature and Art* (1796). She died in 1821.

William Godwin (1756 – 1836): William Godwin is an English philosopher who also wrote novels. He was born in Cambridgeshire, England in 1756. Godwin moved to London in 1792 and there began his journey of writing. His first significant work came out in 1793 - *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*. It deals with the theme of political anarchism where Godwin argued that people do not need laws till the time they can act rationally. In 1794, his famous novel *Caleb Williams* was published. The novel in some ways examines the issue of misuse of power by the ruling aristocracy. In 1797, William Godwin married Mary Wollstonecraft; but soon she died after giving birth to Mary (Mary Shelley) in 1798. Godwin carried on writing many works. He died at the age of eighty in 1836.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1798)

Mary Wollstonecraft is a radical feminist writer and is often considered as one of the early ones to do so. She was born in Spitalfields, London in 1759. Her most famous work is *Vindication of the Rights of Women* which was published in 1790. She attacked Burke's ideas based on antiquity and tradition. *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) is the only complete work of children's literature. In *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* written in 1786, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a short tract entitled *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, but it was the advent of the French Revolution in 1789 that brought Mary into the public eye. *Mary A Fiction* (1788) was inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's idea that geniuses are self-taught, Wollstonecraft chose a rational, self-taught heroine, Mary, as the central character of her novel. *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark* (1796) is a

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Pioneering feminist Mary Wollstonecraft's *Letters on Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* was her most popular book during her lifetime. Part travel book, part personal, social, and political memoir, her response to nature and society contains some of her most brilliant writing and gives us a genuine insight into her personality.

Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman is unfinished novelistic sequel to her revolutionary political treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). *The Wrongs of Woman* was published posthumously in 1798 by her husband, William Godwin, and has often been considered her most radical feminist work.

Mary Hays (1759-1843): English novelist and feminist Mary Hays was born in Southwark, near London. She was mentored by Robert Robinson, a Baptist preacher, and it was he who introduced her to the teaching of the leading Dissenters of her days, such as George Dyer, Joseph Priestly and William Frend. Frend was her tutor, who had responded to Hays' Defence of dissenting worship and appropriately occupied the place of a mentor after Robinson's death. Her Primary works include *The Hermit an Oriental Tale* (1786), *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796) and *Victim of Prejudice*.

8.5 OTHER MAJOR NOVELISTS OF THE ROMANTIC AGE

Some of the other novelists of the romantic age are as follows:

Fanny Burney (1752 – 1840): Fanny Burney was an eminent British novelist who was born in Norfolk, England in 1752. She started writing early in her life; but her stepmother did not want her to keep on writing and consequently all her writings were burnt down when she was fifteen years old. Even then she continued writing diaries as it was the only way which she knew how to express herself in a creative way. In 1778, her first novel *Evelina or the History of A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* was published anonymously. The novel was heavily praised for its epistolary (Novel written in the form of letters) form and was much highly appreciated by Dr. Samuel Johnson and Edmund Burke. Her second novel *Cecelia or the Memoirs of an Heiress* was also very well appreciated but it was her third novel *Cecelia or the Memoirs of an Heiress* which was a big commercial hit. Fanny Burney died in London in 1840.

Maria Edgeworth (1768 – 1849): Anglo-Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth was born in Blackbourton, Oxfordshire, England in 1768. She was the second child of Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Anna Maria Edgeworth. Edgeworth attended Mrs. Lattafiére's school in Derby until 1780. Her family shifted to Ireland in 1782. Edgeworth's first novel *Castle Rackrent* satirised the conventions of upper - middle class Anglo- Irish landlords and their overall mismanagement of the estates they owned. Her next work, *Belinda* (1801), a society novel was unfortunately marred by her father's insistence on a happy ending. The novel became controversial for its depiction of an interracial marriage between an African servant and an English

farmgirl. However, despite that, it was a popular work. Critics have noted that Jane Austen's heroines owe something to Belinda. Edgeworth's other works include *Essay on Irish Bulls* (1802), *Leonora* (1806), *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809 and 1812), *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812), *Patronage* (1814) her longest novel about political intrigue and the quest for a universal language and *Ormond* (1817), about pre-revolutionary France. After her father's death in 1817, she edited his memoirs, and extended them with her biographical comments. Her last years were spent working for the relief of the famine-stricken Irish peasants during the Irish *Potato Famine* (1845-1849). Edgeworth died of a heart attack on 22nd May, 1849.

Walter Scott (1771 – 1832): A Scottish author and poet, Walter Scott, was born in 1771 in Edinburgh. He is known for his historical novel. He attended Edinburgh High School and studied arts and law at Edinburgh University. Scott was apprenticed to his father in 1786 and in 1792 he was called to the bar. In 1802-03, Scott's first major work, "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" a collection of ballads appeared. This was followed by the 12 years' series of metrical romances. Scott's first novel was a historical novel named *Waverley*. It was set during the Jacobite uprising of 1745, which sought to restore the Stuart dynasty. This was followed by a series of novels of the Jacobite (Stuart) rebellions of the 18th century *Rob Roy* (1817), *Waverley and Red gauntlet* (1824). Other Scottish novels indirectly related to historical themes were *The Black Dwarf* (1816), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) and *The Pirate* (1822). Scott also wrote a group of novels set in his own times: *Guy Mannering* (1815), *The Antiquary* (1816) and *St. Ronan's Well* (1824). Walter Scott died in 1832.

Sir Walter Scott, "the prophesier of things past," brought to the contemporary age interest in the past and with his own splendid gift of imagination he developed an almost a new genre, the historical novel. "To the historical novel," writes Edward Albert, 'he brought a knowledge that was not pedantically exact, but manageable, wide and bountiful. To the sum of this knowledge he added a life-giving force, a vitalizing energy, an insight, and a genial dexterity that made the historical novel an entirely new species. He noted that he did much to develop the domestic novel, which had several representatives in the Waverley series, such as *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary*."

Few novelists before Scott had attempted to write historical fiction. Horace, Walpole, Clara Reeve and Mrs. Radcliffe were concerned in their historical romances with periods sufficiently remote to be invested with romantic charm and to offer scope for the imaginative treatment of history. None of these writers possessed any feeling for historical realism and they made no attempt to induce in the reader "a willing suspension of disbelief". Scott defined the novel as a fictitious narrative in prose or verse because the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society. Scott combined the elements of real life with elements of wonder from old romance and created a new synthesis of historical prose romance.

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His very first novel *Waverley* is “a slight attempt at a sketch of ancient Scottish Inaner. Scott had a comprehensive knowledge of the Scottish past. *Guy Mannering* and *The Antiquary* truthfully picture the manners and a state of society that could breed such characters as *Meg Merrilies*, *Dandie Dinmont*, and *Counsellor Pleydelle*. *The Antiquary* is also important for its peasant humours, which makes it a true picture of the manners of Scotland. *Old Mortality* takes us to the troubled times of Charles II and the rising of Covenanters in 1685, It is a historical monument of the finest pictures of the past, its men, its ideas and manners. In *Ivanhoe*, Scott took up England as his scene, and reconstructed not the eighteenth century he knew, but the Middle Ages.

In order to create historical realism, Scott employed a language approximating to common speech but heightened with poetry and with just enough of archaisms to create an illusion of the past. In his use of the Scottish vernacular, Scott is exceedingly natural and vivacious. His characters who employ Scottish dialect owe much of their freshness and attraction to his happy use of their native tongue.

Jane Austen (1775 – 1817)

Jane Austen was born on 16 December, 1775 in the village of Steventon in Hampshire. In 1801, the family moved to Bath. Austen also started writing – the first called *Elinor and Marianne*, another story told as a series of letters, which would eventually be published as *Sense and Sensibility*. In 1795, Austen met Tom Lefroy. After her brief romance with Lefroy, Austen began work on a second novel called *First Impressions* which would later become *Pride and Prejudice*. *Mansfield Park* appeared in 1814, followed by *Emma* in 1816. None of the books published in Austen’s lifetime had her name on them - they were described as being written ‘By a Lady.’ Austen continued to write *The Elliots* (later published as *Persuasion*). She died on 8th July. 1817.

Her Important Works

- ***Sense and Sensibility* (1811)** – first published novel of Jane Austen written in 1795. It was written in epistolary form (novel written in the form of letters)
- ***Pride and Prejudice* (1813)** – The original title of the novel was *First Impressions*. The opening sentence of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* – “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good-fortune, must be in want of a wife.” The main characters are Elizabeth and Darcy.
- ***Mansfield Park* (1814)** – Centred on the character of Fanny Price.
- ***Emma* (1815)** – Centred on the character of Emma Woodhouse.
- ***Northanger Abbey* (1818)** – It is somewhat a parody of the Gothic novel.
- ***Persuasion* (1818)** – The main character is Anne Elliot.

Unfinished Works

- *The Watsons* (1804)
- *Sanditon* (1817)

Jane Austen represents in her novels the world that she knew and the influences that she saw at work. The chief business of these people, as Austen saw them, was attention to social duties. Their chief interest was matrimony. Themes of personal relationships fascinated her and were therefore, a part of her writing. There is scarcely any feeling for external nature in her novels, except in *Persuasion*. Jane Austen's novels are domestic comedies of a high order. Jane Austen is a gentle humorist. She had a keen sense of the absurdities of men and women, but she was never harsh or unkind. Austen is seldom satirical, but her satire is always gentle, seldom severe and never savage. She brilliantly uses irony in social comedies, her gentle strokes of irony are charming. Love and marriage form an important element in Jane Austen's novels. Hers was a practical idealism. In most of her novels, there is no reference to the radical themes of her times – the French revolution and other revolutionary and radical changes that are happening around that time. This has often led critics to think that she is apolitical in her writings; but it is to be understood that Jane Austen is primarily dealing in her novels with the world of women who were not so conversant with the political happenings at that point of time. For a female, the only option left in life was to find a suitable groom for herself so as to live life comfortably. There was no place for unmarried women and women could not pursue a career of their own. In those circumstances, it was decisive that Jane Austen portrayed in her novels, characters who looked forward to getting married. Jane Austen's art of characterization has not been excelled by any writer. She deftly reproduced those men and women whom she found crowding about her tea parties, her church gatherings, her balls and she reproduced them for us with an unemotional fidelity, sometimes a little crude, but never unfair. All her characters are living, breathing realities. Often people are of the view that she is not a feminist enough even though she writes about the female characters. But it is to be understood again that Jane Austen makes an implicit statement by simply disregarding certain strictures of her era that may not be obvious to modern readers. For example, most of Jane Austen's heroines (Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elinor Dashwood in *Sense and Sensibility*, Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*, Anne Elliot in *Persuasion*, and even Emma Woodhouse in *Emma*) do not have people around them whom they can confide in. In their lives, they have to make their own decisions and live life more or less independently. Jane Austen occupies a high place in English novel. She imparted realism to English novel in an age of Romanticism. She pioneered the comedy of manners successfully and introduced dramatic clement.

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Let Us Sum Up

Though the Romantic Age is usually known for its poetry (The Six Romantic poets – Wordsworth, Shelley, Blake, Keats, Byron and Coleridge, which we will be getting acquainted in the next unit), it is also an age which saw tremendous growth in prose writings – especially essays and novels.

Check Your Progress

7. What does *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* deal with?
8. Name some works of Maria Edgeworth.
9. What was the setting of *Waverley*?
10. What did Walter Scott do to create historical realism?

8.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Romantic Age began with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the year 1798.
2. The Second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* came out in 1800 with a Preface by Wordsworth.
3. Thomas De Quincey's first major work was *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, which appeared in *London Magazine* in 1821.
4. In the later part of his life, Quincey published *The Logic of the Political Economy* (1844), a dissertation on David Ricardo's economic theory and *Suspiria De Profundis* (1845), the sequel to his *Confessions*, in which he documented his childhood, dreams and fantasies.
5. Gothic writers are interested in the breakdown of boundaries, in the exploration of what is forbidden in desire that should neither be spoken off nor acted upon.
6. The three significant archetypes that are used in Gothic fiction are:
 - the figure of Seeker after forbidden Knowledge,
 - the wanderer
 - the vampire (usually an anti-bourgeois figure)
7. *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* deals with the theme of political anarchism where Godwin argued that people do not need laws till the time they can act rationally.

8. Maria Edgeworth's works include *Essay on Irish Bulls* (1802), *Leonora* (1806), *Tales of Fashionable Life* (1809 and 1812), *Ennui* (1809), *The Absentee* (1812), *Patronage* (1814) her longest novel about political intrigue and the quest for a universal language and *Ormond* (1817), about pre-revolutionary France.
9. *Waverly* was set during the Jacobite uprising of 1745, which sought to restore the Stuart dynasty.
10. In order to create historical realism, Scott employed a language approximating to common speech but heightened with poetry and with just enough of archaisms to create an illusion of the past.

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8.7 SUMMARY

- The Romantic Age began with the publication of Lyrical Ballads by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the year 1798.
- Every age is either a reaction to the age preceding it or a continuation of the earlier age with subtle changes. In the case of romantic age, we see, that it is a complete reversal of the Age of Reason.
- Lamb's style is the expression of his personality. Rickett writes: "His style is a mixture certainly of many styles, but a chemical, not a mechanical mixture." Lamb's style is noticeable for its immense variety.
- Thomas De Quincey, the famous essayist from Romantic Age, is known for his writings such as *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1822) and *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth* (1823).
- Thomas De Quincey skilfully recreated the poetic prose of the seventeenth century. He successfully attempted to create a new style which combines the best elements of prose and poetry. Consequently, his prose works are often, like those of Milton, more imaginative and melodious than much of our poetry.
- In *Literary Miscellany*, Thomas Love Peacock wrote about the gradual origin and development of poetry in four ages: Age of Iron; Age of Gold; Age of Silver and Age of Brass.
- The setting of the Gothic novels is very significant in the initial novels that were published where the atmosphere of horror and dread was produced through decaying, ruined scenery.
- Mary Shelley was the daughter of William Godwin (famous political writer of the Age) and Mary Wollstonecraft (often considered as the first feminist writer).

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- Thomas Holcroft's *Anna St Ives* is thought to be the first Jacobin Novel. The idea of the term "Jacobin" was taken from a journal named *Anti-Jacobin or Weekly Examiner* which was founded by Tory politician George Canning.
- Thomas Holcroft believed in social justice. He had a utopian notion of social justice which was presented in his novels such as *Anna St. Ives* where Anna, a member of the landed gentry took up the cause of the social reform and equality.
- Godwin moved to London in 1792 and there began his journey of writing. His first significant work came out in 1793 - *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness*.
- In *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* written in 1786, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a short tract entitled *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, but it was the advent of the French Revolution in 1789 that brought Mary into the public eye.
- In 1778, Fanny Burney's first novel *Evelina or the History of A Young Lady's Entrance into the World* was published anonymously. The novel was heavily praised for its epistolary (Novel written in the form of letters) form and was much highly appreciated by Dr. Samuel Johnson and Edmund Burke.
- In 1802-03, Scott's first major work, "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" a collection of ballads appeared. This was followed by the 12 years' series of metrical romances.
- Scott defined the novel as a fictitious narrative in prose or verse because the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society.
- In his use of the Scottish vernacular, Scott is exceedingly natural and vivacious. His characters who employ Scottish dialect owe much of their freshness and attraction to his happy use of their native tongue.
- Jane Austen represents in her novels the world that she knew and the influences that she saw at work. The chief business of these people, as Austen saw them, was attention to social duties. Their chief interest was matrimony.
- Jane Austen's art of characterization has not been excelled by any writer. She deftly reproduced those men and women whom she found crowding about her tea parties, her church gatherings, her balls and she reproduced them for us with an unemotional fidelity, sometimes a little crude, but never unfair.

8.8 KEY WORDS

- **Gothic Novel:** It refers to an English genre of fiction popular in the 18th to early 19th centuries, characterized by an atmosphere of mystery and horror and having a pseudo-medieval setting.
- **Tutelage:** It is the protection of or authority over someone or something; guardianship.
- **Humorist:** It is an intellectual who uses humor in writing or public speaking, but is not an artist who seeks only to elicit laughs.
- **Idealism:** It refers to the unrealistic belief in or pursuit of perfection.
- **Realism:** It is generally the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding speculative fiction and supernatural elements.
- **Aphorism:** It is a concise, terse, laconic, or memorable expression of a general truth or principle.

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8.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Name the six major male romantic poets.
2. What was Romanticism a reaction against?
3. Mention some of the famous works by Quincey.
4. Write a short note on the four ages of poetry development.
5. Who wrote the first Gothic novel?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss Quincey's notable works and writing style.
2. Analyze the setting and chief characteristics of the Gothic novel.
3. Examine the origin and meaning of the term 'Jacobin'.
4. Elaborate upon the early life and works of Jane Austen.

8.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 9 THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH: THE POETS

*The Age of Wordsworth:
The Poets*

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Structure

- 9.0 Introduction
- 9.1 Objectives
- 9.2 William Wordsworth
- 9.3 Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- 9.4 P. B. Shelley
- 9.5 John Keats
- 9.6 William Blake
- 9.7 Lord Byron
- 9.8 Robert Southey (1774 – 1843)
- 9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 9.10 Summary
- 9.11 Key Words
- 9.12 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 9.13 Further Readings

9.0 INTRODUCTION

Already a general introduction to the Romantic Age and its poetry has been given in the beginning of the last unit. This unit will be dealing with seven major poets – William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, John Keats, William Blake, Lord Byron and Robert Southey.

9.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the Romantic poets - William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, John Keats, William Blake, Lord Byron and Robert Southey
- Analyze the main concerns of the Romantic poets

9.2 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The governing word of the Age of Reason is 'Reason' and the dominating word of the Eighteenth century (also termed Neo-Classical Age) literature is 'diction'. The Romantics tried to oppose both these words and these words were replaced. Reason was replaced by Imagination/ Emotion; and 'diction' of the 18th century

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poetry was replaced by the language of the common man as William Wordsworth talks about it in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Thus, we see a stark contrast between the eighteenth-century poetry and the poems of the Romantics. The satiric tones of the poems of Pope, Dryden, Johnson, Gray are not seen in the poems of the Romantics.

But it is not that this change that we perceive, happened suddenly. Any change is moreover a gradual process. And this change of outlook about writing poetry was also a gradual one. The Pre-Romantics (Thomson, Gray and others; some literary scholars even include William Blake in the list of the Pre-Romantics) had their contribution in achieving this change in the path of the English literature. But Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* emphasized the aims and objectives of the new poetry. According to William Wordsworth, the subject of the new poetry should be taken from the ordinary and commonplace life and coloured with Imagination to make it poetic and to write in the language of the common man.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850) brought a completely new approach to the writing of English poetry. His objections to an over-stylized poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple incidents and humble people as subjects for his poetry – these well-known characteristics of his art but minor aspects of his revolutionary achievement. Poetry for him was primarily the record of a certain kind of state of mind, and the value of poetry for him lay in the value of the state of mind which the poem recorded.

In his famous Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth proceeded to define poetry by first asking “What is a Poet?” A poet for Wordsworth was a man of unusual emotional vitality whose perceptions of his fellow men and of the world of external nature yielded intuitions of the relation of one to the other and of the psychological and moral truths underlying all existence. The poetic process is not something that happens in an instant; but it is an emotion which is recollected in tranquillity as the poet tries to bring his experience to an awareness of universal significance. The poet here works in manner through which he tries to talk about his personal emotions in such a way so as to create a human feeling which every reader can experience and understand. The poet is thus a man of extraordinary calibre who has emotions which he can put to words for his readers in an ordinary way so that the readers are able to experience that emotion.

William Wordsworth was very much influenced by the philosophical, social as well as political happenings of the time and in his writings, we can always find the reference to the situations of those times. The French Revolution and the social and political thought preceding and succeeding the revolution finds manifestation in his poems. It is also the “democratic upbringing in the elemental countryside of the Lake District” as pointed out by David Daiches which also is a significant factor in the shaping up of the poetic mind of William Wordsworth.

Wordsworth's Definition of Poetry

One of the key issues William Wordsworth deals within the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* is the notion of poetry. For Wordsworth, "... **all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings**: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits, we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the Reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified."

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Wordsworth took a walking tour of France and Switzerland in 1790 and a visit to France in 1792. These visits to France made him come in direct contact with the tenets of the French Revolution and how the people of France overthrew the tyrannical regime in France.

In his first published poem "*An Evening Walk*" (published in 1793) there are influences of the French poets such as Rosset, Roucher, and Delille. **Wordsworth's *Descriptive Sketches*, also published in 1793**, is another significant work dealing with his alpine tour of 1790.

Lyrical Ballads were planned with Coleridge in 1797, when Wordsworth was living at Racedown with his sister. The volume appeared the following year, with four poems by Coleridge (including *The Rime of Ancient Mariner*) and nineteen by Wordsworth. The materials of poetry can be found "in every subject which can interest the human mind" and explained that these poems were experiments written chiefly "to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure." The real point is that Wordsworth wanted a minimum of stylization because he was not working in any poetic tradition but kindling poetry from the naked experience, as it were. This is always a dangerous thing to do for there is no conventional poetic effect to fall back on if the kindling does not take place.

Wordsworth's task was not simply to describe the thing seen or the incident encountered or heard of, still less to render these things in a conventional poetic medium; he had to put it across with such naked force that the poet's feeling about it when he later revoked the original perception, the poet's feeling about it when he later revoked the original perception, the poet's sense of its importance, became immediately clear to the reader. Wordsworth was not a dramatic poet; his vein was what Keats called the "**egotistical sublime**". His greatest poems are those where autobiography, perception, and narrative are woven seamlessly into one texture.

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“*The Idiot Boy*” is a poem of strange power deriving from Wordsworth’s ability to show the *interestingness* of this commonplace incident as he tells it. In the careful precision with which the actions are handled, in the clearly etched imagery and carefully chosen detail, the poet’s humane curiosity shines through; the story is made to seem relevant, the characters to share something important with humanity.

The poem “*Tintern Abbey*” is one of the most important poems of the 1798 volume of *Lyrical Ballads* where Wordsworth creates something new – from the meditative verses of the eighteenth century, he creates a personal idiom which is very significant in terms of bringing the organic quality to his writing. The semi-autobiographical experimentation in the poem is something that was new to the field of literature and Wordsworth later tries to emulate the same model in his magnum opus *The Prelude*.

In 1800, William Wordsworth etched out the famous Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. In the Preface, he developed and presented

- (a) his views of the nature of the poetic process,
- (b) the origin and purpose of poetry, as well as
- (c) the language most suitable for it.

In his poems such as “*Michael*,” in “*Resolution and Independence*”, in the *Lucy poems*, in “*The Old Cumberland Beggar*” as well as in other poems, William Wordsworth very magnificently brings about an extraordinary freshness with poetic suggestiveness. William Wordsworth’s “*Immortality Ode*” is even remembered today for its reflective quality as well as the way in which he points out the developing soul of the poet which he also did in this poem “*Tintern Abbey*.”

Wordsworth presents his gift of the “egotistical sublime” in his remarkable poetic art *The Prelude*. The first version of the poem was completed in 1805 but Wordsworth kept on rewriting certain parts of it throughout his life and the final version came out in 1850 immediately after his death.

“I wandered lonely as a cloud” has a restrained eloquence, an almost rhetorical clan, with the pattern of rhyme and rhythm providing a relish and a sense of *Einfühlung*. “*The Solitary Reaper*” does something similar in a more subdued and melodious manner. There is yet another kind of Wordsworthian simplicity, related to some of those just discussed yet distinctive. It represents something he was often moving toward but rarely attained absolutely.

A Short Note on Wordsworth’s *The Prelude*

Studying *The Prelude* can be one of the finest ways to William Wordsworth’s poetry in general and his philosophy of nature in particular. Though apparently *The Prelude* seems to be a simple account of the poet’s own life, but the long poem should not be treated merely as an autobiography as it bypasses the genre of autobiography to provide a philosophical account of the romantic movement, primarily that of the romantic concern of Nature and man’s relation to

it. The poem begins in Wordsworth's boyhood and continues till 1798, the year when his *Lyrical Ballads* was published. The year, 1798, is significant in his life as Wordsworth felt that by that time his formative years of being a poet had passed, and his poetic powers are mature.

Wordsworth finished in 1805 but was carefully and constantly revised until 1850, when it was published posthumously. But the 1805 version of *The Prelude* is not the final text, Wordsworth carried on revising it many a times and it was published posthumously in 1850. The 1805 draft was resurrected by Ernest de Selincourt and first published in 1926. A comparison of the 1805 version with the 1850 (and final) version shows the vast change the work underwent. Some passages in the earlier version do not appear at all in the later; others are altered almost beyond recognition.

The Prelude is not a poem which deals with any particular action; actions are incidental, it is primarily a poem of ideas. Though if one tries to talk about the poems from the point of view of the ideas and actions one can easily divide the poem in the following sections:•

Books 1-7: description of William Wordsworth's boyhood and youthful environment;

Book 8: a kind of reprise;

Books 9-11: depict Wordsworth's exciting adventures in France and London;
•Books 12-14: mostly metaphysical and devoted to an attempt at a philosophy of art, with the end of the last book giving a little summary. Thus, *The Prelude* can be roughly divided into three sections which deal with three distinct phases of the poet's life and his poetic development –

The first dates from the time of his intuitive reliance on nature, when he wrote simple and graceful lyrics.

The second part represents his days of hope for, and the consequent disappointment with the French Revolution as well as his adoption of Godwinian rationalism.

The third part deals with orthodoxy of his life in the later years in which he wrote works like *The Excursion* and *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*.

The Prelude, thus, is critical to Wordsworth's poetic career as it is the work which helps in understanding the different phases of Wordsworth's career as a poet.

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Check Your Progress

1. What were 'Reason' and 'diction' replaced by in the Romantic Age?
2. What are some of the well-known characteristics of Wordsworth's art?
3. Why did Wordsworth want a minimum stylization in *Lyrical Ballads*?
4. What are Books 12-14 of *The Prelude* devoted to?

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9.3 SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (21 October 1772 – 25 July 1834) is considered to be one of the founders of the Romantic Movement in England and a member of the Lake Poets. He is famous for his poems like *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*, *Dejection: An Ode* as well as critical work like *Biographia Literaria*. His critical work, especially on Shakespeare, was highly influential, and he helped introduce German idealist philosophy to English-speaking culture. Coleridge's early intellectual debts, besides German idealists like Kant and critics like Lessing, were first to William Godwin's *Political Justice*. But throughout his adult life, Coleridge suffered from crippling bouts of anxiety and depression.

At the university, he was introduced to political and theological ideas then considered radical, including those of the poet Robert Southey. Coleridge joined Southey in a plan, soon abandoned, to establish a utopian commune-like society, called Pantisocracy, in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. In 1795, the two friends married the sisters, Sarah and Edith Fricker, in St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, but Coleridge's marriage with Sarah proved unhappy. The period 1797 - 1798 was the most fruitful of Coleridge's life. In 1795, Coleridge met poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and from then on, an association then developed which culminated in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*. In this period, Coleridge wrote the famous poems such as *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, as well as *Christabel*. During this period, he also wrote his "conversation" poems *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison*, *Frost at Midnight*, and *The Nightingale*. In 1798, Coleridge and Wordsworth published a joint volume of poetry, *Lyrical Ballads*, which heralded the romantic age. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* was published in *Lyrical Ballads*.

In 1800, he settled with his family and friends in the Lake District of Cumberland. Soon, he was surrounded with many problems such as marital disharmony, nightmares, illnesses which led to his increased opium dependency as well as his tensions with Wordsworth. It was also a time when he thought that he had fewer poetic powers. All these anguishes led him to compose *Dejection: An Ode*. In 1804, he travelled to Sicily and Malta and it was at that time that he became a full-blown opium addict. His opium addiction began to take over his life: he separated from his wife Sarah in 1808 and quarrelled with Wordsworth in 1810. In 1817, Coleridge finished his major prose work, the *Biographia Literaria* (1817). Samuel Taylor Coleridge died on July 25, 1834 at the age of 61.

Wordsworth, in the *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*, has talked about how imagination should be the means through which one has to color the commonplace incidents of one's life. He spoke of poetry as a "work of imagination and sentiment." Keats wrote in a letter in 1819 – "I describe what I imagine." Thus, all the Romantics are preoccupied with imagination though it's Samuel Taylor Coleridge who tried

to theoretically and critically talk about Imagination in his book of criticism named *Imagination*. Coleridge writes –

“The imagination, then, I consider either as primary, or secondary. The Primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the Infinite I AM. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet as identical with the primary in its kind of agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

Fancy, on the contrary has no other counters to play with, but with fixities and definites. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space ...”

The Primary Imagination, according to Coleridge, is the only means through which the poet can transcend the worries, tensions and pains of this reality so as to communicate with the “infinite” or the ‘divine’ and get some access to the ideal world of His. According to him, the only poetic means through which a poet can surpass the “fixities and definites” of the world of Fancy is Primary Imagination. He makes a distinction between the fanciful and the imaginative poet when he compares John Milton and Abraham Cowley, and says – “Milton is an imaginative poet, whereas Cowley, a fanciful one.”

But the poet’s work is not only that of a seer, as he does it while getting into the mode of perceiving the supreme reality with the Primary Imagination. His next role is that of a prophet, where his duty is to talk about the things that he has perceived in his primary imagination. So, the poet now tries to concretize the perception of the Primary Imagination through Secondary one. But as Coleridge says it is not altogether possible to recreate the things of the primary imagination, as the secondary imagination “dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create.” Therefore, it is never possible for any imaginative poet to be very content with the things that his creative work as the essence of what he had perceived through his primary imagination is gone if not fully, but partially.

9.4 P. B. SHELLEY

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 August 1792 – 8 July 1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets who is radical in his poetry as well as his political and social views. P. B. Shelley is known for his poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud* and *The Masque of Anarchy*. His other major works are *Queen Mab*, *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonais*, the unfinished work *The Triumph of Life*; as well as the visionary verse dramas *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

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On 10 April 1810, he matriculated at University College, Oxford. His first publication was a Gothic novel, *Zastrozzi* (1810). In 1811, Shelley published his second Gothic novel, *St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian*, and a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism* which resulted in his expulsion from Oxford on 25 March 1811. Thereafter, the 19-year-old Shelley went to Scotland eloping with 16-year-old Harriet Westbrook though he soon became increasingly unhappy in his marriage to Harriet. On 28 July 1814, Shelley abandoned Harriet and ran away to Switzerland with Mary, daughter of William Godwin (Shelley's mentor) and Mary Wollstonecraft. In late 1815, while living close to London with Mary, Shelley wrote *Alastor; or The Spirit of Solitude*. Shelley's major production after this was *Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City* which was later edited and republished as *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818. Early in 1818, Shelley began the long verse drama *Prometheus Unbound*. Shelley completed *Prometheus Unbound* in Rome, and he spent mid-1819 writing a tragedy, *The Cenci*.

Prometheus Unbound is a four-act lyrical drama written by Percy Bysshe Shelley which was first published in 1820. The play portrayed the torments of the Greek mythological figure Prometheus and his suffering at the hands of Zeus. The play was inspired by the classical *Prometheia*, a trilogy of plays attributed to the classical Greek Dramatist Aeschylus. But P.B. Shelley is not doing a translation or transliteration of Aeschylus' plays – Shelley's play is different in its treatment from Aeschylus. Shelley took only that part of the play which was essential for him to convey the message of how Prometheus is a rebellious figure, who rebelled against the tyranny of Zeus. Therefore, Shelley's play concerns Prometheus' release from captivity, but unlike Aeschylus' version, there is no reconciliation between Prometheus and Jupiter (Zeus). Instead, Jupiter is overthrown, which allows Prometheus to be released.

One has to keep in mind that P. B. Shelley's lyrical play is not supposed to be performed on stage; instead it is a closet drama, which is produced on the stage of the mind of the readers. In other words, the imagination of the readers makes them visualize the play in their minds while they are reading the play. Thus, *Prometheus Unbound* is a play which is meant to be read rather than staged. Though the format of the text is that of a play, but it is usually considered to be one of the best poetries ever written.

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world" – this statement of Shelley itself points out what he thought to be the role of the poet in society. The poet, according to Shelley, is always striving for the ideal, trying to always provide a better model from the then society so that the people living at that time have a better life. Shelley's poems deal with this ideal and therefore make a critique of the existing society. Therefore, the revolutionary characters, whether Satan or Prometheus, become heroic for Shelley as they question the tyranny of the existing order and try to come up with a better world. In choosing Prometheus as the hero for his lyrical drama, P. B. Shelley is choosing the theme of questioning the tyrannical

authority which is in keeping with the rebellious spirit of the French Revolution (1789).

Utopia is the ideal – whether you talk about it as Ideal Beauty or the Absolute Truth. Throughout the Romantic Age, most of the Romantic Poets tried to search for the ideal world. P. B. Shelley wrote that “the poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” They are legislators because they always are unhappy with the present state of affairs and try to provide a better version of the reality to the readers. But the problem is that, at no point of time they are accepted as the people who can make rational choices and decisions. From the time of the classical Greece, especially Plato, there has always been a notion that poetry waters the emotional self of a human being. The rational faculty is not at all used in the process of the creation or the reading of poems. And the rational faculty or the ‘Reason’ is always given preference in different ages according to the dominant theme of the day. We have already seen that the 18th century thought very badly about the emotional or imaginative writing and moreover was concerned with reason. Romanticism is a revolt against this notion of the world which proclaims that the world should be governed by reason. Marilyn Butler writes –

“Romantic artist’s conception of Himself as a certain kind of Producer. Romanticism inflates the role of the artist, for it is expressive where neoclassicism is mimetic; it is hostile to external authority and acknowledges no imperatives other than truth to the artist’s experience.”

Or as Rene Wellek says, –

“They all (the Romantic poets) see the implication of imagination, symbol, myth and organic nature, and see it as part of the great endeavour to overcome the split between the subject and object, the self and the world, the conscious and the unconscious. That is the central creed of the great Romantic poets in England, Germany and France. It is a closely coherent body of thought and feeling.”

The Romantic Poets are all rebels as Marilyn Butler’s book *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* portrays. We see Satan becoming the hero of John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Blake writes – “Milton is with devil’s party without knowing it.” Satan, Prometheus – all the rebellious characters of the western mythology became heroes of the age who revolted against God. We see P. B. Shelley championing the spirit of Prometheus in *Prometheus Unbound*. Thus, the celebration of the individual is one of the dominant themes of the age. But more important than that is rebellious temperament of theirs. We have already talked about how Wordsworth and Coleridge revolted against the rational spirit, classicism, and diction of the 18th century writing. French Revolution (1789) has much to do in building up the romantic poet’s revolutionary fervour. We see William Blake talking about the high hopes of the French revolution in His Songs of experience and trying to locate the failures of it in the Songs of Innocence.

The main tenets of French revolution were that of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Rousseau, Voltaire and other writers of the Pre-French Revolution period

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provided the ideas of the rights of the common man and made the men of France aware of their need to overthrow the monarchical form of government, to fight against the oppressive and suppressive authorities. The Romantic poets were influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and their temperament got that revolutionary spirit. That is the reason the mythical rebellious figures of the European civilization were championed by the Romantic poets. Promethean spirit is celebrated in P. B. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* also has a subtitle called 'The Modern Prometheus'. Moreover, we see that Milton's Satan also becomes a hero of *Paradise Lost* in the Romantic age. These rebellious spirit of the poets are a product of the French revolution.

William Wordsworth writes about French revolution –

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive

But to be young was very heaven.

Thus, the French revolution was for them one of the most inspiring events. P. B. Shelley in *Ode to the West Wind* tries to celebrate the rebellious spirit of the poet when he personifies that spirit in nature in the nature of the west wind. Donald H. Reiman says "the ode embodies the conflicting themes of the poet's personal despair and his hopes for social renewal in the images drawn from the seasonal cycle." West wind is the wind of the spring, as well as the autumn. In autumn, west wind is a destroyer, and in spring, it's a preserver, according to Shelley –

"Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere;

Destroyer and Preserver"

West wind is the "breath of autumn's being" which leaves its unseen presence in dead leaves and "pestilence-stricken multitudes" become the "living hues" of the "dreaming earth" in the spring. The west wind can be the spirit of revolution which destroys the old order and invites the new order to settle itself in a new form to make the society worth living. According to Pirie, "it is a political poem in the sense that all Shelley's poems are seeking a better world, a new life to replace the old systems and old corruptions. The wind of autumn is a perfect symbol of a moving and cleansing power, evident in natural world of what was so poignantly missing in the human."

Some critics also do see the west wind as the poetic inspiration that makes the poet create new poetry. According to Scrivener, "in the ode, Shelley offers himself as a fiery inspiration . . . inspiration entails destruction of the poet's merely human self so that in '*Ode to the West Wind*' he becomes a fine apocalypse and in '*To a Skylark*' he achieves Madness." Therefore, in the end of the poem, the poet does not want himself to be like the West wind, instead asks the West wind to be a part of him –

"Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!

Be through my lips to unawakened earth."

Thus the west wind is nothing but the metaphor for poetic inspiration that can change the worldview – "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" the

optimistic note suggests not to be sad about the destruction and consequent chaos as from within the chaos the cosmos will arrive. This note of the arrival of the ideal from the destruction of the present disorder is the message that the poet wants to provide his readers. In this process the west wind is nothing but an instrument of change which makes it possible to relocate the “winged seeds” in the spring to give birth to new plants which will make the greenery comes back again. Thus, for Shelley, West wind represents that rebellious power which can bring the change to the suffering humanity, and which can help in the destruction of the obsolete, unwanted, dead institutions and beliefs in order to regenerate the world.

Similarly, in ‘*Ode to Liberty*’, P. B. Shelley makes a scathing attack on the despotic rulers and also on the priests –

Like one fierce could over the waste of waves

Hung tyranny; beneath, sate deified

The sister – pest, congregation of slaves.

Shelley refers to the tyrannical ruler as “one fierce could” that has overshadowed the humane element; and also refers to the priests as “the sister pest” who helped the rulers in carrying on with the oppression of the common man. The institution of the King as the divine ruler and the priest as the divine son is being attacked here so as to make the readers realize the falsity of the whole argument of the divine rights of Kings and priests.

In the next part of the poem Shelley goes on to praise the classical age – Athens and Rome, in praising their love for freedom, as he writes –

“One sun illuminates heaven; one spirit vast

With life and love makes chaos ever new.

As Athens doth, the world with thy delight renew.”

The poet goes on to praise Saxon Alfred and Luther for their liberating spirit which made the humanity renew their hope in the concept of liberty which meant a desolation for the destroyer and a renewed hope for men –

“Men started, staggering with glad surprise,

Under lightings of thine unfamiliar eyes.”

Thus, the poet throughout the poem tries to suggest that only in the end of the monarchy will the ideal be reached where everyone could be happy forever. The search for the ideal is one of the characteristics of the Romantic age, as we have talked about it earlier. Keats and Coleridge also tried to search the utopian state in their poetry. Shelley is trying to do the same here in *Ode to Liberty*, where the ideal world can only be achieved in the post – Monarchical era.

Poet then turns to England and says –

“England yet sleeps: Was she not called of old?

Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder ...

To the eternal years enthroned before us

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In the dim West; impress us from a seal

All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal.”

It refers to the Spanish revolution which evokes in the poet the love for the Spanish ideal of achieving liberty. The poem ‘*Ode to Liberty*’ starts with the celebration of the Spanish revolution and coming to the thirteenth stanza Shelley makes the voice appeal to England and its inhabitants to come up to the ideals of Spain and fight the Monarchy that exist in Britain.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth stanzas, Shelley again launches a vehement attack against the Kings and the priest respectively and in seventeenth stanza goes on to describe the role of man in such a state –

“Checks the great Mother stooping to caress her,

And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion

Overall height and depth?”

Thus, Shelley is of the opinion that the concept of Liberty should emerge from man’s mind and heart –

“Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave

Of man’s deep spirit, as the morning star

Beckons the sun from the Eoan wave,

Wisdom.”

The day people will get the wisdom they will break all barriers to remove monarchy and oppression from this world and a harmony will be achieved –

“By blood or tears, have not the wise and free

Wept tears, and blood like tears? – The solemn harmony.”

The poet, thus through the poem ‘*Ode to Liberty*’ tries to evoke the feeling of harmony that they can achieve if they can overthrow the oppressing rulers and priests from the thrones. The harmony is nothing but the ideal that the poet wants to achieve in this world. But he alone cannot do anything to achieve that harmony, so he appeals to his readers to do the same so that the world becomes a nicer place to live in.

Check Your Progress

5. What was Shelley’s major production after *Alastor*, or *The Spirit of Solitude*?
6. Why do the revolutionary characters like Satan and Prometheus become heroic for Shelley?
7. Why did the Romantic poets champion the mythical rebellious figures of the European civilization?

9.5 JOHN KEATS

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John Keats (31 October 1795 – 23 February 1821) can be said to be one of the main poets of the second generation of Romantics, the others being Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Being not from a rich family, Keats' parents were unable to afford Eton or Harrow, so in the summer of 1803, he was sent to board at John Clarke's school in Enfield, close to his grandparents' house. Keats was registered as a medical student at Guy's Hospital (now part of King's College London) and began studying there in October 1815. But the medical profession increasingly encroached upon his writing time, and he became ambivalent towards his medical career. In October, Clarke introduced Keats to the influential Leigh Hunt, a close friend of Byron and Shelley. Five months later came the publication of *Poems*, the first volume of Keats's verse. In spite of the bad reviews of *Poems*, Hunt published the essay "Three Young Poets" (Shelley, Keats, and Reynolds) and the sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer."

The winter of 1818–19 was a period of most difficulty for Keats, but it was also a period in which Keats wrote much of his mature works – he composed five of his six great odes at Wentworth Place in April and May. "Ode to Psyche" probably is the first one in the series though scholars doubt the exact chronology in which they were written. "Ode to a Nightingale", "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode on Melancholy" and "Ode to Autumn" are the famous odes that Keats wrote in this period. Apart from the odes, in 1819, Keats wrote *The Eve of St. Agnes*, "La Belle Dame sans Merci", *Hyperion*, *Lamia* as well as *Otho*. John Keats died in Rome on 23 February, 1821 and was buried in the Protestant Cemetery, Rome.

This search for the ideal/utopia is also the main theme of Keats' odes. In one of his letters to his brother George, Keats wrote – "I am straining at the particles of light in the midst of darkness . . ." This line from his letters aptly serves to talk about the theme of Keats' poetry. Wordsworth and Shelley saw nature as an inspiring force, but Keatsian concept was that "scenery is fine, but human nature is finer." He had a romantic taste for the awe-inspiring manifestations of nature. But the distinct quality of individualism of the solitary artist at odds with society, was very much a part of Keats' sensibility. From this isolation, Keats won a vision of life which embodied a "Negative Capability" –

"Where a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts without any irritable reaching after fact and reason."

Unlike the impassioned self-projection and self-dramatization of Byron and Shelley, Keats strove to objectify his emotions and feelings into a universal form. He believed that man possesses an inherent power by which he can conquer his self-regarding instincts and attain the heights of selflessness. Keats' poetic world not only comprised the "imagined" but also the far off, remote world of myth and legend, feelings and intuitions, which are the pure activities of the imagination.

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For Keats, Greek paganism held strange and necessary elements of experience, as he said in a letter to B. Barton – “What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth.” Keats’ early works exhibit a progressive adaptation of myth and humanitarian symbolism while Keats initially found in Classical Mythology a satisfying system of values, he soon came to realize its insufficiency. The realization, which probably is marked in the third book of *Endymion*, was no doubt painful, but it also led him to a search for new systems of thought. And it is this sense of urgency that makes Keats’ poems and letters so moving a record.

In the great *Odes*, Keats realizes that his visions of beauty and truth are transitory moments which he must strive to experience to the fullest. Most of his odes have a close connection of thought and sequence of mood. Ernest de Selincourt finds the odes bound together only by a similar chain of thought and a unity of feeling. They not only sum up Keatsian attitude to life, but are the expressions, in varying keys of emotions, of a mind which had loved the principle of beauty in all things. Wilson Knight too suggests that Keats achieved a kind of resolution in the odes.

The Ode on Indolence portrays a mood which in the embryo of the “melancholy”; *To Psyche* personifies the deity – “the winged psyche” – with beauty, which is one of the forms with which dwells melancholy. *On Melancholy* displays the growth; intensity and climax of the mood revealed in the earlier two odes. *To A Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* centre on natural objects of unusual beauty and significance and the poet in their presence becomes oblivious of the outside world and loses himself in contemplation. He tries to seek a self-identification in order to lift himself above the world of flux, but in the end realizes that these moments in which one enters “onto a sort of oneness” and becomes a “floating spirit” are brief. Thus, emerges the painful contrast of flux and stability as the poet is compelled to return to this world of pain and sorrow. On the other hand, Keats believed that maturity comes with the acceptance of pain and suffering as he continually grappled with various approaches to meet the challenge of human predicament. But if pain be inescapable in human destiny, this pain must be meaningful and absolute joy cannot be experienced without intense agony. While searching for a positive significance of pain, Keats affirmed in the soul making letter that pain heightens consciousness and, in the process, liberates the mind from the bondage of experience.

The characteristic use of “rich” in the phrase “seems it rich to die” meaning pleasant or precious, is used in *To Melancholy* – “if thy mistress some rich anger shows.” We can take the poem as an imaginative piece of complexity and intensity of human experience, as it is evident from the last stanza of *To Melancholy* –

“She dwells with Beauty – Beauty that must die;
And joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:

Ay, in the very temple of Delight
 Veiled Melancholy has her Sovran shrine
 Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
 Can burst joy's grape against his palate fine;
 His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
 And be among her cloudy trophies hung."

The finiteness, mortality and flux are what pains the poet's self throughout his poetic journey in the odes. *Ode to a Nightingale* therefore begins in the similar note where we see a sad poet trying to make use of 'hemlock' and "blushful Hippocrene" to forget the pains and sufferings of this world –

"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains"

Then Keats goes on enumerating the things that we want to get away from and he lists the causes of woe –

"Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
 What thou among the leaves hast never known,
 The weariness, the fever, and the fret
 Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
 Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last grey hairs,
 Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
 Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
 And leaden-eyed despairs;
 Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
 Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow."

Thus, the poet in *Ode to a Nightingale* tries to fade far away from the world of woes to the word of the "immortal Bird" nightingale through the "view less wings of Poesy." But we find out that the poetic journey of Keats ends in a failure as he even finds faults with the world of nightingale which he earlier thought to be the perfect world, as his sense of sight stopped working as soon as he reaches the nightingale's world –

"I cannot see what flowers are at my feet.
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
 But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows"

There the poet is still "half in love with the easeful death" though when he thinks of death as the balm to the poet's sad self, he is reminded that this song of nightingale will then turn into a "requiem." He understands that the poet may die but this bird will carry on singing to "hungry generations" and would carry on

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charming “magic casements.” So, the song which till now was the song of the infinite suddenly becomes a “plaintive anthem” for the poet and he says –

“Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music: do I wake or sleep?”

Keats then tried to encapsulate the ideal world in *Ode to a Grecian Urn* where he tried to talk about the “unravished bride of quietness” who is also the “foster child of silence and slow time.” But whole the poet is trying to locate the ideal world in the Grecian urn he also finds some fault there as it’s a “cold pastoral”

—
“Fair youth, beneath the tress, thou canst not leave

They song, nor ever can those tress be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal, yet, do not grieve:

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,

For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair.”

The lover and his beloved are immortal creatures, their love and beauty cannot be touched by the tyrannical time as they are the “foster child of silence and slow time.” But still they lack the warmth and the bliss of the first kiss. The lover will be forever running after the beloved and at no point of time he will be able to get near to him. Therefore, we see that though the poet in the beginning of the poem was in praise of the Grecian Urn, but as he approaches the end he gets dissatisfied with the whole atmosphere and setting of the Urn and tries to come up with one of the philosophical statement –

“Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

It’s not clear in the poem who is making this statement for whom. It can be the poet saying it to his readers, it can be poet saying it to the Urn, and it can also be that the urn is saying this to the poet. Whatever it is, this statement cannot be for the readers, as they need to worry about many a thing as the poetic truth is not the only truth for the readers. Therefore, Keats goes into another poetic journey in *To Autumn*, the final one in his series of odes, where he tries to locate the ideal world in the seasonal circle.

To Autumn tries to celebrate the maturity of life, as in the maturity Keats tries to locate the ideal. In the process of life, one proceeds and reaches a state of ripeness where he understands the essence of life. Keats therefore celebrates Autumn whereas other poets before Keats have always seen autumn to be a season of death and desolation as it is followed by winter. We have already seen Shelley trying to focus his poetic sensibility towards Spring as he writes in *Ode to the West Wind* –

“If winter comes, can Spring be far behind”

Keats lacks that youthful vigor that we see in Shelley as for Keats maturity is everything. In *To Autumn* he tries to celebrate what Shakespeare does in *King Lear* – “ripeness is all.” In the first stanza of the poem, Keats celebrates the maturity and ripeness of Autumn –

“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness!
Close bosom-friend off the maturing sun,
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-tress,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o’er-brimmed their clammy cells.”

In the second stanza the poet goes on to talk about the human activities in autumn – reaping, gleaning, winnowing and making cider. In all the four cases there is a sense of satisfaction, which comes from some kind of fulfilment. This sense of accomplishment becomes more pronounced when the “fume of poppies” has made the people drowsy. In the third stanza, Keats tries to talk about the song of the autumn and enumerates the sounds of nature –

“In a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river swallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs bleat from the hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.”

Thus, Keats celebrates the ideal in the seasonal circle and locates the ideal in the life of human beings. In that sense, Keats is one of the successful poets of the romantics who is able to concretize the notion of the ideal for his readers. Whereas the other poets suffer from the romantic agony, as Keats suffered in the earlier odes, but at the end Keats could achieve the concretization of the ideal through the negative capability.

Keats is also famous for his long poems. Keats’ long poem, *Endymion* which was written in 1817 and was published the following year in 1818 deals with the Greek myth of the shepherd of Mount Latmos who was loved by the Moon. *Hyperion*, which followed thereafter manifests it itself an influence of Milton. Keats’ love for the Greek mythology continues even in his *The Fall of Hyperion*. Therefore Keats “Hellenism” (love for Greek) is often thought to be his prime

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quality. *The Eve of St. Agnes*, written early in 1819, is again a greatest narrative poem which is written in Spenserian stanzas. Keats in his “*La Belle Dame Sans Merci*” develops the folk theme of the beautiful but evil lady into an uncannily powerful expression of a sense of loss, mystery, and terror.

Check Your Progress

8. Name some of the odes that Keats wrote in the period of 1818-19.
9. On what note does *Ode to A Nightingale* begin?
10. What do *To A Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* centre on?

9.6 WILLIAM BLAKE

William Blake was born in London in 1757. From his childhood, he had the power of extraordinary imagination. When he was four, he spoke to his parents about the visions that he used to see. William Blake spent his childhood and youth at a time of revolutions which shook the world – in 1775, American Revolution and in 1789, the French Revolution. These revolutions and ideas and his reading of different writers especially Scandinavian poet Swedenborg created a rebel poet in him. In 1789, Blake published *Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel* which established him as a poet of extraordinary calibre. Between 1790-1800, Blake created iconic works like *Songs of Experience*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *America: A Prophecy*, *Europe: A Prophecy*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Song of Los*, and *The Book of Urizen*, all of which discernibly demonstrate Blake’s ideas on the Revolution. As the ideals of the French Revolution disintegrated during the Reign of Terror and into a war for national power, and lost sight of its original mission of liberating idealism; Blake began to lose his faith in humanity and in the revolutionary spirit. In Blake’s final years of poverty and despair, he completed two of his most famous and respected religious works, *Jerusalem* and *Milton*.

William Blake was a revolutionary in every sense. His views on politics, religion, literature, science, etc. were all revolutionary as he could not accept the prevailing ideas and culture of the eighteenth century. He was opposed to the eighteenth-century mechanistic view of the universe. Therefore, he despised the tendency to analyse rather than synthesize which made him ridicule philosophers like Voltaire and Rousseau:

“Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau:

Mock on, Mock on, ’tis all in vain!

You throw the sand against the wind,

And the wind blows it back again.”

Again, in *Reason and Imagination*, Blake says:

“I come in self-annihilation & the grandeur of Inspiration
To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour,
To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration
To cast off Bacon, Locke & Newton from Albion’s covering,
To take off his filthy garments & clothe him with Imagination.”

He held reason in contempt because he thought it imprisons the mind. For him, imagination (like other Romantic poets) plays an important role not only in poetic creation, but also in the development of human mind. Being a person born during the age of Revolution, he was attracted to the ideas of ‘liberty, equality and fraternity’ of the French Revolution.

William Blake also hated the traditional Christianity which he thought cramped the soul rather than setting it free. Like all the Romantics who attempted a re-evaluation of Christian values after the French Revolution, William Blake also had his own interpretation of Christian religion and its use for the benefit of the mankind. He was against the authoritarian God who is revengeful. Therefore, he thought of churches as a kind of prison as there is no individual freedom under the purview of the church. Therefore, in *The Garden of Love*, Blake writes –

“I went to the Garden of Love,
And saw what I have never seen;
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.
And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with braids my joys & desires.”

For Blake, love is the supreme religion and it cannot be found in the bricks and mortar of the churches, but in love for humanity. It is not that he did not have faith in merciful benevolent Christ, but he is against God the Father who, according to him, is authoritative and tyrannical. If we look at the poems “The Lamb” and “The Tyger” from *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* respectively then we will figure out that Jesus is the lamb, the merciful, innocent and tender, whereas God, the Father, as represented in “The Tyger” has a “fearful symmetry.”

William Blake was very hostile in his attitude towards traditional Christianity which also influenced his interpretation of history. He identified three stages in history which corresponded to three stages in the life of an individual. The first stage corresponds to that of the Garden of Eden, or of primal innocence. The second stage was the eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree or the Fall (that is, the phase of Experience). The third stage was that of achieving a higher state of innocence or redemption (when one is as clever as a serpent and as innocent as a dove). In the third stage, the innocence cannot be corrupted anymore as one has the necessary cleverness of the serpent to not allow the corruptions to affect the innocence. So, from that point of view, the two contrary states – innocence and

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experience are absolutely essential as “without contraries, there is no progression.” One can never be in the first stage of innocence forever; one will get into the phase of experience with aging and with the pressures of culture; but when one surpasses that to achieve supreme innocence, one is in an ideal. Blake through his two series of poems – *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* is trying to concretize the notion of Supreme Innocence for the readers.

Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience

Songs of Innocence was published in 1789 and *Songs of Experience* in 1794. The Poems in *Songs of Innocence* are happy songs written to and about children. *Songs of Innocence* is a statement of the reaffirmation of the New Testament doctrine, “Lest ye become again as a little child ye cannot hope to enter the kingdom of heaven”. This is underscored by Blake’s use of pastoral Christian symbols (the Christ child, the lamb, the shepherd, etc.) As Russell Noyes observes: “The poet has left out all art, all moralizing, all pretending. The theme of loss and finding runs through the songs and the gaiety and laughter of children fills them.” The poems of the *Songs of Innocence* are in contrast with the poems of *Songs of Experience*. “The Chimney Sweeper” implies a sharp criticism of the society of his times. It is to be kept in mind here that Blake does not think that Innocence is lost simply through aging, but the forces of culture can also crush innocence as society can think of developing itself sometimes at the expense of children’s souls.

Songs of Experience, the collection of poems which comes as an antithesis to *Songs of Innocence* comes five years later, bound with a reprinting and slight revision of *Songs of Innocence*. *Songs of Experience* has never been printed separately from the former volume. Blake intended *Songs of Experience* as a companion piece to the earlier work. The same method of engraving plates to illustrate the poems is also used in *Songs of Experience*. In *Songs of Experience*, Blake makes a direct criticism of society.

As mentioned earlier, both *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* contain poems that are interdependent to each other. For example, understanding of the poem “The Lamb” from *Songs of Innocence* is only possible when one reads the Introduction of *Songs of Innocence* and “The Tyger” from *Songs of Experience*. When in “The Tyger” Blake writes “Did he who made the Lamb made thee?” we need to figure out from the poem “The Lamb” what Blake has written there. Thus “The Lamb” and “The Tyger” present two contrary states of human soul, like all the other poems in *Songs of Innocence* have contrary poems in *Songs of Experience*. As Keith Sagar writes “The subtitle of *Songs of Innocence and Experience* is ‘Showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul’. According to Blake, the contraries are a necessity as ‘Without contraries is no progression’. This theme can even be seen to be highlighted in his other famous work *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Therefore, Jacob Bronowski says that ‘They (*Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*) were as formative for the culture of the 20th century in

Europe and America as *the Bible* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* have been earlier". As Blake could clearly visualize the shape of things to come, such as the problems of urban living, the power structures, the animosities among nations and the bitter rivalries among industrial societies, Blake's prophetic insights made no sense to his contemporaries, but we are in a better position to understand the truths conveyed in his poems. Blake has chosen simple models for these "songs".

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9.7 LORD BYRON

George Noel Gordon or Lord Byron was born in London on January 22, 1788. He received his higher education from Cambridge. Byron's first volume of poems, *Fugitive Pieces*, was published in 1806. *Poems on Various Occasions* was published as *Hours of Idleness* 1807. In July 1809, Lord Byron started his 'grand tour,' of Europe which included Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece, and Turkey. His impressions of these countries formed the substance of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Cantos I and II, published in 1812. *Childe Harold* became immensely popular. In 1816 Byron left England, never to return. "Beppo" was published in 1818 which marks the appearance of the new poetic manner on which Byron's present reputation as a poet largely rests. Soon after, Byron started to work on his great masterpiece, *Don Juan*. Between 1821 and 1822, Byron wrote four five-act plays, *Sardanapalus*, *Marino Falieri*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Werner*. During the same period, he wrote *Cain*, a play in three acts, and two dramatic fragments, *Heaven and Earth* and *The Deformed Transformed*. Byron returned to *Don Juan* in 1822 and by May 1823 he had written a total of sixteen cantos. The poem was published in six separate volumes between 1819 and 1823. He died of a fever at Missolonghi, Greece, on April 19, 1823.

Writing of Don Juan

- *Don Juan* was written by Lord Byron for a long period with intervals in between. He started writing the first canto of *Don Juan* in the autumn of 1818, and he was writing the seventeenth canto before his death in the spring of 1823.
- Canto I. was written in September 1818;
- Canto II. in December–January, 1818-1819. Both were published on 15 July 1819.
- Cantos III. and IV. were written in the winter of 1819-1820;
- Canto V., after an interval of nine months, in October–November 1820, but the publication of Cantos III., IV., V. was delayed till 8 August 1821.
- In June 1822, Byron began to work at a sixth, and by the end of March 1823, he had completed a sixteenth canto
- Cantos VI., VII., VIII., with a Preface, were published on 15 July; Cantos IX., X., XI on 29 August;

- Cantos XII., XIII., XIV., on 17 December 1823;
- Cantos XV., XVI. on 26 March 1824.

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Lord Byron's *Don Juan* is a satiric poem which is based on the legend of Don Juan. The poem is not an exact representation of the legend as Byron reverses the legend by portraying Juan not as a womanizer but as someone easily seduced by women. Many critics feel that it is a variation on the epic form. Byron himself called it an "Epic Satire." Though unfinished, yet many critics also consider it as Byron's masterpiece, with a total of more than 16,000 lines of verse. Byron completed 16 cantos, leaving an unfinished 17th canto before his death in 1824. When the first two cantos were published anonymously in 1819, the poem was criticized for it having 'immoral content', though it became immensely popular at its publication.

9.8 ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774 – 1843)

Robert Southey was an English poet and biographer who was born in Bristol in England in 1774. His early years were spent at the place called Bath. He studied in Westminster School and later in Oxford. In 1794, he met Samuel Taylor Coleridge and both of them together tried to give vent to their radical literary aspirations as they wrote the verse drama *The Fall of Robespierre*. Southey published his first collection of poems in 1795. Between 1796 and 1798, Southey wrote many ballads (such as *The Inchcape Rock*, *The Battle of Blenheim*) and these can be seen as the most productive years of his life. Robert Southey was appointed the Poet Laureate in 1813. Along with Wordsworth and Coleridge, he is the trio of the poets who are today known as the Lake Poets. Apart from being a poet, Southey was a biographer too and his best-known biographies are – *The Life of Nelson* and *Life of Wesley*. Southey died in Cumberland in 1843 and after his death William Wordsworth became the Poet Laureate.

Let Us Sum Up

The Seven Romantic poets - William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, P. B. Shelley, John Keats, William Blake, Lord Byron and Robert Southey – discussed in this unit brought a new trend in the English poetic tradition by championing imagination, nature, emotions, rebellious spirit and thus made the short age of about three decades one of the most memorable ones in the history of English Literature.

Check Your Progress

11. When did Blake begin to lose faith in humanity?
12. Why can't innocence be corrupted further in the third stage?
13. When was Byron's first volume of poems published?

9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

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1. Reason was replaced by Imagination/ Emotion; and ‘diction’ of the 18th century poetry was replaced by the language of the common man as William Wordsworth talks about it in the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.
2. Wordsworth objections to an over-stylized poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple incidents and humble people as subjects for his poetry – these well-known characteristics of his art.
3. Wordsworth wanted a minimum of stylization because he was not working in any poetic tradition but kindling poetry from the naked experience, as it were.
4. Books 12-14 of *The Prelude* is mostly metaphysical and devoted to an attempt at a philosophy of art, with the end of the last book giving a little summary.
5. Shelley’s major production after *Alastor; or The Spirit of Solitude* was *Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City* which was later edited and republished as *The Revolt of Islam* in 1818.
6. The revolutionary characters, whether Satan or Prometheus, become heroic for Shelley as they question the tyranny of the existing order and try to come up with a better world.
7. The Romantic poets were influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and their temperament got that revolutionary spirit. That is the reason the mythical rebellious figures of the European civilization were championed by the Romantic poets.
8. “*Ode to a Nightingale*”, “*Ode on a Grecian Urn*” and “*Ode on Melancholy*” and “*Ode to Autumn*” are the famous odes that Keats wrote in this period.
9. *Ode to a Nightingale* therefore begins in the similar note where we see a sad poet trying to make use of ‘hemlock’ and “blushful Hippocrene” to forget the pains and sufferings of this world
10. *To A Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* centre on natural objects of unusual beauty and significance and the poet in their presence becomes oblivious of the outside world and loses himself in contemplation.
11. As the ideals of the French Revolution disintegrated during the Reign of Terror and into a war for national power, and lost sight of its original mission of liberating idealism; Blake began to lose his faith in humanity and in the revolutionary spirit.
12. In the third stage, innocence cannot be corrupted anymore as one has the necessary cleverness of the serpent to not allow the corruptions to affect the innocence.
13. Byron’s first volume of poems, *Fugitive Pieces*, was published in 1806.

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Self-Instructional
Material

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9.10 SUMMARY

- According to William Wordsworth, the subject of the new poetry should be taken from the ordinary and commonplace life and coloured with Imagination to make it poetic and to write in the language of the common man.
- A poet for Wordsworth was a man of unusual emotional vitality whose perceptions of his fellow men and of the world of external nature yielded intuitions of the relation of one to the other and of the psychological and moral truths underlying all existence.
- Wordsworth was not a dramatic poet; his vein was what Keats called the “egotistical sublime”. His greatest poems are those where autobiography, perception, and narrative are woven seamlessly into one texture.
- In 1795, Coleridge met poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy and from then on, an association then developed which culminated in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*.
- The Primary Imagination, according to Coleridge, is the only means through which the poet can transcend the worries, tensions and pains of this reality so as to communicate with the “infinite” or the ‘divine’ and get some access to the ideal world of His.
- *Prometheus Unbound* is a four-act lyrical drama written by Percy Bysshe Shelley which was first published in 1820. The play portrayed the torments of the Greek mythological figure Prometheus and his suffering at the hands of Zeus.
- P. B. Shelley wrote that “the poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” They are legislators because they always are unhappy with the present state of affairs and try to provide a better version of the reality to the readers.
- The Romantic poets were influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and their temperament got that revolutionary spirit. That is the reason the mythical rebellious figures of the European civilization were championed by the Romantic poets.
- This search for the ideal/utopia is also the main theme of Keats’ odes. In one of his letters to his brother George, Keats wrote – “I am straining at the particles of light in the midst of darkness . . .” This line from his letters aptly serves to talk about the theme of Keats’ poetry.
- Keats believed that maturity comes with the acceptance of pain and suffering as he continually grappled with various approaches to meet the challenge of human predicament. But if pain be inescapable in human destiny, this pain must be meaningful and absolute joy cannot be experienced without intense agony.

- Keats' love for the Greek mythology continues even in his *The Fall of Hyperion*. Therefore Keats "Hellenism" (love for Greek) is often thought to be his prime quality.
- William Blake held reason in contempt because he thought it imprisons the mind. For him, imagination (like other Romantic poets) plays an important role not only in poetic creation, but also in the development of human mind.
- Both *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* contain poems that are interdependent to each other. For example, understanding of the poem "The Lamb" from *Songs of Innocence* is only possible when one reads the Introduction of *Songs of Innocence* and "The Tyger" from *Songs of Experience*.
- Byron wrote four five-act plays, *Sardanapalus*, *Marino Falieri*, *The Two Foscari*, and *Werner*. During the same period, he wrote *Cain*, a play in three acts, and two dramatic fragments, *Heaven and Earth* and *The Deformed Transformed*.
- Robert Southey was appointed the Poet Laureate in 1813. Along with Wordsworth and Coleridge, he is the trio of the poets who are today known as the Lake Poets.

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9.11 KEY WORDS

- **Pantisocracy:** It was a utopian scheme devised in 1794 by, among others, the poets Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey for an egalitarian community. It is a system of government where all rule equally.
- **Transliteration:** It is a type of conversion of a text from one script to another that involves swapping letters in predictable ways.
- **Negative Capability:** It is a phrase first used by Romantic poet John Keats in 1817 to explain the capacity of the greatest writers to pursue a vision of artistic beauty even when it leads them into intellectual confusion and uncertainty, as opposed to a preference for philosophical certainty over artistic beauty.
- **Paganism:** It is a religion other than one of the main world religions, specifically a non-Christian or pre-Christian religion.

9.12 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short Answer Questions

1. What should the subject of new poetry be taken from?

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2. What did Wordsworth develop and present in the *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads*?
3. What do the three sections of *The Prelude* deal with?
4. What was the inspiration for *Prometheus Unbound*?
5. What does the poem 'Ode to Liberty' start with?
6. Which realization of Keats is marked in the third book of *Endymion*?
7. Write a short note on *Ode to a Nightingale*.
8. What role do imagination and nature play in the Romantic Poetry?

Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss Wordsworth's idea of a poet and the poetic process.
2. Analyse Wordsworth's *The Prelude*.
3. Explain the concept of 'primary imagination'.
4. Describe the plot of *Prometheus Unbound*.
5. Elaborate upon Keats' themes of utopia and Greek paganism.
6. Discuss three stages in history which corresponded to three stages in the life of an individual.

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UNIT 10 THE AGE OF TENNYSON: VERSE AND GENERAL PROSE

*The Age of Tennyson:
Verse and General Prose*

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Structure

- 10.0 Introduction
- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 General Background to Victorian Age
- 10.3 Victorian Essays
- 10.4 The Pioneers of English Drama
- 10.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 10.6 Summary
- 10.7 Key Words
- 10.8 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 10.9 Further Readings

10.0 INTRODUCTION

The Victorian age starts from 1837 and carries on till 1900/ 1901. The age is called so, as Queen Victoria ruled during this period of time, just as the Elizabethan age is named after Queen Elizabeth. Queen Victoria ascended the British Throne in 1837 and ruled over England till 1901 till her death. Her ascension to the British Throne till her death in 1901 is usually considered to be the Victorian Age. This age saw the growth of novel as a primary mode of expression of the literary artists, though there are distinguished poets like Browning, Tennyson, and Rossetti's writing poems. But there is a lack of drama in the Victorian Age.

But before going any further into the discussion of the Victorian age it's very essential to know the philosophical and the social background in which different writers of this age are writing as major socio-economic and political forces (Democracy, Individualism, Industrialism, Imperialism, Rationalism and Science) and their complex interaction with culture, life and beliefs affected life, literature and thought in many ways.

10.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the Victorian Age in general along with its background
- Discuss the major Victorian Poets – Tennyson, Browning and others
- Describe the main characteristics of Victorian prose and drama

10.2 GENERAL BACKGROUND TO VICTORIAN AGE

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Let us begin by discussing the background of the Victorian Age.

Utilitarian Theories

The age was dominated by the *Utilitarian Theories* – that of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. The Theory of Utilitarianism propounded that the dominant striving factor of an individual's life is to attain as much pleasure as possible – to *maximize pleasure and to minimize pain*. Bentham is the first one to provide two principles that should govern an individual's life, which is known as Bentham's Deontology –

1. The first law of nature is to wish our own happiness.
2. Seek our own happiness in the happiness of others.

Bentham's Theory of Utilitarianism thus not only talks about the striving of the pleasure principle in an individual's main perspective in life but focuses also on the societal aspect when in the second principle he tries to focus on the societal pleasure. Therefore, apart from the intensity, duration, certainty/uncertainty, nearness/remoteness, fecundity or fruitfulness, purity (not to be followed by painful experience); the extent of the pleasure (that is, how many people are enjoying or participating or benefiting from that pleasure) becomes an important aspect in Bentham's Theory of Utilitarianism.

But the problem with Bentham's Deontology is that the first principle talks about the basic instinct of any human being whereas the second one talks about the social duty of a rational human being. Thus, the second principle moreover makes the man aware of their social duties. This dichotomy makes it clear that when the first principle was made the basis for living life in the industrial England the second principle of Bentham was heavily undermined in the practice of Utilitarianism. Carlyle commented on Bentham that "he has the completeness of the incomplete man."

After Bentham, John Stuart Mill talked about the utilitarianism where he tried to talk about the quality of pleasure. He says – "it is better to be a Socrates dissatisfied than to be a fool satisfied." Mill talked about higher and lower pleasures and said that which pleasure is higher can only be judged by an experienced person. Referring to Bentham's catalogue of pleasure Mill added three more things which he thinks is missing out in that catalogue –

1. Conscience: that people should use conscience for judging whether a particular pleasure is right or wrong.
2. Sense of Duty
3. Pleasure in doing right things.

Apart from the Utilitarian theories this age also perceived many a scientific progress which were a result of the constant effort of the eighteenth and nineteenth century's engagement with the scientific rationality and experiments. The age was ornamented with many a scientific writing along with the new technologies.

We are first of all trying to focus on the newer technologies that paved the path for Industrialism in England and the consequent Imperialistic tendencies. It not that capitalism was a new thing in Europe in the nineteenth century. The advent of Capitalism started in the sixteenth century. But the capitalistic tendencies began to show their full impact from the Victorian period onwards, when the entrepreneurs took up the newer technologies to set up industries in the urban centres of England. Large numbers of people from rural England started flocking together in town with the hopes that somehow this industrialism will change their fate and will make them live a more luxurious life. But the industrial urban life created a new ethos – where every relationship became a deal and money became an end in itself, where love and affection are replaced by indifference; and power and action became the desirable social virtues. Thus, the Industrial revolution made Britain prosperous in scientific and monetary terms, but that also led to the dehumanization process in England. The British literature of the Victorian era obviously dealt with all these.

The key words which dominated this era are that of –

1. Assertion: implying negation
2. Expansion: implying oppression
3. Imitation: implying devaluation

Faith and Doubt

But the more important factor that became a major concern of the literary writing is the question of faith and doubt. In the history of England, it's the first age when we see the existence of God is questioned for the first time. In the earlier age (Romantic Age), we see the Romantic Poets to be rebellious, and we see all the mythical rebellious figures were championed by the Romantic Poets. But no one till the Victorian age had ever dared to question the very existence of God. P. B. Shelley's *The Revolt of Islam* is considered by some literary critics as a text which sometimes does put the question, but not in such vehement terms. It's only in the Victorian age that the scientific, rational spirit of the age made the question of the existence of God a pertinent one and we see many writings to be revolving around the question of faith and doubt.

But, again before going into the literature of the Victorian age let us try to focus on from where the Victorian people had the idea of the basis for questioning God. We see the Utilitarian theory trying to substitute the word "suffering" with "pleasure". Whereas earlier it was thought that if a person repents for the original sin and suffers for that then he/she has a chance to achieve salvation. But the utilitarian theorists try to present it the other way when they talk about the fact that the primary objective of one's life should be to accumulate as much pleasure as one can and also try to decrease as much sufferings and pains as possible.

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Not only the Utilitarian theorists but the scholars from other subjects like Biology (Charles Darwin coming up with the theory of the evolution of man in *Origin Of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, that man is a biological product who has come into being in the process of evolution, and is not a divine product as the Bible proclaims) and Geology (Charles Lyell , the famous geologist of the age proves that earth is much older than what The Bible proclaims it to be) also tried to disapprove the authority of the Bible and to question God. Thus, one of the prime concerns of the Victorian scholars was the matter of faith and doubt, the other being the utilitarian philosophy which created a stir in the minds of the people who thought about the socialistic trends as the Marxian thought also dominated the nineteenth century.

Victorian Poetry

Let us, now discuss the major victorian poets.

Alfred Tennyson (1809 – 92)

Alfred Tennyson was born August 6th, 1809, at Somersby, Lincolnshire. In 1827 Tennyson went to Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1829, he joined The Apostles, an undergraduate club, which met to discuss major philosophical and other issues, included Arthur Henry Hallam, James Spedding, Edward Lushington, and Richard Monckton Milnes. There Tennyson developed strong friendship with Arthur Hallam. He and Tennyson knew each other only four years, but their intense friendship had major influence on the poet. On a visit to Somersby, Hallam met and later became engaged to Emily Tennyson, and the two friends looked forward to a life-long companionship. Hallam's death from illness in 1833 shocked Tennyson profoundly, and his grief led to most of his best poetry, including *In Memoriam*, "*The Passing of Arthur*", "*Ulysses*," and "*Tithonus*."

Since Tennyson was always sensitive to criticism, the mixed reception of his 1832 *Poems* hurt him greatly. The success of his 1842 *Poems* made Tennyson a popular poet, and in 1845 he received a Civil List (government) pension of £200 a year. The success of "*The Princess*" and *In Memoriam* and he became the Poet Laureate in 1850 finally established him as the most popular poet of the Victorian era. Lord Tennyson died on October 6, 1892, at the age of 83.

In *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (published in 1830) by Alfred Tennyson, the objective of the collection of poems was to render a mood rather than to explore it, which is typical of the Romantic Age. The poem "*The Lotos Eaters*" begins in this manner "'Courage!' he said and pointed toward the land" where Tennyson explores the lethargic mood of Ulysses and his mariners as they visit the lotus land. In some ways, the poem seems to be a critique of the Victorian spirit to move forward and is seen by many critics as antithetical to the mood in *Ulysses*. As against the tone of the protagonists in *The Lotos Eaters*, we have the theme of further exploration in the poem *Ulysses* (written in the form of dramatic monologue)

where Ulysses is leaving his island Ithaca and moving forward to the seas to drink life to the lees. The two poems *The Lotos Eaters* and *Ulysses* are opposite in themes and tones which often makes the critics think in terms of two voices of Tennyson for which he is famous. On the one hand, he seems to be the voice of the imperial nation of England and on the other, he makes a critique of that voice too. One of the greatest examples of his imperialistic voice is the poem *The Defence of Lucknow* which is written about the Sepoy mutiny of 1857 in India.

Tennyson's poem collection *Poems* (1833) shows his artistic advancement which contains famous poems such as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Lotos Eaters* and *The Place of Art*. Thereafter Tennyson produced two Volumes of poems in 1842 which also marks his achievement as a poet. The Second Volume of the 1842 poems consists of great poems such as *Morte D'Arthur*, *Ulysses* and *Locksley Hall*.

It is in 1847 that Tennyson's longer poem *The Princess* was published which deals with the significant theme of the concept of New Woman dealt with in a comic manner. *The Princess* was written in blank verse and is believed to contain some of the most lyrical poems of Tennyson.

Next significant publication of Lord Tennyson is *In Memoriam* which was published in 1850. It is a long philosophical poem which was occasioned by the death of his friend Arthur Henry Hallam and therefore very aptly deals with the theme of life and death in a most philosophical manner. It is a poem which Tennyson starts composing since his friend's death in 1833 and publishes it only in 1850, the year in which he becomes the Poet Laureate. It is a poem which took almost seventeen years to get published from the year of its composition.

1855 is another significant year in Tennyson's poetic career as his collection of poems *Maud and Other Poems* was published in that year along with another remarkable set of poems named *Enoch Garden and Other Poems*. In 1859, came the *The Idylls of the King* which deals with the theme of the King Arthur. In the later years of Tennyson's life, he focused on writing some plays which have not much literary worth as Tennyson was not a great dramatist. The dramatic works are *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, *Becket*, *The Falcon*, and *The Cup and The Foresters*.

Tennyson is thought to be the most representative poet of the Victorian Age as he represents both the national spirit of progress and imperialism in his poems as well as makes a critique of the Victorian spirit. One of the significant critics of Tennyson, Killham, talks about the two voices of Tennyson for which his poems are generally known. Tennyson represents the political as well as the socio-cultural voice of the age and therefore he was the apt one to become the Poet Laureate of the Victorian Age.

Robert Browning (1812-89)

Robert Browning is a Victorian poet who is famous for his dramatic monologues. The great achievement of Browning was to break away from the post-Keatsian

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handling of sensory images and bring back a colloquial vigour to English poetry. Browning developed a remarkable ability to explore character argumentatively and his characters in dramatic monologues are studies of “psychology of abnormal characters” who are caught at a critical moment of their life and they justify their actions by logic which seems apparently absurd. Dramatic Monologue as a genre finds its best exploration in Browning’s creativity and the poems, we have in syllabus are greatest examples of it, whether it is “*Fra Lippo Lippi*” or “*Porphyria’s Lover*” or “*The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed’s Church*.”

Born in Camberwell, South London, Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was raised in a household of significant literary resources. In March 1833, *Pauline, A Fragment of a Confession* was published anonymously. In 1838, Browning visited Italy which remains the backdrop of many of his famous poems, especially *Sordello*. It is a long poem in heroic couplets, presented as the imaginary biography of the Mantuan bard spoken of by Dante in the Divine Comedy, Canto 6 of Purgatory.

Next was *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841-1846), a series of eight pamphlets. In 1845, Browning met the poet Elizabeth Barrett who was six years elder to him. Elizabeth Barrett Browning lived as a semi-invalid in her father’s house in Wimpole Street, London and Browning got infatuated to her and later got married to her on 12 September 1846. It is after this that Browning works on his poems and published his two-volume *Men and Women*, (1855) for which he is now well known. He completed and published the long blank-verse poem *The Ring and the Book* in 1868.

Browning is often known by some of his short poems, such as *Porphyria’s Lover*, *My Last Duchess*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *How they brought the good News From Ghent to Aix*, *Evelyn Hope*, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *A Grammarian’s Funeral*, *A Death in the Desert*. Browning’s fame today rests mainly on his dramatic monologues, in which the words not only convey setting and action but also reveal the speaker’s character.

Robert Browning as a Dramatic Monologist

In a dramatic monologue, even though there is only one speaker speaking (therefore Monologue), still it is dramatic as there is an actual or implied listener whose questions and queries are anticipated by the speaker and answered making the monologue dramatic. It is an unusual form of poetry in the sense that it is dramatic and yet there is only one speaker. The silence of the listener is not a problem for the readers as listener’s presence is manifest in the poem through the speech of the speaker.

It is similar to soliloquy in some sense, but in a soliloquy, there is no implied or actual listener in front of the speaker. In a soliloquy, the speaker talks to himself at a critical juncture of his life when he is undecided about what action he or she should follow thereafter; whereas in a dramatic monologue, the speaker not only

talks to himself but also to the speaker at the same time. Thus, this form of poetry is interesting at it allows the reader to figure out what the speaker is telling himself and what he intends the listener to understand.

For example, in “*Porphyria’s Lover*”, Browning’s dramatic monologist, the lover is speaking to the readers explaining why he has murdered his beloved and at the same time making himself understand that he is justified in his actions. Therefore, though it is monologue, but there are both the intentions of the speaker.

As mentioned before, the monologist enters the scene at a critical juncture of his life to justify some act that he has committed. The action of the monologist is mental, psychological and verbal, that is, the speech includes pleading, informing, reminiscing, meditating and justifying oneself. The monologist asks the readers to suspend his or her sense of judgment as it thrives on reader’s sympathy. In most cases, we see that the Browning’s dramatic monologist is an obsessive and neurotic character suffering from “I” syndrome and has great rhetorical capability. The dramatic monologue form is ‘a fusion of two kinds of poetry into one – the lyric and the dramatic, subjective and pictorial.’

Browning’s dramatic monologues are not just concerned with passions, but with the “psychology of passions” of abnormal characters who at some critical point of their life sets into a rhetorical mode to justify his action through a dramatic monologue. Browning’s monologues grow out of some critical situation in the life of the principal figure and embody the reactions of that figure to that particular situation. Placed in such a situation, the speaker indulges in self-analysis and self-introspection and in this way his soul is laid bare in the poem.

Let us take two examples – “*Porphyria’s Lover*” and “*My Last Duchess*.” Both the dramatic monologues deal with man- woman relationships, both the speakers are male and murderers. Porphyria’s lover is a soliloquy in isolation as there is no listener though the lover speaks dramatically. The lover of Porphyria lives in a world of obsession and nightmare. He kills his beloved for he suspects her fidelity. To him, she is a “bee” and the moment this “bee” surrenders and begins to worship him (the bud”) – her deity – he shuts her forever. She is strangled to death. He justifies his crime by saying that he strangled his beloved while she did not feel any pain and her smiling head was glad to rest itself on his shoulders. He fondly believes that god by remaining silent has accepted his superiority and condoned this sinister act. But the readers are able to discern that in his attempt to reassure himself the mad lover has betrayed his anxiety, his sullenness and his vexation. We get to know that he has not only a great rhetorical competence but also suffers from the “I” Syndrome.

In “*My Last Duchess*”, the Duke, the dramatic monologist, is a polished, sophisticated Italian aristocrat, an autocrat, a product of renaissance, arrogant, avaricious, status-conscious, and connoisseur of art. Like all the other speakers of dramatic monologue, the Duke is aggressive, socially and intellectually superior to his listener. From the very beginning he asserts his superiority over the listener by

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forcing him to observe the last duchess' portrait, to hear what he has to say and not to read the meaning of her life, like painted countenance with passionate glance and cheerful blush and half flush. The Duke in his own typically narcissistic self-delineation puts himself in the spotlight and turns the listener into a shadow. The envoy is compelled to listen to his story suspending all his power of judgment. The dramatic monologues are basically concerned with human psychology. George Santayana thought that Browning's personae always displayed "traits of character and never attains character at all."

Matthew Arnold (1822-88)

Matthew Arnold, the son of Thomas Arnold who was the renowned Headmaster of the Rugby School, was born in 1822 at Laleham in the county of Middlesex. In 1836 Arnold was sent to Winchester Boarding School. In August 1837, he was called to Rugby to be under his father's personal care. He won a prize at Rugby in 1840 for his poem *Alaric at Rome*. In 1841 he went up to Oxford on a scholarship. In 1842 his father died, who is remembered in the famous elegy *Rugby Chapel*, written fifteen years after his father's death. In 1843 Arnold won the Newdigate prize with the poem entitled *Cromwell*. His stay at Oxford was the happiest part of his life. Here he composed some of his finest poems *The Scholar Gypsy* and *Thyrsis*, and the famous *Preface to The Essays in Criticism*.

The poetry of Matthew Arnold represents the age in quite a profound way than any other Victorian poet. He is a sensitive Victorian poet who was brooding over the lack and loss of faith in God and consequent situation of the Victorian people. Arnold's first volume of poetry, *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* (1849), is noted for its elegiac description of landscape which is also typical of his poem "*Sohrab and Rustum*." The poem "*Dover Beach*" thought to be one of the finest expressions of that symbolic scene of night quiet which provided the setting and the emotional background of so much of Arnold's elegiac medication.

Arnold's second volume of poems, *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*, appeared in 1852. His poems, Second Series, appeared in 1855, and *Merope*, his somewhat wooden attempt at a Greek tragedy, in 1858; after this, he published only one slim volume of poetry, *New Poems*, in 1867, and some twenty volumes of prose, between 1861 and 1888. "*Thyrsis*" was written to commemorate Arnold's friend Arthur Hugh Clough, who had died in 1861. It is a poem which is closely linked to "*The Scholar Gypsy*", though written many years after it. It has the same stanza form, the same general tone.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61) is known today chiefly for the romantic circumstances of her marriage with Robert Browning. In the Victorian Age, it was Elizabeth Barrett Browning who was a much more popular and famous poet. Her

volume of poems *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is the most read book of hers in the present times and it records her love for Browning. She spoke for herself and in doing so represented her age more directly than the greater Victorian poets did; her popularity in her own day tells us a great deal about Victorian poetic taste.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

D. G. Rossetti turned to poetry from painting. His first poems appeared in the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite periodical *The Germ* (1850), and others in the Oxford and Cambridge magazine (1856) which printed also the early work of William Morris and others. *The Early Italian Poets* appeared in 1861 and again in a new arrangement as *Dante and his Circle* in 1874.

Christina Rossetti (1830-94)

The poetry of Christina Rossetti (1830-94) has less complex sources than her brother D. G. Rossetti. Some of her poems for children have delicacy and charm, and the sprightly “Goblin Market” uses allegory with unforced directions that is unusual in post-medieval English poetry. “The Prince’s Progress,” an allegorical narrative poem more serious in tone and more comprehensive in meaning, is somewhat more laboured, but it possesses nevertheless something of the grace that characterizes her best poetry.

William Morris

William Morris (1834-96) began writing poetry as a Pre-Raphaelite under Rossetti’s influence. Morris’ long narrative poems – *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) – show him trying a variety of poetic styles and following a variety of models. *The Earthly Paradise* is a collection of twenty-four stories. The poetry of George Meredith (1828-1909) reveals a more conscious modern intelligence. *Modern Love* (1862), his series of fifty sixteen-line sonnets describing the break-up of a marriage, with a careful attention to emotional detail, is unequal, but fountains some memorable poems, notably the forty-seventh. His *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* (1883) contains some of his most interesting poems on the force and mystery of nature and illustrates his highly individual and imaginative use of the Darwinian position.

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) began to write poetry as a friend and admirer of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, but he soon developed his own style, making his own use of influences from Greek, Elizabethan, and Jacobean drama. His *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865) follows the form of Greek tragedy, and though it is not really Greek in spirit, its manipulation of pagan notions to achieve deliberate and exhibitionist scepticism with respect to conventional religious ideas does give something of a Euripidean flavour.

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Check Your Progress

1. What did the Theory of Utilitarianism propound?
2. List the key words which dominated the Victorian era.
3. What was the objective of *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*?
4. What was the great achievement of Browning?
5. What is Arnold's first volume of poetry noted for?

10.3 VICTORIAN ESSAYS

The essay was a genre which was made very popular in England by Francis Bacon with his didactic essays, which are aphoristic in style. His primary aim was to educate the gentlemen of England. In the 18th century also essays were very popular as in Johnson's *Rambler Papers*, and the Romantic Age saw the advent of personal essays in Charles Lamb, Thomas De Quincey and others. The essayists of the Victorian era are quite distinct in the sense that they represent the true "spirit of the age" and are also the greatest critique of the Victorian ethos.

Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881)

Born in 1795, Carlyle was educated at Edinburgh University, and became for a time a schoolteacher. Carlyle's spiritual conflict and the restoration of faith are expressed in *Sartor Resartus*. In 1834, the Carlyles settled permanently in Chelsea. He gave lectures far and wide and wrote profusely. He died in 1881 in Chelsea. His earliest work consisted mainly of translations, essays and biographies. The translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's *Apprenticeship* (1824), his *The Life of Schiller* (1825) and his essays on Burns and Scott are his best works of the early period. His most characteristic book is *Sartor Resartus* (1834), which is also one of the most remarkable and vital books in modern English literature.

Carlyle's major historical works are *The French Revolution* (1837), Oliver Cromwell's *Letters and Speeches* (1845), *The Life of John Sterling* (1851) and *The History of Frederick II of Prussia, Called Frederik the Great* (1858-65). His famous works dealing with contemporary life and events are *Chartism, Past and Present* (1843) and *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850). The series of lectures he delivered in 1837 was published as *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History*.

Carlyle is considered as a sage in moral and political affairs. He was a staunch Puritan who valued moral purpose in life very highly. Thomas Carlyle denounced commercial prosperity, easy-going optimism, scientific materialism and the utilitarianism of the Victorian Age. In other words, whatever are the prominent features of the Victorian age, Carlyle was against it. For example, Carlyle

didn't get into the faith and doubt question with the side of doubt, but moreover, proclaimed faith in God.

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John Ruskin (1819 – 1900)

John Ruskin, born in London, in 1819, was son of a very prosperous wine merchant who gained a fortune in trade. Therefore, he had the luxury of spending long hours in with good books and pictures. Of Ruskin's early years at Herne Hill, on the outskirts of London, it is better to read his own interesting record in *Praeterita*. Ruskin entered Christ Church College, Oxford, in 1836, when only seventeen years old.

A Volume of poems which had illustrations by the poet himself was published in 1859. It was his volume of poems which gave him some fame; but it was his essays and his prose writings for which he is known for today. In 1843, appeared his first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843). He wrote other books, - *Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), *Pre-Raphaelitism*, and numerous lectures and essays, which gave him a place in the world of art similar to that held by Matthew Arnold in the world of letters. In 1869 he was appointed professor of art at Oxford, a position which greatly increased his prestige and influence, not only among students but among a great variety of people who heard his lectures and read his published works. *Lectures on Art*, *Aratra Pentelici* (Lectures on sculpture), *Ariadne Florentina* (lectures on engraving), *Michael Angela and Tintoret*, *The Art of England*, *Vald'Arno* (Lectures on Tuscan art), *St. Mark's Rest* (a history of Venice), *Mornings in Florence* (studies in Christian art, now much used as a guidebook to the picture galleries of Florence), *The Laws of Fiesole* (a treatise on drawing and painting for schools), *Academy of Fine Arts in Venice*, *Pleasures of England*,—all these works on art show Ruskin's literary industry. And we must also record *Love's Meinie* (a study of birds), *Proserpina* (a study of flowers), *Deucalion* (a study of waves and stones), besides various essays on political economy which indicate that Ruskin, like Arnold, had begun to consider the practical problems of his age.

John Ruskin then published the essays in book form, with the which was titled as *Unto This Last*. It was published in 1862. *Munera Pulveris*, another work of much significance, which dealt with the principles of capital and labor and the evils of the competitive system were discussed in such a way that the author was denounced as a visionary or a madman. It was also published in 1862. The other works of this period which are of extreme significance in understanding the Victorian ethos are *Time and Tide*, *Fors Clavigera*, *Sesame and Lilies*, and the *Crown of Wild Olive*.

Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800 – 1859)

Macaulay contributed a number of essays to The Edinburgh Review. His essays are of two kinds those dealing with literary subjects such as Milton, Byron and Bunyan, and those dealing with historical studies, including his famous essays on

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Lord Clive and Warren Hastings. His essays are clearly and ably written, and in them he often creates vivid picturesque effects. His magnum opus *History of England* in five volumes is a memorable work.

Walter Horatio Pater (1839 – 1894)

Walter Pater is one of the greatest English aesthetes of the nineteenth century who appreciated much of the Renaissance art. He was of the idea that art should exist for its own right without any social significance. In other words, he was the proponent of art for art's sake. In the following books, such as *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (published in 1873) and *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas* (published in 1885), Walter Pater showed his skill has a highly perceptive critic of the Victorian Age. His work, *Marius the Epicurean*, is often called the first anti-novel

His first essays appeared in book form as *Studies in the History of Renaissance* (1873) and are concerned chiefly with art. *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) deals with artists; and *Appreciations* (1889) is on literary themes. *Marius, the Epicurean* (1885) is a remarkable philosophical novel. Pater represented the school of aesthetic criticism. As a critic, he is not a moralist like Arnold. To him art exists to afford us an intense and noble pleasure, and the highest pleasure necessarily furnishes an ethical impulse. In his *Essay on Style in Appreciations* he gives importance to beauty of expression, which can be achieved by well-chosen words. Words for him were not merely connections of thought but carried with them an aroma that might create the fitting mood for appreciating the drift of the writer's mind. According to Pater, criticism is the critic's attempt to put himself into sympathetic relationship with the artist in such a way as to derive the maximum of personal pleasure from the work of art.

R. L. Stevenson

As an essayist R.L. Stevenson stands on a very high plane. His famous works are *The Amateur Emigrant*, *Memories and Portraits*, *Random Memories*, *Fontainebleau*, etc. We get charming glimpses of his childhood and youth in *The Lantern Bearers*. Stevenson brought the story element to essay writing. He was a great observer of man and nature and he could write brilliant and charming essays even on the most trivial scene or even in street or in country. He was a born essayist who knew how to make use of small things. *An Island Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey* are interesting essays, full of humour and flashes of imagination and insignificant things. Stevenson was a moralist too. He is profoundly ethical. He loved the heroic quality in man. It is the essence of the Christmas Sermon and of his frequent meditations on death in *Ordered South* and *Aes Triplex*. Stevenson was a skilled stylist. He could create a striking effect by using a well-chosen phrase or expression.

Victorian Drama

Victorian Age is known for its advancement in novels—it is an age in which novelists explored much in their works and made the genre of the novel famous; but when one talks of Victorian theatre and drama, one finds there it was conspicuously lagging behind. Even in the Romantic period we have seen that though some of the Romantic poets wrote plays, but theatre as genre was not very popular.

In the Victorian Period, Tennyson had more success with theatre than with any other literary artist. Similarly, Browning's *Strafford* (1837) and *A Blot in the Scutcheon* (1843) evinced some genuine dramatic gift. Lord Lytton's *Money* (1840) is a moral comedy of love and cupidity. Charles Reade's *The Courier of Lyons* (1854) and *Drank* (1879) are full of melodramatic element and have little literary worth. *Tom Taylor* (1817-80), *Still Waters Run Deep* (1855) and *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* (1863) show a pioneer trend toward realistic drama which was on the way. Sir Thomas Talfourd (1795-1854) wrote *Ion*, a pseudo-classic tragedy in declamatory style. *The Tragedies of Sheridan Knowles* (1784-1862) are examples of the popular sentimental romantic drama.

Check Your Progress

6. Mention Carlyle's major historical works.
7. What idea was Pater the proponent of?

10.4 THE PIONEERS OF ENGLISH DRAMA

Let us discuss some of the dramatists of the Victorian Age.

T. W. Robertson (1829-71), Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) and A. W. Pinero (1855-1934)

T.W. Robertson tried to write realistic comedy depicting the foibles of aristocratic society and satirizing the snobbery of all classes in *Ours*, *Caste*, *School*, *Home*, *M. P.* and *David Garrick*. Both his characters and settings are real. He introduced in his plays the idea of a serious theme underlying the humour, and characters and dialogue of a more natural kind.

Henry Arthur Jones' first play *The Silver King* is a melodrama. His second play *Saints and Sinners* is noticeable for realism. Characters are realistically portrayed and are presented into two classes representing meanness and idealism respectively. It deals with everyday problems as the hatred of petty shopkeeper at the larger cooperative stores, the meaninglessness of conventional puritanism, the rapacity and poverty of soul in middle-class provincial society.

A.W. Pinero was a skilled craftsman and had a keen appreciation of stage effects. In his early dramatic farces as *The Squire*, *Sweet Lavender*, *The Magistrate*, *The Schoolmistress*, *The Dandy Dick*, *The Weaker Sex*, *The Profligate* and

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The Second Mrs. Tranquerry, Pinero endeavoured to impart realism to both situation and character. In his serious plays *Trelawny of the Wells*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, *Iris and Midchannel*, he successfully delineates realistic characters and deftly creates realistic atmosphere.

Even though these dramatists had started writing plays in the Victorian Period, they were more of the dramatists of the Modern Period.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900)

Born on October 16, 1854 in Dublin, Irish writer Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde is best known for the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, as well as for his infamous arrest and imprisonment for being gay. He is known today for both his novels and plays, but also for his championing of art for art's sake. He is one of the major aesthetes of the Victorian Era and emphasized on the role of art in the society. According to him, the world of art would not exist if the artist does not talk about it, therefore it is essential that the artist creates the world of art and it may not have any resemblance to the world that we are living in.

From early on in his life, Oscar Wilde showed his poetic and artistic talent as in the year of his graduation in 1878, his poem "Ravenna" received the Newdigate Prize for the best English verse composition by an Oxford undergraduate. Thereupon he continued to write poetry and went on to publish his first collection, *Poems*, in 1881.

Then he went on an American tour, giving more than 140 lectures and then served as an editor of *Lady's World*. In 1888, Wilde published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, a collection of children's stories. In 1891, he published *Intentions*, an essay collection arguing the tenets of aestheticism, and that same year, he published his first and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Oscar Wilde's first play was *Lady Windermere's Fan* which had a great opening in February 1892. This play encouraged Oscar Wilde to adopt theatre as his primary literary form for the next few years when he carried on writing one play after the another which were highly witty and at the same time satirical comedies. The greatest among these plays are *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895).

As talked about earlier, Oscar Wilde was an aesthete and therefore throughout his life was committed to the principles of aestheticism. In the Preface of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde mentioned that "All art is at once surface and symbol . . . Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors. Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new, complex and vital."

George Bernard Shaw

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George Bernard Shaw, (July 26, 1856, — Nov. 2, 1950), was born in Dublin, Ireland and is considered to be one of the most significant dramatists of the latter half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century. He was not only an Irish dramatist, but also a literary critic and a social propagandist who wrote with such vehemence about the need for moulding art for society's sake that he was awarded Nobel Prize for literature in the year 1925.

It is to be kept in mind that there was a vehement movement in the latter half of the nineteenth century spearheaded by many significant poets and writers such as Walter Pater and Oscar Wilde who talked about the notion of "arts for art's sake." It is against this maxim of "arts for art's sake" that George Bernard Shaw made a protest in his writings who following the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen talked about the "art for society's sake." George Bernard Shaw once said that he would not take the pain of writing a single line for the sake of art which suggests how his writings are committed to social development and how through his writings he wanted to change the outlook of the society.

Some writers and dramatists feel that literature or art can be used as a tool of social change and that should be the objective of art or literature and George Bernard Shaw was no different as he too thought that a revolution of ideas is necessary in the society to reform it and therefore, he considered his Problem Plays to be the most significant way in which he could bring about those changes. He thought that in his plays he should talk about the social problems that exist in society in such terms that people/ audience come to know the root of the problems and act in such a way so as to make the society a better place to live in. Thus, most of his plays are Problem plays which deal with some problem of the society or the other.

It is George Bernard Shaw who was the major force behind the newly founded Fabian Society, (1884) a middle-class socialist group that aimed at the transformation of English society, but not through revolution. Shaw and the other members of the Fabian Society believed that society can be changed slowly through means of slow transformation of the ideology of the people by providing them with the just doses of right thought through writing and dramatic performances. Thus, most of Shaw's plays are meant to be works which look forward to changes in society which will make the society a better place to live in. Shaw was one of the most visible editors of one of the classics of British socialism, *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1889), to which he even contributed two sections.

At a time when George Bernard Shaw started writing plays, A. W. Pinero and H. A. Jones were the prominent dramatists of the English stage who were trying their best to develop modern realistic theatre which would try to break free from the artificial plots and conventional stereotypical characters. It was something new that the theatre goers were experiencing around that time. It is at this time that Norwegian Dramatist Henrik Ibsen's plays were introduced to the English theatre

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– in 1890 *A Doll's House* was performed in London whereas in 1891, Ibsen's *Ghosts* was performed.

Ibsen's plays brought fresh perspective to the world of theatre who came up with the notion of the Problem Plays which Shaw found to be an apt thing for the British Stage. At this time, George Bernard Shaw published his famous *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* (1891), which is thought to be a Manifesto of the modern Problem Plays. Following Ibsen's influence on Shaw, we can find that Shaw's plays get an Ibsenite tone and fervour as we can see in his plays such as *Widowers' Houses* or *The Result* (performed 1892).

In 1893, one of Shaw's famous plays, *Mrs Warren's Profession* was written though the play was not put up on stage till 1902 but it was refused a license by Lord Chamberlain, the censor of plays for it dealt with the theme of organized prostitution. Shaw then wrote four Pleasant Plays and in 1898 his group of plays was published with the name *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898). This collection had plays such as *Arms and the Man* (performed in 1894) as well as *Candida* (performed in 1897).

Three Plays for Puritans (1901) was his next collection of plays which was published which had a Preface by Shaw – an essay which talks about the choice of the themes of his plays. One should read this preface to figure out how Shavian plays dealt with some social problem or the other. *The Devil's Disciple* was performed in 1897 and was a play set in New Hampshire during the American; whereas *Caesar and Cleopatra* which was performed in 1901 deals with Cleopatra is a spoiled and vicious sixteen-year-old child rather than the thirty-eight year old protagonist of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The third play, *Captain Brassbound's Conversion* which was performed in 1900 dealt with various kinds of folly masquerading as duty and justice.

Man and Superman, which was performed in 1905, is another of the great plays by George Bernard Shaw which expounded the philosophy that humanity is the latest stage in a purposeful and eternal evolutionary movement of the 'life force' toward ever-higher life forms. In *Major Barbara* which was also performed in 1905, Shaw presents his heroine, a major in the Salvation Army, shows how behind the religious consciousness of the society lies an arm dealer's money. It is an interesting attack on the religious sensibilities of the people who do not understand the basis on which religion as a social institution works in the society in tandem with the worst of the society's people who are supposedly the arms manufacturers.

The Doctor's Dilemma which was performed in 1906, dealt with the medical profession. In this play, George Bernard Shaw made a satire on the medical profession which represented the self-protection of professions. *Androcles and the Lion* which was performed in 1912, was a play which dealt with true and false religious exaltations.

Pygmalion, which was performed in 1913, was Shaw's masterpiece and can be talked about to be one of his most popular plays. It is a very great didactic theatre where Henry Higgins, the phonetician tries to train a Cockney flower girl in linguistic pronunciation in such a way so as to present her as a social lady. Eliza Doolittle's appears in the high society with her accented English even though she was a flower girl. The play was adapted into a film named *My Fair Lady*.

Around this time the World War I began, and it was a time when Shaw ceased from writing plays. Though he was also into action during the times of war as he wrote a controversial pamphlet during that time named "Common Sense About the War." In this pamphlet, Shaw talked about how Great Britain and its allies are equally culpable with the Germans and therefore he argued in favour of negotiation and peace.

It is this pamphlet and his anti-war speeches which was a rage at that point of time but also these made him immensely unpopular as he was subject to much criticism for his anti-war stance. In *Heartbreak House*, which was performed in 1920, Shaw tried to expose the way there is a spiritual bankruptcy because of the way war had its effect on the people and a whole generation felt somehow wasted because of the war. Shaw wrote five linked plays under the collective title *Back to Methuselah* (1922).

Shaw's play *Saint Joan* was performed in 1923 which dealt with a Roman Catholic saint and martyr. George Bernard Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 though he refused the award. Shaw then went on to write many other plays and also his social criticism. His encyclopaedic political tract "The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism" was published in 1928. In 1929, Shaw produced *The Apple Cart* which was a futuristic high comedy. Shaw then wrote many other plays but they were not very popular – these plays include *Too True to Be Good* (which was performed in 1932), *On the Rocks* (which was performed in 1933), *The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles* (which was performed in 1935), *Geneva* (which was performed in 1938), and *In Good King Charles's Golden Days* (which was performed in 1939), *Farfetched Fables* (which was performed in 1950), *Shakes Versus Shav* (which was performed in 1949), and *Why She Would Not* (which was performed in 1956).

Let Us Sum Up

Victorian Age is known for industrialization, mercantile expansion, colonialism, growth of utilitarian spirit and capitalist beliefs and systems and also a time of great development of literature. In this unit, we have dealt with Victorian poets, prose writers (especially essayists) and drama; and in the next unit we will be dealing with Victorian Novels.

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Check Your Progress

8. What does *Saints and Sinners* deal with?
9. Name some of Pinero's dramatic farces.
10. What did Shaw talk about in the pamphlet *Common Sense About the War*?
11. What did Shaw try to do through his play *Heartbreak House*?

10.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Theory of Utilitarianism propounded that the dominant striving factor of an individual's life is to attain as much pleasure as possible – to *maximize pleasure and to minimize pain*.
2. The key words which dominated the Victorian era are that of –
 - Assertion: implying negation
 - Expansion: implying oppression
 - Imitation: implying devaluation
3. In *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* (published in 1830) by Alfred Tennyson, the objective of the collection of poems was to render a mood rather than to explore it, which is typical of the Romantic Age.
4. The great achievement of Browning was to break away from the post-Keatsian handling of sensory images and bring back a colloquial vigour to English poetry.
5. Arnold's first volume of poetry, *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* (1849), is noted for its elegiac description of landscape.
6. Carlyle's major historical works are *The French Revolution* (1837), Oliver Cromwell's *Letters and Speeches* (1845), *The Life of John Sterling* (1851) and *The History of Frederick II of Prussia, Called Frederik the Great* (1858-65).
7. Pater was of the idea that art should exist for its own right without any social significance. In other words, he was the proponent of art for art's sake.
8. It deals with everyday problems as the hatred of petty shopkeeper at the larger cooperative stores, the meaninglessness of conventional puritanism, the rapacity and poverty of soul in middle-class provincial society.
9. Pinero's early dramatic farces are *The Squire*, *Sweet Lavender*, *The Magistrate*, *The Schoolmistress*, *The Dandy Dick*, *The Weaker Sex*, *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs. Tranquary*.

10. In this pamphlet, Shaw talked about how Great Britain and its allies are equally culpable with the Germans and therefore he argued in favour of negotiation and peace.
11. In *Heartbreak House*, which was performed in 1920, Shaw tried to expose the way there is a spiritual bankruptcy because of the way war had its effect on the people and a whole generation felt somehow wasted because of the war.

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10.6 SUMMARY

- The age was dominated by the *Utilitarian Theories* – that of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.
- Mill talked about higher and lower pleasures and said that which pleasure is higher can only be judged by an experienced person.
- The advent of Capitalism started in the sixteenth century. But the capitalistic tendencies began to show their full impact from the Victorian period onwards, when the entrepreneurs took up the newer technologies to set up industries in the urban centres of England.
- Tennyson's poem collection *Poems* (1833) shows his artistic advancement which contains famous poems such as *The Lady of Shalott*, *Oenone*, *The Lotos Eaters* and *The Place of Art*.
- It is in 1847 that Tennyson's longer poem *The Princess* was published which deals with the significant theme of the concept of New Woman dealt with in a comic manner.
- Dramatic Monologue as a genre finds its best exploration in Browning's creativity and the poems, we have in syllabus are greatest examples of it, whether it is "Fra Lippo Lippi" or "Porphyria's Lover" or "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church."
- The dramatic monologues are basically concerned with human psychology. George Santayana thought that Browning's personae always displayed "traits of character and never attains character at all."
- Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) began to write poetry as a friend and admirer of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, but he soon developed his own style, making his own use of influences from Greek, Elizabethan, and Jacobean drama.
- *Munera Pulveris*, another work of much significance, which dealt with the principles of capital and labor and the evils of the competitive system were discussed in such a way that the author was denounced as a visionary or a madman.

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- Victorian Age is known for its advancement in novels – it is an age in which novelists explored much in their works and made the genre of the novel famous; but when one talks of Victorian theatre and drama, one finds there it was conspicuously lagging behind.
- Oscar Wilde's first play was *Lady Windermere's Fan* which had a great opening in February 1892. This play encouraged Oscar Wilde to adopt theatre as his primary literary form for the next few years when he carried on writing one play after the another which were highly witty and at the same time satirical comedies.
- In *Major Barbara* which was also performed in 1905, Shaw presents his heroine, a major in the Salvation Army, shows how behind the religious consciousness of the society lies an arm dealer's money.
- Shaw's play *Saint Joan* was performed in 1923 which dealt with a Roman Catholic saint and martyr. George Bernard Shaw was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925 though he refused the award.

10.7 KEY WORDS

- **Utilitarianism:** It is a theory of morality, which advocates actions that foster happiness or pleasure and opposes actions that cause unhappiness or harm. When directed toward making social, economic, or political decisions, a utilitarian philosophy would aim for the betterment of society as a whole.
- **Deontology:** It is the study of the nature of duty and obligation.
- **Capitalism:** It is an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- **Industrialism:** It refers to a social organization in which industries and especially large-scale industries are dominant.
- **Pre-Raphaelite:** It refers to a member of a group of English 19th-century artists, including Holman Hunt, Millais, and D. G. Rossetti, who consciously sought to emulate the simplicity and sincerity of the work of Italian artists from before the time of Raphael.

10.8 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. List the two principles provided by Bentham that should govern an individual's life.

2. What is the problem with Bentham's Deontology?
3. Which remarkable ability did Browning develop?
4. Write a short note on Swineburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*.
5. List Ruskin's works on art that show his literary industry.
6. What was the objective of Shaw's problem plays?
7. In what ways do Victorian essays portray the philosophical attitudes of the day?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyze the advent of capitalism in Britain and its impact on the lives of people.
2. Discuss Alfred Tennyson's poetry.
3. Examine Robert Browning as a dramatic monologist.
4. Elaborate upon Pater's major ideas on art.
5. Analyze Oscar Wilde's life and major works.
6. Discuss the main ideas and beliefs of the Fabian society.

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UNIT 11 THE AGE OF TENNYSON: NOVEL

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Structure

- 11.0 Introduction
- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Major Novelists of the Victorian Age
- 11.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 11.4 Summary
- 11.5 Key Words
- 11.6 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 11.7 Further Readings

11.0 INTRODUCTION

Though the eighteenth century saw the birth of novel, but it is only in the nineteenth century that the novel as a genre reached a certain height which was not earlier trespassed. All of us are aware of this fact that the growth of the novel was dependent on the growth of the middle class, as today we see the novel to be the most popular genre as the major part of the world's middle class is interested in this genre of literature. The Victorian novel is the revelation of the most typical product of English genius. In fact, the novel occupies the same place in Victorian age, which drama established its unique reputation in the age of Queen Elizabeth I. David Daiches' comments seems to be apt here, as he says, "The Nineteenth Century was the great age of the English novel."

11.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyze the major Victorian novelists and their concerns
- Discuss the works of novelist like Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley and William Thackeray among others

11.2 MAJOR NOVELISTS OF THE VICTORIAN AGE

Let us discuss the major Victorian Novelists.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens started from the humblest position in life. In 1827 he entered the office of an attorney and got an appointment as reporter on *The True Sun* and

later on *The Morning Chronicle*. Some of his articles, known as *Sketches by Boz* appeared in *The Monthly Magazine* in 1833. They were brilliantly written and were published in two volumes in 1836. Then appeared *Pickwick Papers* in 1836-37, which was a great success. It is a sort of picaresque novel. The incidents are loosely connected, but in vivacity of humour and minuteness of observation it is a marvellous work. *Oliver Twist* (1837) appeared piecemeal in Bentley's *Miscellany*, and *Nicholas Nickleby* came out in 1838. Dickens became immensely popular and his novels were in great demand.

Dickens varied his work with much travelling - among other places to America (1842), to Italy (1842), to Switzerland (1846), and again to America (1867). As a journalist he edited *The Daily News* (1846) and founded *Household Words* (1849) and *All the Year Round* (1859). *The Old Curiosity Shop* which appeared in 1840 was an immense success, and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), was a historical novel. His American experiences are described in *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843). Then followed *A Christmas Carol* (1843) and *Dombey and Son* (1846). Dickens' famous autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* appeared in 1849. His other famous novels are *Bleak House* (1842), *Hard Times* (1854), *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations* (1860) and *Our Mutual Friend*. Dickens did not live to finish *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, as he died in 1870.

Dickens is the pioneer of realism in nineteenth century novel. Chesterton says: "Dickens used reality while aiming at an effect of romance, while Thackeray used the loose language and ordinary appearance of romance while aiming at an effect of reality... Dickens writes realism in order the incredible credible." Dickens' power of minute and keen observation coupled with poetic imagination, retentive memory and remarkable instinctive power of reading character make him a realist of a high order. As a realist he centred his eye on London and low life. To him London was the epitome of contemporary English life. He knew London thoroughly. Hugh Walker remarks: "*He knew it topographically, industrially, socially within the limits of middle and lower classes. He could penetrate into all obscure nooks. He was familiar with all its strange trades and with those who followed them- the dustman, the articulator of skeletons, the marine-store dealers, the man who made a living by recovering bodies from the Thames, and many less innocent than he- Dickens knew them all better than we know our next door neighbours. It was from this material that he built his books.*"

All novels of Dickens are characterised by humanitarian note. He attacked the abuses in the existing system and throughout he considered himself as the champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed. Hudson remarks: "Humanitarianism was indeed the keynote of his work, and as his enormous popularity carried his influence far and wide, he may justly be reckoned one of the greatest social reformers of his age." Dickens' sympathy was always with the out-castes, the poor, the downtrodden, the exploited and all victims of society. In

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most of his novels a child is usually presented as a victim of society. *Oliver Twist*, *Little Nell*, *Florence Dombey* and *David Copperfield*, stand out in celestial innocence and goodness, in contrast to the evil creatures whose persecution they suffer for a season. They represent vividly the complaint of the individual against society. The cruelty the malign characters inflict on children is a manifestation of social wrong. Bumble's savage blow at Oliver Twist asking for more food, and Squeers' wicked exploitation of his pupils in *Nicholas Nickleby* expose utter want of human love and sympathy in the existing social system. In his novels we find a deep-seated reaction against the organised authority and established institutions. His three novels, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Old Curiosity Shop* established Dickens as the pioneer of humanitarianism. He tried to arouse the conscience of the people against the exploitation of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Dickens saw life from the viewpoint of the poor and oppressed. He had himself known the lot of the persecuted; at the root of the zeal for reform was the memory of his own bitter childhood. Victorian realism is of two kinds: Firstly, it is a sociological realism. While in all his work Dickens is attacking the social conditions of his time, in *Hard Times* he gives the theme a special emphasis.

Charles Kingsley (1819-75)

Charles Kingsley, born on 12 June, 1819 at Holne Vicarage near Dartmoor, went to Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a first class in classics and a second in mathematics. In the year 1848, Charles Kingsley published the blank verse drama, *The Saint's Tragedy*. Charles Kingsley then joined the newly established Queen's College, London as a professor, but soon was forced to resign because of the work pressure.

In 1848, Kingsley published a long story by the name of *Yeast; a Problem* which dealt with the deplorable living conditions of England's agricultural laboring families. The story started appearing in *Fraser's Magazine* and later was published as a book in 1851. By then, Charles Kingsley's political activism was widely known throughout London and in consequence, there was an adverse reaction by the establishment which resulted in his rejection for a professorship at King's College.

Charles Kingsley was appalled by the heinous sanitary conditions in Victorian cities. Because of the rise of the Industrial cities, many a people from the rural areas had migrated to the cities making city life crowded. The cities were not equipped with this inflow of population and therefore the sanitary conditions of the cities were in a bad shape. Charles Kingsley saw these and was horrified by it leading him to write about it in his novel *Alton Locke* (1859).

Charles Kingsley published his first historical novel, *Hypatia: or, New Foes with an Old Face*, in two volumes; it had earlier appeared serially in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1853. It deals with the fifth-century Alexandria, which presents the story of various conflicts of Greeks, Jews, Romans, Egyptians, and Goths,

particularly the rival claims of Christianity, Judaism, and Neoplatonic thought, against the background of the collapsing Roman Empire.

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In 1855, *Glaucus*; or, *The Wonders of the Shore* (1855) was published which was his first books specifically meant for children. In 1854 the Kingsleys moved to Biddeford on the north coast of Devon, where Kingsley wrote his historical romance *Westward Ho!* for which he is still known throughout the world. It is the most widely read of all his novels.

In 1868 Charles Kingsley published *The Heroes*; or *Greek Fairy Tales, for My Children*, a book of three Greek legends, intended specifically for children. Thus, his fame for a writer for the children was established with this book as he knew how to appeal to the sensibilities of his child readers.

Then came another novel for adults, *Two Years Ago* which was published in 1857). The novel *Two Years Ago* is set in the Victorian age, in which Kingsley expressed his views on topics such as the role of the artist as a greater good for the society at large, the great need for sanitation in the cities so as to maintain hygiene, the importance of science in the contemporary life as well as the abolition of slavery.

In 1863, Charles Kingsley's another well-known work for children came out as *The Water-Babies*. The book was serialized in Macmillan's Magazine dealing with the story of little Tom, the poor child chimney sweep who, reborn as a water-baby, experiences wonderful adventures in the company of real and imaginary creatures.

William Makepeace Thackeray

Thackeray was born in 1811 at Calcutta. *The Book of Snobs* (1849) is a memorable work from his early works which is a satire on snobbery. During the industrial revolution in England, social snobbery had reached alarming proportions which needed someone to speak about and Thackeray spoke about it in his novel. *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1841) as well as *Fitzboodle Papers* (1842-43) have a great biting humour and merciless observation of human weaknesses for which Thackeray is well known. *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1844) is a picaresque novel. But it is with *The Vanity Fair* (1847-48) that the novelist Thackeray reached his zenith of literary consciousness and creativity. The heroine of the novel Becky Sharp is a female adventuress who has few moral scruples. *Pendennis* (1849-50) is autobiographical in nature. In it he owes us debt to Fielding. *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852) is a historical novel of great length and complexity. *The Virginians* 1857-59), a sequel to Henry Esmond records experiences of two lads, the grandson of Henry Esmond himself. Thackeray's *Lovel, the Widower* (1860), *The Adventures of Philip* (1861) and the unfinished work, *Dennis Duval* are inferior works. He also wrote series of charming essays, *The Roundabout Papers* (1860)

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Thackeray was a realist. He wrote what he observed. If Dickens was concerned with the portrayal of the lower-class people, the downtrodden of the society then Thackeray was primarily concerned with the presentation of the Upper-class people. But he wasn't at all a romantic and therefore presented the society from a highly realistic point of view. *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848) is the best known of Thackeray's novels. It was his first great work and was intended to express his own views of the social life about him, and to protest against the overdrawn heroes of popular novels. He takes for his subject that *Vanity Fair* to which Christian and Faithful were conducted on their way to the Heavenly City, as recorded in Pilgrim's Progress.

George Meredith

Meredith was born at Portsmouth on February 12, 1828. George Meredith was both a poet and novelist. His famous poem *Modern Love* (1862) records his pains and heart-searching. His first attempt in fiction was *The Shaping of Shagpat*, a pleasant oriental tale. His well-known novels are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Sandra Belloi* (1864), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Vittoria* (1867), *Harry Richmond* (1871), *Beauchamps Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879) and *Diana of the Crossways* (1855). *Richard Feverel* is one of his memorable works. *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* is also believed to be autobiographical. *The Egoist* is his masterpiece.

Meredith is not a realist like Thackeray. He enlarged the scope of the novel by creating a new species of fiction which has been called the Romantic comedy. Meredith's novel is the poetic comedy. As a shrewd observer of human nature Meredith was unsurpassable. Rickett remarks: "His humour lacks the jolly geniality of Dickens, and the easy breadth of Fielding; but there is a keener intellectual vision behind. Less universal in his appeal as a humourist, he has no rival as a satirist; for him, satire is keen, subtle, incisive; and never blunted as Dickens' occasionally was by overemphasis, or as Thackeray's was by overemphasis, or as Thackeray's was by sentimentality. No Victorian novelist has a wider range of sympathy, or shrewder vision." Everywhere Meredith displays a rare penetration into the characters of men and women. He excels in lying bare the springs of egotism. *The Egoist* is his masterpiece and one of the great works of the century. His other important works are *Richard Feverel*, *Evan Harrington*, *Harry Richmond*, *Rhoda Fleming*, *Vittoria* and *Diana of the Crossways*.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-65)

Mrs. Gaskell used novel as an instrument of social reform. In her first novel *Mary Barton* (1848), she presents a sociological study based on her experience of the conditions of the labouring classes in the new cities of the industrial North. It is remarkable for passionate sympathy for the downtrodden *North and South* (1855) is a better constructed novel than its predecessor but it is also a Sociological novel. Despite her sympathy with the poor and the downtrodden she does not

offer any positive solution to the hardships of labourers. Her next novel, *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863) is a moralistic love story in a domestic setting. *Wives and Daughters*, her last unfinished novel, is an ironical study of snobbishness, and is noticeable for the fine delineation of female characters - Mrs. Gibson, Molly Gibson and Cynthia Kirpatrick. Mrs. Gaskell's most celebrated work is *Cranford* (1853). It is less a novel than a series of papers in the manner of *The Spectator*. It is remarkable for light, gently humorous tone and the realistic picture of life and manners the author had known in Knutsford.

The Bronte Sisters

The Bronte Sisters - Charlotte (1816-55), Emily (1818-48) and Anne (1820-49) - writes Edward Albert, "were the pioneers in fiction of that aspect of the romantic movement which concerned itself with the baring of human soul. In place of the detached observation of a society or group of people, such as we find in Jane Austen and the earlier novelists, the Brontes painted the sufferings of an individual personality, and presented the new conception of the heroine as a woman of vital strength and passionate feelings. Their works are as much the products of imagination and emotions as of the intellect, and in their more powerful passages they border on poetry. Charlotte Bronte's first novel *The Professor* (1857) is a tedious and clumsy effort. It is autobiographical in tone and the characters are drawn from her own personal acquaintances. *Jane Eyre* (1847), her greatest work, is also autobiographical and reveals the love story of Charlotte. It combines realism and romanticism. It is rich in Wordsworthian attitude to nature. *Shirley* (1849) is extremely realistic and factual in character. The main incidents in this novel are historical and the places are real. Her last novel *Villette* (1852) is a direct autobiographical novel. As a novelist Charlotte Bronte is concerned with the baring of human soul.

George Eliot (1819-80)

George Eliot was the pen name of Mary Ann Evans, one of the leading English novelists of the 19th century. Her novels, most famously '*Middlemarch*', are celebrated for their realism and psychological insights. George Eliot was born on 22 November 1819 in rural Warwickshire. In 1850, Eliot began contributing to the 'Westminster Review', a leading journal for philosophical radicals, and later became its editor. She was now at the centre of a literary circle through which she met George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived until his death in 1878. Lewes encouraged Eliot to write. In 1856, she began '*Scenes of Clerical Life*', stories about the people of her native Warwickshire, which were published in 'Blackwood's Magazine'. Her first novel, '*Adam Bede*', followed in 1859 and was a great success. She used a male pen name to ensure that her works were taken seriously in an era when female authors were usually associated with romantic novels.

Mary Ann Evans imparted moral and philosophical dimension to English novel. Her first work consisted of three short stories, published in Blackwood's

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Magazine during 1857. These stories deal with the tragedy of ordinary lives, unfolded with an intense sympathy and deep insight into the truth of character. Her first novel *Adam Bede* (1859) presents a fine picture of English country life among the humbler classes. It contains well delineated characters Hetty, Adam Bede and Mrs. Poyser. *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) is partly autobiographical. Set in authentic rural background, it is a highly moving tragedy. The character of Maggie is psychologically portrayed. *Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe* (1861) is remarkable for earnestness of tone, rich humour, profound tragedy and excellent pictures of village life. With the publication of *Romola* in 1863 the ethical note becomes more prominent in her writings. It is a historical novel set in medieval Florence. *A Study of Provincial Life* (1871-72) presents the complex picture of the life of a small town. George Eliot's last novel *Daniel Deronda* (1876) is overloaded with moral problems and considerations.

If Dickens and Thackeray were known for their social realism, then George Eliot was known for her psychological realist novels. The general character of George Eliot's novels may be described in author's own terms, as psychological realism. Her great novels are *Adam Bede*, *Silas Marner*, *Romala* and *Middle-March*. In each of these novels we find evidence of psychological penetration and intellectual analysis of the problems of life.

Let Us Sum Up

Victorian novelists portrayed the outside world and some of them, especially Charles Dickens were great realists which takes a turn to the inner realms of human existence in the next century, the modern age.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the novels that describe Dickens' American experiences.
2. What are the novels of Dickens characterized by?
3. Name some well-known novels by George Meredith.
4. What does Gaskell present in her first novel *Mary Barton*?
5. Why did George Eliot use a pen name?
6. What is the general character of George Eliot's novels?

11.3 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' QUESTIONS

1. Charles Dickens' American experiences are described in *American Notes* (1842) and *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843).
2. All novels of Dickens are characterised by humanitarian note. He attacked the abuses in the existing system and throughout he considered himself as the champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed.

3. Meredith's well-known novels are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), *Evan Harrington* (1861), *Sandra Belloi* (1864), *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Vittoria* (1867), *Harry Richmond* (1871), *Beauchamps Career* (1876), *The Egoist* (1879) and *Diana of the Crossways* (1855).
4. In her first novel *Mary Barton* (1848), she presents a sociological study based on her experience of the conditions of the labouring classes in the new cities of the industrial North.
5. George Eliot used a male pen name to ensure that her works were taken seriously in an era when female authors were usually associated with romantic novels.
6. The general character of George Eliot's novels may be described in author's own terms, as psychological realism.

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11.4 SUMMARY

- In 1827 Charles Dickens entered the office of an attorney and got an appointment as reporter on *The True Sun* and later on *The Morning Chronicle*.
- Dickens varied his work with much travelling - among other places to America (1842), to Italy (1842), to Switzerland (1846), and again to America (1867). As a journalist he edited *The Daily News* (1846) and founded *Household Words* (1849) and *All the Year Round* (1859).
- Dickens' power of minute and keen observation coupled with poetic imagination, retentive memory and remarkable instinctive power of reading character make him a realist of a high order.
- Dickens saw life from the viewpoint of the poor and oppressed. He had himself known the lot of the persecuted; at the root of the zeal for reform was the memory of his own bitter childhood.
- In 1848, Kingsley published a long story by the name of *Yeast; a Problem* which dealt with the deplorable living conditions of England's agricultural laboring families.
- In 1868 Charles Kingsley published *The Heroes; or Greek Fairy Tales, for My Children*, a book of three Greek legends, intended specifically for children. Thus, his fame for a writer for the children was established with this book as he knew how to appeal to the sensibilities of his child readers.
- *The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1841) as well as *Fitzboodle Papers* (1842-43) have a great biting humour and merciless observation of human weaknesses for which Thackeray is well known.

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- Thackeray was primarily concerned with the presentation of the Upper-class people. But he wasn't at all a romantic and therefore presented the society from a highly realistic point of view.
- Meredith is not a realist like Thackeray. He enlarged the scope of the novel by creating a new species of fiction which has been called the Romantic comedy. Meredith's novel is the poetic comedy.
- Mrs. Gaskell's most celebrated work is *Cranford* (1853). It is less a novel than a series of papers in the manner of *The Spectator*. It is remarkable for light, gently humorous tone and the realistic picture of life and manners the author had known in Knutsford.
- Charlotte Bronte's first novel *The Professor* (1857) is a tedious and clumsy effort. It is autobiographical in tone and the characters are drawn from her own personal acquaintances. *Jane Eyre* (1847), her greatest work, is also autobiographical and reveals the love story of Charlotte. It combines realism and romanticism.
- Mary Ann Evans imparted moral and philosophical dimension to English novel. Her first work consisted of three short stories, published in *Blackwood's Magazine* during 1857.
- If Dickens and Thackeray were known for their social realism, then George Eliot was known for her psychological realist novels. The general character of George Eliot's novels may be described in author's own terms, as psychological realism.

11.5 KEY WORDS

- **Picaresque Novel:** It is a genre of prose fiction. It depicts the adventures of a roguish, but "appealing hero", usually of low social class, who lives by his wits in a corrupt society.
- **Humanitarianism:** It is an active belief in the value of human life, whereby humans practice benevolent treatment and provide assistance to other humans, in order to improve the conditions of humanity for moral, altruistic and logical reasons
- **Realism:** It is generally the attempt in arts to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding speculative fiction and supernatural elements.
- **Romanticism:** It is a movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18th century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.

11.6 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the two kinds of Victorian Realism?
2. Which novels established Dickens as the pioneer of humanitarianism?
3. Write a short note on Kingsley's novel *Hypatia*.
4. Write a short note on Gaskell's *Cranford*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss Dickens' realism in novels.
2. Examine Elizabeth Gaskell as a novelist.
3. Write a critical note evaluating the contribution of the Victorian novelists.

11.7 FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK IV MODERN AGE

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UNIT 12 THE AGE OF HARDY

Structure

- 12.0 Introduction
- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Eminent Novelists of the Twentieth Century
- 12.3 The Stream of Consciousness Novel
- 12.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 12.5 Summary
- 12.6 Key Words
- 12.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 12.8 Further Readings

12.0 INTRODUCTION

The signifier “modern” has been related to so many signifieds that it becomes impossible to define the term. Therefore, the notion of modern and modernity remains so varied and disturbing in the academic history. Sometimes the Elizabethan age is referred to as the first modern age; whereas some literary historians feel that true modernism starts with the eighteenth century when for the first time the spirit of Reason came in the history of European civilization. But for the present purpose, without going any further into the discussion of the project of modernity and notion of modernism, I will try to sketch the modern era which to some begins in 1890s, while others think it begins in 1901, with the death of Queen Victoria, while another view is that it starts during the First World War. The kind of confusion about when Modernism began is there because there are varied views about what Modernism is. Only the literary scholars are of the same view that the High Modernism began in the year 1922, with the publication of three major literary writings – T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*. These three writers focus on three different aspects of Modernism – whereas Joyce dealt with the drabness of modern existence, Virginia Woolf dealt with the women’s questions and T. S. Eliot tries to point out that shabbiness of Modern existence, one thing is common between all three of them, that is, they all dealt not with the external reality but with the internal one. They didn’t deal with the clock time or the mechanical time, but with “duree” or the psychological time and how the duree dominates our consciousness. That’s the major change we can see between the Victorian writing and the Moderns. Whereas the Victorians were concerned with the reality outside, with the social problems, with the problems of

loss of faith and the bad effects of Utilitarianism and industrialization, the moderns were concerned about the metaphysical existence, with psychological existence, with the effects of the World wars which traumatized the human psyche. Thus, we can perceive a vast amount of change between the Victorian literature and the Modern literature. There are many reasons why these changes have happened in the course of history of literature. Our next project would be to locate all those influences that paved the path for the changes.

When Virginia Woolf announced that “in or about December, 1910, human character changed” what she was expressing is what seemed by 1924 to be an accumulated sense of exhilaration at a variety of new beginnings and rejections of the past. The most important influence is that of Sigmund Freud who changed the path of human thought by his awe-inspiring analysis of the human mind –

(The id is) ... a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement. ... The laws of Logic – above all, the law of contradiction — do not hold for processes in the id. Contradictory impulses exist side by side without neutralizing each other or drawing apart, ... in the id there is nothing corresponding to the idea of time, no recognition of the passage of time, and no alteration of mental processes by the passage of time. ... Naturally, the id knows no values, no good and evil, no morality. ... As regards a characterization of the ego, in so far it is to be distinguished from the id and the super-ego, we shall get on better if we turn our attention to the relation between it and the most superficial portion of mental apparatus; which we call Pcptcs (perceptual – conscious) system. This system is directed on to the external world, it mediates perception of it, and in it is generated, while it is functioning, the phenomena of consciousness ... The ego has to observe the external world and preserve a true picture of it in the memory traces left by its perceptions, and, by means of the reality – test, it has to eliminate any element in this picture of the external world which is a contribution from internal sources of excitation. On behalf of the id, the ego controls the path of access of motility, but it interpolates between desire and action the procrastinating factor of thought, during which it makes use of the residues of experience stored in memory. In this way it dethrones the pleasure-principle, which exerts undisputed sway over the processes in the id, and substitutes for it the reality-principle, which promises greater security and greater success. ... the ego stands for reason and circumspection, while the id stands for the untamed passion. ... on the other hand, Super-ego ... holds up certain norms of behavior, without regard to any difficulties coming from the id and the external world; and if these norms are not acted up to, it punishes the ego with the feelings of tension which manifest themselves as a sense of inferiority and guilt ...”

Thus, Freud makes a three-part division of consciousness – id, ego and super-ego. Through these three constituents of the mind Freud tried to make a study of the different human behaviors. In modernist literature we see many influences of the Freudian psychoanalysis – D. H. Lawrence in the novel *Sons*

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and *Lovers* deals with the Oedipus complex, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce dealt with the stream of consciousness technique, T. S. Eliot dealt with the internal reality of mankind etc.

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Novel as a genre found its birth in the eighteenth century and in about a century it became the favourite genre of the masses as in the nineteenth century (Romantic and Victorian Era) we have seen that Novel became very popular. In many ways it had surpassed poetry and drama and attracted a host of readers from all realms of life. Whereas the Victorian novel focused on social realism and try to portray the Victorian society from close quarters often to make a critique of the Victorian ethos (think about Charles Dickens, especially *Hard Times*); the modernist novels instead of presenting the outside world focused more on the inner realms of man's existence as the mind and consciousness of man becomes the subject matter of study in the modernist novels.

Some of the significant themes of the modernist fiction are enumerated below—

1. Variety and Complexity of themes

Modern writers explored various themes in their writings as the preoccupations of the modern men are diverse. The diversity of the human existence and its various interests as well as manifestations found expressions in the modern novel.

- (a) There are some writers who continued with the old order of the Victorian novel such as H. G. Wells, Arnold Bennett and Galsworthy where they focused on portraying the anxieties of the middle-class societies.
- (b) People like H. G. Wells also anticipated the influence of science in the lives of modern man and therefore focused on writing about the various scientific developments as we see in his famous novel *The Invisible Man*.
- (c) The influence of the World War can also be seen in the writings of the modern novelists. It is true that the novelists did not write about the War directly as the War poets did; but they represented the negative aspects of the war in their writings such as the portrayal of Septimus Warren Smith in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf.
- (d) Writers like D. H. Lawrence emphasized on the impulses and instincts of man and wrote novels which dealt with the sexual instincts of man such as *Sons and Lovers*.
- (e) James Joyce, Miss Richardson and Virginia Woolf found themselves dealing with the inner aspects of the mind's workings and developed the Stream of Consciousness technique and the evolution of the genre of the psychological novel happened in their writings.

- (f) Beside the Psychological novel many new genres of novel, such as biographical novel, regional novel, satirical novel, sea novel, war novel, novel of humour, novel of hunting, etc. were also written.

The Age of Hardy

12.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyze how the Modern Novel is different from the nineteenth century novels
- Discuss the major novelists of the early twentieth century
- Examine the Stream of Consciousness Technique

12.2 EMINENT NOVELISTS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Some of the novelists of the modern period are as follows:

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy, the son of a builder, was born in 1840 in the county of Dorset. He was educated at a local school and later in Dorchester. Except for a brief period in London during manhood, Hardy passed his life near Dorchester. Rickett classifies Hardy's novels in the following groups:

(i) Pastoral Tragedies:

- *The Return of the Native* (1878),
- *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886),
- *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and
- *Jude, the obscure* (1896).

(ii) Pastoral Comedies:

- *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1875),
- *A Laodicean* (1881),
- *Two on a Tower* (1882).

(iii) Pastoral Romances:

- *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872),
- *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874),
- *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1875),
- *The Trumpet Major* (1880),
- *The Woodlanders* (1887).

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(iv) Pastoral Extravaganza:

- *The Well Beloved* (1897).

(v) Short Stories:

- *Wessex Tales* (1883),
- *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891),
- *Life's Little Ironies* (1894),
- *A Changed Man* (1913) and
- *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*,

Hardy deals with simple, primal natures with remarkable ease and sureness, but a certain awkwardness and theatricality appear when he deals with the more complex characters of the highly civilised society of men and women. Hardy's love for the elemental simplicities and elemental forces is suffused in all his works.

As an interpreter of nature, Hardy is not a transcendentalist like Wordsworth and Shelley, but in the concreteness and picturesqueness of his settings and landscape he reminds us of Keats. Nature in his novels is a brooding presence, which often tinges human life with sadness and fatality. Nature is not just the background of his novels, but a leading character in them. Sometimes it exercises an influence on the course of events, more often it is a spiritual agent, colouring the mood and shaping the disposition of human beings. The huge bleak darkness of Egdon Heath dominates the lives of the characters in *The Return of the Native*, infusing them with its grandeur and melancholy. In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy uses the natural setting with symbolical meaning, as when he makes the warped, misshapen, stunted trees suggest the "unfulfilled intentions" in human life.

Hardy's personal nature combined with the circumstances of his life and the scientific rationalism of the age developed in him a pessimistic view of life. He was influenced by the melancholy spirit of the age, which was generated by the disintegration of old religious, social and economic order, and the advancement of science and scientific thinking. An atmosphere of doubt and apprehension prevailed everywhere. Under such circumstances he could not cultivate a happy view of life. His view of life has been variously described as "pessimism", "twilight view of life", "determinism", "fatalism", "atheism" and "evolutionary meliorism".

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)

Josef Teodor Konrad Naleez Korzeniowski, born on 3rd of December 1857 in Poland, anglicized himself as Joseph Conrad. Early in his life, Conrad lost both his parents; and under the surrogacy of his maternal uncle Tadeusz Bobrowski, he grew up. In 1874, Conrad left Poland to become a sailor and in 1878, he came to England. In England, Conrad received his master's Certificate in the British Merchant Service and for the next two decades he carried on various journeys across the world in different ships in Latin America, Africa, and eastern countries. In 1886, he acquired British citizenship and remained a sea man till 1894, following

which he devoted himself to be a full-time writer. He was brought up during the heydays of European colonial explorations across the globe which made the European ships sail across oceans to find wealth and raw materials for the growing industrial demands of Europe. These explorations to amass wealth were masked under the name of civilizing missions and being given the name of ‘doing good’ to the supposed ‘uncivilized,’ ‘uncultured’ and often barbarous non-Europeans. Conrad’s explorations across different parts of the world and experiences of the colonial enterprises from close quarters probed him to examine colonialism from a psychological point of view.

In 1890, Conrad took a job with a Belgian Company which took him to Congo basin, the background to the novel *Heart of Darkness*. Whereas Conrad had originally signed a contract to be in the service of the Belgian Company for a term of three years, but within a span of six months, the traumatic experiences of the African excursion left him completely shattered both morally and psychologically. Conrad himself writes, “Before the Congo I was a perfect animal.” Congo experience made him look at the European colonial enterprises from a different perspective and made him expose some of the unjust ways of the Europeans; but at the same time it is also true that his explorations of colonial mindset is dubious as he found the British colonial enterprise to be beneficial for the non-west and looked at other European enterprises such as that of King Leopold II as detrimental for the Africans.

Conrad’s first novel was *Almayer’s Folly* which was published in 1895, followed by *The Nigger of Narcissus* (1897). Both the novels work within the tradition of adventure narrative dealing with shipwrecks and exotic settings, though the element of introspection for which Conrad’s writing is so enigmatic finds its expressions even in these two novels. Then followed a series of novels, such as *The Secret Agent*, *Chance*, dealing with the genre of spy thrillers. In 1898, Conrad wrote a short story “An Outpost of Progress” which represents his “indignation at masquerading philanthropy” which was elaborated on in *Heart of Darkness* which some scholars believe to be an exposition of Conrad’s racist ideology while others view the novel as Conrad’s attempt to evaluate the colonial enterprise along with its psychological moorings on Europeans.

Most of Conrad’s works can be read as explorations of the various facets that the modern western man faced in his adventures across the globe. Whereas the novel, *Lord Jim*, explores the heroism of a white man who is not so heroic; *Heart of Darkness* represents the anxiety and despair of the colonial agents as they find themselves in the midst of perpetrators of violence on the natives of Africa. The notion of doing well to the natives, of educating them, of white man’s burden, has always been a driving force of many of the colonial enterprises; but this civilizing mission is often carried out to overshadow the exploitation and subjugation of the natives of Africa so as to extrapolate the wealth from these countries.

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George Moore (1852-1933)

George Moore was an Irish novelist who was much influenced by Emile Zola's naturalistic technique. Moore can be talked about as the pioneer of realistic novel in the twentieth century. He believed that the novel, if it be anything, is contemporary history, an exact and complete reproduction of the social surroundings of the age in which we live. Arnold Bennett describes George Moore's first novel *A Modern Lover* (1883) as the first realistic novel in the history of English language. Moore's other significant works are *Esther Waters* (1894), *A Mummer's Wife* (1884), *Evelyn Inns* (1888) *Sister Teresa* (1901) and *The Brook Kerith* (1916).

H.G. Wells (1886-1946)

Today when one takes the name of Science Fiction, one cannot help but think in terms of H. G. Wells as a pioneering Science Fiction artist because of the volume and depth of his works. His famous works include *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Stolen of Dr. Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *The First Man in the Moon* (1901) and *The Food of the Gods* (1904). In these works, apart from the romantic incidents and ready inventions, Huxley presented the interest of the people in science and how science has taken over the life of the modern man. If the poets and writers of the age were writing psychological novels and works dealing with the moral and psychological dilemmas of the war-torn society, then H. G. Wells represented another significant aspect of the modern life – that is, how the modern existence is enamored by science and scientific inventions.

Not only scientific novels, H. G. Wells is also known for his sociological works such as *Kipps* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* (1909), *The History of Mr. Polly* (1926). His other significant works consist of *Marriage* (1912) and *The Passionate Friends* (1913) as well as *The Outline of History* (1920), *A Short History of the World* (1922) and *Experiments in Autobiography*, *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham* (1930), *Brynhild* (1937), *Apropos of Dolores* (1938) and *The Holy Terror* (1939).

John Galsworthy (1867-1933)

John Galsworthy is another significant novelist of the early twentieth century who through his purposeful writings made an important contribution to the modernist writings with the publication of *The Man of Property* (1906), Galsworthy was raised as one of the leading novelists of the twentieth century. In *Chancery* (1920), he takes up the story of the Forsyte family, which he began with the *Man of Property To Let* (1921) is the drama of their children. Galsworthy also told of other Forsyte generations and collected them all in *The Forsyte Saga* (1922). The best single selection from his thirty volumes of fiction may be *Indian Summer of a Forsyte*, which is commonly regarded as his masterpiece.

Arnold Bennett (1867-1931)

Arnold Bennett was a prolific writer and has to his credit about eighty volumes of novels, short stories, essays, articles and plays. His reputation as a novelist rests on *The Old Wives' Tales* (1908), *Clayhanger* (1910), *Hilda Lessways* (1911) and *These Twain* (1916).

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901) is considered one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century. He is also known for his works such as *The Jungle Book* and *The Second Jungle Book*. His poem "The White man's Burden" makes it a significant phrase which is being used by other writers in a variety of ways in the post-colonial context.

E.M. Forster (1879-1970)

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London on 1st January 1879. He graduated from King's College. In his first novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) he made an attempt to present the idea that man should be in touch with the land to cultivate his imagination. *The Longest Journey* (1907) was the next one which was comic in its tone. *A Room with a View* (1908) concerns itself with the experience of a young British woman, Lucy Honeychurch, in Italy. However, Forster's first major success was *Howards End* (1910), a novel centred on the alliance between the liberal Schlegel sisters and Ruth Wilcox, the proprietor of the titular house, against her husband, Henry Wilcox, an enterprising businessman. The novel ends with the marriage of Henry Wilcox to Margaret Schlegel, who brings him back to Howards End, re-establishing the Wilcox land link.

Forster's next major work is *A Passage to India* which was published in 1924. This novel examines the British colonial occupation of India, but rather than developing a political focus, explores the friendship between an Indian doctor and British schoolmaster during a trial against the doctor, based on a false charge. *A Passage to India* is the last novel Forster published during his lifetime, but two other works remained, the incomplete *Arctic Summer*, and the unpublished complete novel *Maurice*, which was written in 1914, but published in 1971 after Forster's death. Forster published several anthologies of short stories, including *The Celestial Omnibus* (1914) and *The Eternal Moment* (1928), two collections of short stories, *Abinger Harvest* (1936), a collection of poetry, essays and fiction, and several non-fictional works.

William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965)

Somerset Maugham was of Irish ancestry though he was born in Paris and known for his short stories which were much evocative in their content and style. Most of his short stories are set in the remote areas of the British Empire. Maugham received his education in King's School in Canterbury, Kent and then in Heidelberg University.

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He then studied in London and qualified as a Surgeon practicing in later life at St. Thomas Hospital. His experience in medical practice made him find much material for his artistic works such as *Liza of Lambeth* which was published in 1897 and also of his autobiographical novel *Of Human Bondage* which was published much later in 1915.

During the World War I, Maugham joined the British Red Cross Ambulance Unit attached to the French Army and his experience of the War found him much material for his novel *Ashenden* which was published in 1928. Maugham, took to the South Seas, after the end of the War and from there he collected much material for his later works such as *East of Suez* which was published in 1922, *Our Betters* which was published in 1923 and *The Letter* which was published in 1927. In 1928, Maugham returned to France and there wrote his satirical masterpiece *Cakes and Ale*, a literary biography within a novel. His other bestselling novel was *The Razor's Edge*. It is during the World War II that Somerset Maugham settled in the United States and worked on the novel *The Razor's Edge*.

Aldous Leonard Huxley (1894-1963)

Aldous Leonard Huxley was one of the greatest intellectual thinkers of the early twentieth century and his works are a proof of his intellect. His first novel is *Chrome Yellow* (1921). His next work, *Antic Hay* (1923) deals with the disillusionment with the post war generations which Huxley presented brilliantly in the novel. The ethical problem of the post war society can also be found to be portrayed in his next works such as *Those Barren Leaves* (1925) and *Point Counter Point* (1928). Huxley's next novel *The Brave New World* which was published in 1932 is a great work by him which satirizes the scientific utopia. In his next novel *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), he portrays his faith in the life of the spirit. His later works *After Many a Summer* (1939) and *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944) also show the ironical sketches of the contemporary society.

Hugh Walpole (1884-1941)

Hugh Walpole, born in New Zealand in 1884, was the son of a Bishop, though at the age of five he migrated to Great Britain. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, and Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Walpole wrote a great deal while at Bracken burn, including his Cumberland family saga *The Herries Chronicle*. He wrote 15 volumes of his diaries which are also thought to be his artistic achievement. The manuscripts of many of his novels are also in the Museum, along with work by William Wordsworth and Robert Southey. Hugh Walpole died in 1941, and his grave is in St. John's Church, Keswick.

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)

D. H. Lawrence can be talked about as one of the foremost novelists of the twentieth century who represented in his novels the modern psyche from a perspective which was often refreshing and challenging as he did a frank treatment

of sex and love in his novels. In his lifetime, he is often thought to be someone who has been obscene and his novel *Rainbow* (1915) was charged with obscenity during his times. It is to be remembered that what was then thought to be obscene was actually nothing but frank treatment of sexual and psychological norms.

We have already discussed how Sigmund Freud was a significant influence on the novelists and artists of the early twentieth century. Freud's psychological theorization on sexuality and psychology led many writers to deal with sexual matters in a frank way. Lawrence also did the same, though Lawrence often claimed that he had not read Freud before writing his major novels, such as *Sons and Lovers*.

D. H. Lawrence is well known for his novel *Sons and Lovers* which is a representation of the mother fixation of its chief protagonist Paul Morel. Paul Morel's relationship with his mother Gertrude affects the relationship that he has with the women in his life – Miriam and Clara. At the end of the novel when Paul Morel chooses to look towards the city, he is choosing the order of the father and getting over his mother fixation. D. H. Lawrence himself suffered from the same problem and therefore by writing this novel he is doing a therapy on himself by which he is getting over his own problems. Moreover, *Sons and Lovers* is a colliery novel dealing with the life in the coal mines and therefore often is termed as a great sociological portrayal.

Lawrence's first novel *The White Peacock* (1911) deals with the unhappy human relationship between man and woman. *The Trespassers* (1912) not such a significant work and then comes *Sons and Lovers* (1913) which is his most popular novel. It is an autobiographical novel of great artistic merit. Next novel *The Rainbow* (1915) was banned as obscene and it deals with man - woman relationship. *Women in Love* (1921) reveals Lawrence's views upon life. *Aaron's Rod* (1922) is a mature work noted for its artistic excellence. *Kangaroo* (1923), *The Boy in the Bush* (1924) and *Plumed Serpent* (1926) deal respectively with his experiences in Australia and Mexico. Finally, his finest work *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) is an artistic revelation of the deep need of modern men and women to face all the elements in their natures if they were not to live frustrated and incomplete lives.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf is of one of the greatest novelists that early twentieth century had given us. She is not just a novelist but also a great feminist writer who fought for the cause of women through her writings. Her two non-fictional books – *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas* are examples of her feminist tracts where she vehemently critiques the patriarchal society and its ways. She was the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen a man who is known for his literary taste. It is her father who imbibed in her the taste for literature and it is her marriage with Leonard Woolf, another writer of much significance which made her pursue literature in a serious manner.

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Virginia Woolf's first two novels are *The Voyage Out* and *Night and Day*. They are written in a largely traditional Victorian style but soon she realized that modern sensibilities do not fit the traditional mould of the genre of novel and there is a need for making new ways in which the modern sensibilities could be portrayed. She therefore used the stream of consciousness technique in *Jacob's Room* (1922). In this novel Virginia Woolf uses the technique of Interior Monologue to represent the psychic consciousness of the protagonist Jacob. The novel was accepted by the readers gleefully and this made Woolf further refine the technique in her next novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, like that of James Joyce in his novel *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf confines her narrative to twenty-four hours and one city. In *Ulysses* it is Dublin, in *Mrs. Dalloway* it is London. *Mrs. Dalloway* deals with the life of Clarrisa Dalloway and also that of a war victim Septimus Warren Smith. It is an interesting portrayal of the inner lives of the protagonists.

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) also deals with the psychological lives of its protagonist and here the novelist shows a greater skill over the Stream of Consciousness Technique. The novelist deals the relationship of the members of the Romney Family with such artistic greatness that it often surpasses her artistic mastery in her earlier novels. Even the novel *The Waves*, written in 1931, is a significant novel dealing with the theme of stream of consciousness. In this novel (*The Waves*) Virginia Woolf studies six characters through a series of Internal Monologues. Her later works *Flush* (1933), *The Years* (1937) and the unfinished *Between the Acts* (1941) are also great experiments in the stream of consciousness technique. Even her work, *Orland, a Biography* (1928) is a popular work.

James Joyce (1882 – 1941):

James Joyce was an Irish novelist who was born in Dublin, Ireland on 2nd February 1882. He finished his graduation from University College Dublin and emmigrated from Ireland to Paris where he worked as a journalist and a teacher. His first major work was *Chamber Music* – a collection of thirty-six love poems which was later included in Imagist Anthology by Ezra Pound. Next comes his collection of twelve short stories dealing with the city of Dublin, named *Dubliners*. It primarily talks about the moral stagnation of the Dublin society.

Joyce then ventured into novel writing and became one of the most venerated novelists of the twentieth century with his three novels – *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). The novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* deals with the formative years of Joyce's own life and is therefore semi-autobiographical. It deals with the life of Stephen Dedalus as he grows up in Dublin. *Ulysses* deals with the protagonist Leopold Bloom and one day of his life – 16th June 1904. In this novel, James Joyce deals with the stream of consciousness technique. *Finnegan's Wake* is considered to be Joyce's most significant work though it is thought to be incomprehensible as it has a difficult style which is most difficult to read. Joyce died in Zurich on 13th January 1941.

Check Your Progress

1. How has Hardy's view of life been described?
2. Within which tradition do Conrad's *Almayer's Folly* and *The Nigger of Narcissus* work?
3. Name some of Moore's significant works.
4. Where did Maugham receive his education?
5. What does Huxley's *Antic Hay* deal with?
6. What was James Joyce's first major work?

NOTES**12.3 THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS NOVEL**

"The modern practice of art is somehow an improvement upon the old For the modern, the point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology, at once, therefore, the accent falls a little differently; the emphasis is upon something hitherto ignored" According to William James, "Psychology is the science of mental life, both of the phenomena and of their conditions. The phenomena are such things as we call feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions and the like". In other words, psychology as the scientific and objective, examination of the nature and form of human reactions, is a comparatively recent development. The term "stream of consciousness" comes from psychology. It was coined by William James in 1886 and popularized in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890. According to him, "Every definite image in the mind is stooped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the value of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it. (Here is the "luminous halo" of Virginia Woolf) Let us call it the stream of thing, of consciousness, or of subjective life."

The concept of the stream of consciousness has added a new and significant dimension to the art of prose fiction. In the words of Leon Edel, it has enlarged the scope of fiction and enriched it beyond measure. The supporters of this concept have explored a new realm of subjective experience; they have endeavoured to portray the depth and complexity of human consciousness as faithfully as possible. The presentation of the new material, according to Robert Humphrey, "necessitated the invention of new fictional techniques or a refocusing of the old ones" "... Virginia Woolf realized that in the stream-of-consciousness novel 'the story might wobble the plot might crumble; ruin might seize upon the characters.' New wine could not be held in old skins, and the new novel dispensed with the accepted principles and conventions of prose fiction. I.A. Richards insisted on the need for a new form different from the solid mechanism or framework of the traditional novel.

This new genre took birth between 1913 and 1915. On the eve of the First World War three novelists, unknown to each other, were writing works which had

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a remarkable influence on the English fiction. In France, Marcel Proust published in 1913 the first two volumes of the eight-part work we know today as *Remembrance of Things Past*. While these volumes were in the press, an Englishwoman, Dorothy Miller Richardson had begun to write what was later on entitled *Pilgrimage*. Between the launching of these two ambitious works on both sides of Channel, James Joyce, an Irishman, began publishing in serial form a novel entitled *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In this manner, a new type of novel came into existence what we have come to call the stream-of-consciousness novel or the novel of the silent, the internal monologue, and in French letters, the modern analytic novel, which, is not written as following thought, caught the very atmosphere of the mind. This was indeed a great coincidence. These three writers wrote separately and were unknown to each other. They were writers of altogether different talent and temperament. And yet between them they turned fiction away from external to internal reality. The great journey inward had definitely begun – a journey of exploration into the realm of feelings and sensations. Of course, the first thing to be discarded was the traditional story. A story involved a certain amount of conscious or unconscious falsification of man's experience of life. It tortured reality out of shape. It was artificial and a made-up thing. It should therefore go. And they annihilated it. According to a critic, "The new psychology has shifted the goal of the novelist." Now he is not out to point a moral or to adorn a tale. He wants to get at all that there is in any individual; in short, his purpose is psychological research. His business is to depict human life as experienced by those engaged in the business of living it. His aim is to get nearer to life. In this he is helped by the psychologist whose goal is the same. Instead of a rounded whole, the novelist is out to catch the psychological moment. This led to many interesting experiments.

According to the psychological researches, consciousness is amalgam of all that we have experienced and continue to experience. Every thought is a part of personal consciousness; every thought is also unique and ever-changing. We seem to be selective in our thoughts, selectively attentive or inattentive, focusing attention on certain objects and areas of experience, rejecting others, totally blocking others out. When a thought recurs in the mind it can never be exactly the same as it was before, Renewed, it carries with it the freshness of renewal, and the new context in which it has re-emerged. "Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the whole world up to that date." This is true not only for ideas, but for our sensory perceptions as the consciousness registers them. In the modern novel, here is the artistic record of a mind, at the very moment that it is thinking. It is the author who says to the reader: "Try to penetrate within it. You will know only as much as this mind may reveal. It is you not I who will piece together any 'story' there may be. Of course, I have arranged this illusion for you. But it is you who must experience it."

The Novel without a Story

The Age of Hardy

During the first two decades of the present century, Hardy, Conrad, James Bennett, Galsworthy and Wells were all very popular novelists. Wells might have been more interested in World Order, popular science and sociology, but he had written *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay*. Henry James, in short, wanted to make his main concern the inside rather than the outside of his characters, and replace the primary interest of the story by the charm and fascination of the carefully analysed reasoning and to feeling which motivated a few figures. This meant to a great extent the narrowing of the broader human interest of the novel to a more specified and specialised study of motives and idiosyncrasies of character. Wells, on the other hand, pleaded for and practiced a mere continuation of the Dickensian tradition of story and character. He was above everything else a storyteller and was at his best when the spirit of Dickens walked in company with his eager and inquiring mind. Henry James had attacked Wells and Bennett directly thus: "If Mr. Bennett's tight rotundity then is of the handsomest size and his manipulation of it so firm, what are we to say of Mr. Wells who, a novelist very much as Lord Bacon was a philosopher, affects us taking all knowledge for his province and as inspiring in us to the very highest degree the confidence enjoyed by himself; enjoyed, we feel, with a breadth with which it has been given no one of his fellow craftsmen to enjoy anything. If confidence alone could lead utterly captive, we should all be huddled in a bunch at Mr. Wells' heels, which is indeed where we are abjectly gathered, so far as that force does operate. It is literally Mr. Wells' own mind, and the experience of his own mind, incessant and extraordinarily various, extraordinarily reflective, even with all sorts of conditions made, of whatever he may expose it so, that forms the reservoir tapped by him that suffices for his exhibition of grounds of interest.

The new technique of novel has relegated the importance of the story to the background. Dr. Sisir Chattopadhyaya has interpreted the experiences of the modern novelists. According to him, there is the death of the story in modern fiction. James Joyce's expression of experience took a different turn as also a different form. The early years of his life were passed in Dublin. Almost blind from his childhood, he lived in the world of sound, in that clamorous town of Dublin, Joyce wanted to catch the immediate and the present – he called it "an epiphany." Unlike Proust, he wanted to express the immediate consciousness as reality. The opening lines of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, clearly demonstrated that there was something strikingly new – a clear departure from the traditional method of novelistic narration:

"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo
.....

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass,
he had a hairy face.

He was a baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where
Betty Bryne lived; she sold lemon plate.

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O' the rose blossoms
On the little green place.
He sang. That was his song.
O! the green wothe botheth.

When you wet the bed, first it is warm then it gets cold. His mother put on the oil-sheet. That had the queer smell. His mother had a nicer smell than his father. She played on the piano the sailor's hornpipe for him to dance. He danced:

Dorothy Richardson's novel also expresses the insistence upon the immediate consciousness as reality. In her, this insistence is instinctive and somewhat irrational, and has a peculiar feminine touch. She is quieter and less dramatic, and her vision of life is rather limited. The conversational tone of the opening lines of her novel may be noted:

"Miriam left that gaslit hall and went slowly upstairs. The March twilight lay upon the landings, but the staircase was almost dark. The top landing was quite dark and silent. There was no one about. It would be quiet in her room. She could sit by the fire and be quiet and think things over until Eve and Harriet came back with the parcels. She would have time to think about the journey and decide what she was going to say to the Fraulein."

We find that this new thing which may be called artistic subjectivism affected prose fiction at a critical phase of its development. These novelists came forward boldly and asserted that the presentation of his immediate consciousness was the primary job of a serious novelist, as this alone bore the stamp of permanent value. They contended, not without obvious effect, that a full, bare and fearless exploration of the self was the surest way to avoid self-deception. In this they did not run counter to the practice and tradition of the great novelist whose enduring works became enduring by rendering their own consciousness of life itself. Not the stories they related, but the comprehensive attitude to life conveyed through those stories gave their works an enduring and permanent value. These new novelists now went to the logical end. Why not annihilate, they argued – and demonstrated in novels they produced – the mechanism of the story once and for all? A story, they seemed to suggest, invariably involved a certain amount of conscious or unconscious falsification of our awareness and experience of life. Life very seldom falls into a pattern and shapes itself into a story. A plot is basically something invented, artificial and a made-up affair. It tortures reality out of shape. Life is chaotic, incomplete and confusing. Why should it become so well-knit, logical and ordered than in a novel? So, in order to keep the novel closer to reality, the illusory objective pattern and the framework of the novel must be annihilated. The story must die to enable the novel to gain a new lease of life.

According to Henry James, to tell the reader is to abandon the whole task of writing a novel. James does not tell, instead he shows by putting us in direct contact with the mind of characters who people his novels. By coming directly in contact with the mind of the people in the novel the reader is in a position to judge

for himself, the author need not *explain* anything. James very often keeps in the background. He narrates very little in the accepted sense of the term. In his later novels almost, all that happens is reflected in the consciousness of one or two of the characters. Their minds become “burnished reflectors,” and sometimes the mind of one character reflects the entire story.

Henry James himself characterized this method of “revelation of the story” and illumination of the situation and character through the mind as the point of view. He elaborates his theory with great care in the Prefaces. He tells us about Roderick Hudson (1876) that “the centre of interest throughout Roderick is in Rowland Mallet’s consciousness, and the drama is the very drama of that consciousness.” He goes on with his explanation, “the beautiful little problem was to keep it connected intimately with the general human exposure, and thereby bedimmed and be fooled and bewildered, anxious, restless, fallible, and yet to endow it with such intelligence that the appearances reflected in it, and constituting together there the situation and the ‘story’ should become by that fact intelligible.” This may be taken as a complete statement of the Jamesian technique.

Henry James constantly puts the reader in contact with the mind of his characters. The recorded talks of James’ characters are detailed and minute, yet it would be difficult to say how much of these are real in life. No moment in the brain of this or that character is fully transferred to paper. Rather, the recorded thoughts that are before the reader, are pruned, selected, and edited and even interpreted for him. Just as in the dramatic monologues of Browning no matter who speaks at the moment, Bishop Blougram or Andrea, it is basically Browning himself she speaks; similarly, in the novels of Henry James no matter who is thinking at the moment, the expression of all thought is inevitably in the personal style of James himself. In the Preface to *The Portrait of a lady* (1881), James comes very near describing the stream of consciousness technique. The Jamesian point of view given us an inner vision of a particular mind, and we are taken to the realm of consciousness. In James’ later novels especially, we are in contact with some mind or other, but very seldom with a whole mind in all its complexity. His purpose is to isolate from the whole stream of consciousness the current he required. He made his novels from the selected and edited thinking of his people. Yet he is perhaps the first novelist to study seriously the problems of consciousness and its novelistic expression. He is certainly a path-maker, a pioneer for those who came after him and carried the technique to his logical conclusion. (Sisir Chattopadhyaya).

Turning Inward

According to Leon Edel, Dorothy Richardson, Marcel Proust and James Joyce turned fiction away from external to internal reality, from the outer world to the hidden world of fantasy and reverie The stream-of-consciousness fiction reflected the tendency towards subjectivity and introspection, and a growing interest in the inmost recesses of human consciousness.

The close of the nineteenth century in England witnessed the rapid disintegration of Victorian life and values. “In a transitional state of civilization,”

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according to David Daiches, “objectivity (i.e., community of belief) ceases to exist and in fiction of the subjectivity.” Several prominent writers of this age of transition turned their back on external reality and the ugly world in which they lived. They turned to subjective experience and dived deep into human consciousness. They retreated from ‘the great without’ to portray ‘the great within’ as Wyndham Lewis put it. This escapist attitude was a reaction against the naturalistic movement and its excesses. The naturalists, led by Emile Zola, prided themselves on their objectivity; they explored the material realities of life and social environment, endeavoured to represent them as faithfully as they could. Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy failed to look within and gave a solid and arbitrarily stylized picture of life. The ‘tight rotundity’ of their works as highly distasteful to Henry James who reacted strongly against ‘the closer notation, a sharper specification’ of character, life and action in their well-constructed stories. Virginia Woolf described them as ‘materialists’ and felt that their narratives left her with ‘a strange feeling of incompleteness and dissatisfaction’. She was an ardent admirer of James Joyce: “In contrast with those whom we have called materialists, Mr. Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its message through the brain, and in order to preserve it, he disregards with complete courage what seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability or coherence...” To Dorothy Richardson, likewise, the concreteness and objectivity of the English realists seemed superficial and unconvincing. She found in ‘*The Ambassadors*’ by Henry James ‘the first completely satisfying way of writing a novel’ and strong to capture the internal realities of the human mind and soul ‘within the close mesh of direct statement’.

Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, ever dissatisfied with superficial objective realities, were opposed realists. They were interested in the flux and complexities of human consciousness and tried to render this internal reality in terms of art. They agreed with Henry James that ‘experience is never limited, and it is never complete’ and desired to explore the hidden recesses of consciousness. They annihilated the illusory objective pattern or framework of the traditional novel.

Human Consciousness

It is obviously necessary to understand the real nature or quality of human consciousness with the focus of interest in the stream-of-consciousness fiction. The subjective note was not absent from the traditional novel and was often expressed through internal conflicts, memories and daydreams. The expression ‘stream-of-consciousness’ was coined by William James and used in his *Principles of Psychology* published in 1890. In 1918, May Sinclair used it for Richardson in *Pointed Roofs*. Henry Levin felt that the term was vague and misleading and Dorothy Richardson herself stated: “Amongst the company of useful labels devised to meet the exigencies of literary criticism, it stands alone, isolated by its perfect imbecility”. However, William James thought that ‘stream’ was an apt metaphor for describing the flux and continuity of human consciousness. He was impressed

by the 'teeming multiplicity' of the human minds and the vague fringes and penumbras that surrounded the process of the consciousness thought or perception. Conscious thought, according to William James, is a 'clearly lighted centre of experience' bounded by a dim twilight region. He dwelt at length on the difficulties of introspective analysis, of arresting and examining the fluidity of the human mind. He believed, "Experience is remoulding us every moment, and our mental reaction on every given thing is really a resultant of our experience of the world up to that date, every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. The significance, the values of the image, is all in the halo or penumbra that surrounds it or escorts it".

The accent also insisted on "the individual flux, or consciousness which we call 'laduree' (duration). Consciousness was the continuation of an indefinite past into the living present. "He disapproved of the logical pattern imposed arbitrarily on life and character and insisted on the need to portray fluidity of human consciousness that defies the barriers of time and logic. Another French writer Edouard Dujardin discovered "the stream of consciousness" before William James wrote about it and invented a technique for his presentation in *Les Lauriers Sort Coupe's* (1888). In this work, 'there is little or no emphasis on external action and the reader is admitted directly to the consciousness of the principal character, a young man in Paris in love with a greedy actress'.

Consciousness covers the 'entire area of mental process. Psychic activity or awareness extends from the lowest level which is just above oblivion or unconsciousness right up to the highest level which is represented by formal or rational communication. Levels of consciousness can be easily distinguished: the speech level and the pre-speech level. The stream-of-consciousness fiction is largely concerned with the pre-speech level of consciousness which lacks coherent pattern and is not rationally controlled. Human consciousness is like an ice-berg a large part of which remains hidden below the surface of the sea. Below the threshold of conscious thought of experience stands the vast region of sub-conscious psychic processes which are in an amorphous, fluid state.

The stream of consciousness novel admits the reader to the hidden recesses of consciousness and concentrates attention on what J.W. Beach calls 'passive states of mind', which are undirected by rational thought or a sense of practical need or conduct. The traditional novel ignores or under stresses ninety-nine percent of what goes on within the human consciousness in order to elucidate a definite course of external action. "The novel," according to Professor Beach, "has generally confined itself with that which interests men on action; and the subjective moments are such as bear upon a definite line of conduct." Middleton Murry believed that the new novel presented human consciousness 'as it was before it had been reshaped in obedience to the demands of practical life' and explored 'the strange limbo where experiences once conscious fade into unconsciousness.'

The stream of consciousness fiction did not impose a coherent and logical pattern on life and dispensed with formal storytelling and characterization in order

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to reveal the depths and fluidity of human consciousness. Life at pre-speech level of consciousness is chaotic and incoherent; it lacks pattern or logical sequence and does not shape itself into a story. A well-made plot or story is something invented – a made-up affair. It tortures reality out of shape. The stream-of-consciousness novel presents character ‘as a process, not a state,’ according to David Daiches. There is no arbitrary formalization and no emphasis on superficial traits of personality or external idiosyncrasies and humours. The old fictional character, according to Aldous Huxley, was like the victim of one of Ben Jonson’s ‘humours,’ neatly circumscribed; the new character is as uncircumscribed as Hamlet. The new novelists aimed at capturing the flux of consciousness. They revealed the richness and subtlety of psychic life.

To Virginia Woolf, “life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end.” She believes that the tasks of the novelist is “to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little of the alien and external as possible.” She aimed at recording the myriad impressions received by the mind ... trivial, fantastic and evanescent. “Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.” Virginia Woolf permits her characters to reveal the inmost recesses of their consciousness. The psychic involutions of Clarissa Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay and Libby Briscoe lead to a new spiritual insight or vision. James Joyce also tries to capture the stream-of-consciousness of his characters wherein ideas and images ‘shift and flow and merge with an intricacy beyond the power of intellect to follow.’ Sometimes a sudden and fleeting spiritual illumination comes to them. In *What Maisie Knew*, Henry James discloses the awareness and sensibility of a child and her ‘confused and obscure notation’ of external incidents which she cannot fully understand. Dorothy Richardson places the reader within the consciousness of Miriam Herderson in *Pilgrimage* and portrays personality as a series of psychic relations. William Faulkner makes bold sally into the consciousness of an idiot in *The Sound and the Fury*.

Association of Ideas

Human consciousness is characterized by flux as well as privacy. It is essentially egocentric and ‘to a great extent the material of any one consciousness are an enigma to the other.’ Each person has his own private sense of values, relationship and associations. Moreover, according to J.M. Beach, “our psyche is such as imperfectly integrated bundle of memories, sensations and impulses, that unless sternly controlled by a dominating will, it is at the mercy of every stray mind of dominating will, it is at the mercy of every stray mind of suggestion. ... The moment we relax, the moment we let go control of our will and our attention we fall back into the welter, the chaos of our natural complicated selves.” When concentration is relaxed, the mind shifts restlessly from one thing to another associated with it.

The stream-of-consciousness novel has to communicate the flux as well as the tone and texture of private consciousness.

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The movement of psychic processes below the speech level is determined by the principles of free association. The pattern of association depends on the individual's past experience and presents obsessions and future dreams or aspirations. According to Robert Humphrey, three factors control association: first, *memory*, which is its basis; second, the *senses*, which guide it; and third, *imagination*, which determines its elasticity. The process of association is strictly private or egocentric and is conditioned by memory, impressions sometimes bob up unexpectedly to the level of consciousness and break the continuity of the psychic process. The association of ideas and fancies thus becomes freakish and often lacks logical sequence. To make the psychic flux intelligible, the writer has to provide explanatory clues and hints.

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The stream-of-consciousness writers sometimes use figurative language, rhetorical devices and expressive symbols and images to portray the flux and privacy of human consciousness. "This use of rhetorical figures," according to Robert Humphrey, "is a feature of stream-of-consciousness writing which stems naturally from the attempt to reproduce the broken, seemingly incoherent, disjointed texture of the process of consciousness when they are not deliberately screened for direct communication." Sometimes the novelist is compelled to use private symbols or images expressive of the individual's private sense of values or predilection. "Both image and symbol tend to express something of the quality or privacy in consciousness; the image by suggesting the private emotional values of what is perceived (either directly or through memory or imagination); the symbol of suggesting the truncated manner of perceiving the expanded meaning." (Humphrey)

The process of psychological association is very well illustrated by Molly Bloom's stream of consciousness in *Ulysses*. Molly lies in bed at night. The striking of the clock, the sight of the wallpaper and lowering of the lamp are the only external stimuli. The flux of her consciousness at the pre-speech level is rendered with great art and skill by James Joyce. An extract from her long monologue is reproduced below with comments within brackets.

"..... quarter after (a clock nearby has reminded her of the time) what an unearthly hour I suppose they are just getting up in China now combing their pigtails (her imagination carries her off to China) Let me see if I can doze off 1 23 4 5 (she tries to count herself to sleep) what kind of flowers are these they invented like the stars (she notices the flowers on the wall paper), the wall paper in Limbard Street was much nicer (at her former dwelling), the apron he gave me was like that (her husband's gift) I only wrote it twice, better lower the lamp and try again so as I can get up early remembers it is already late)" Thus, Molly Bloom's fancy continues to stray.

Similarly, in Virginia Woolf's short sketch "The mark on the Wall" we have the reveries of a woman who allows an unidentified mark on the wall to provoke a train of ideas. From the mark, her consciousness wanders to thoughts on the

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uncertainty of life to Shakespeare, to tables of precedence at court, to remain and relics of the past and back to the mark which turns out to be a snail.

Frederick J. Hoffman gives a brilliant analysis of these varying levels of fictional writings in his book *Two Decades of Criticism*. This technique plunges us into varying degrees of depth. First, the *traditional*. This method accepts all the conscious controls of speech and thought and experience. It uses all the recognized systems of communication. Within the limits of this method of writing, almost all types of behaviour can be described and such description is within the comprehension of ordinary readers.

Second, the level of the preconscious (Freudian) or of *conscious reverie*, in which the chief difference from logical discourse is the former's greater fluidity, and its less obvious attachment to the rules of sentence – structure and work-meanings. This is *Le monologue interieur* of Dujardin in which his "entire book is a quotation from the mind of the hero only with the quotation marks removed." Emma's self-reproach in Jane Austen's *Emma*, or the musings of the father and the mother in Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*, or the concluding portion of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or Raskolnikoff's mental reactions just before he decides to give himself up in *Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment* – are all on this level of the preconscious or conscious *reverie* narration. The most important thing to be noted in this method is that the *reverie* makes a constant reference to the work, a-day world. This method is widely employed by all kinds of novelists who do not want to make the space-time reference all too evident and yet indicate a release from the unconscious.

Third, the level of the *subconscious*. At this level of writing much of the control of the conscious mind over the will is lifted. The control, though apparently lifted or suspended for the time being, is nevertheless present and indirectly guides the flow of thought and the formation of imagery. This may be likened to the "benevolent despotism" of the analyst over the flow of thoughts of the patient in a clinic of psychoanalysis. At this level of writing dream is often effectively employed, as it is in psychotherapy, but the flow of the psychic life is not governed by the mechanisms of the dream world. In this type of narration consciousness is pushed away and as such the author's own suggestion is employed to maintain the "rational space time continuum." The best illustrations of this method are to be found in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, as also in William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* and *The Sound and the Fury*.

Fourth, the level of the *unconscious*. At this level the narrative style and content both try to free themselves completely from rational control and give a verbal rendering of the behaviour-pattern of the psychical unconscious. The rational controls, however removed and attenuated, are not completely done away with. They appear in the form of a mentor or a censor to "distort rather than to impede the flow of unconscious expression." On this level the artifices of a dream-work are widely used. Freud calls this "secondary elaboration." We find a good deal of

this in *Ulysses*, but the best example of this technique is to be found in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

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Space and Time

Another important characteristic of stream-of-consciousness fiction is its *freedom from rigid notions of Time and Space*. Modern novelists are preoccupied with the problem of Time and Space. David Daiches says that they are experimenting with the baffling problem. Virginia Woolf remarks in her diary:

“1926, Tuesday, November 23rd.

.... Yet I am now and then haunted by some semi-mystic very profound life of a woman, which shall all be told on one occasion and time shall be utterly obliterated: future shall somehow blossom out of the past. One incident – say the fall of a flower – might contain it. My theory being that the actual event practically does not exist – not time either. But I don't want to force this. I must make up my serious book.

Psychic processes, before they are rationally controlled for communication, do not follow the chronological sequence. Human consciousness at the pre-speech level swings away freely in time and space. The past, present and future intermingle inside it. “The stream-of-consciousness technique is a means of escape from the tyranny of the time dimension,” according to David Daiches. He believes that “retrospect and anticipation constitute the very essence of consciousness at any specified time.” The past impinges upon the present and conditions it. The present holds visions of the future. Consciousness becomes a jumble of vague memories, immediate preoccupation and dim aspirations. Memory and flashbacks mingle the past with the present.

Bergson insisted on fluidity or ‘duration’ which is independent of external time and spoke of ‘the continuation of an indefinite past into a living present.’ External time is indicated by the ticking or chiming of clocks or the ringing of church bells. Marcel Proust said that “memory by introducing the past into the present without modification, as though it were the present, eliminates precisely that great Time dimension in accordance with which life is lived.”

Memory recalls the past and disrupts the time sequence. The mind also swings away in space to distant scenes and thus the movement acquires a wide sweep. The concurrence of the past and present, or of scenes widely apart in space, within the consciousness, is known as time or space montage. Montage is a cinematic device based on the simultaneous representation of associated images or the scenes. In the works of Robert Humphry montage shows ‘a rapid succession of images or the super-imposition of image on image or the surrounding of a focal image by related ones.’

Mrs. Dalloway opens with the interior monologue of the middle-aged woman who walks leisurely through a London street. She thinks of preparations for her party in the afternoon and admires the fine morning. Then there is a memory

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flashback, and she thinks of her life at Bourton 20 years ago and recalls Peter Walsh who loves her. Time montage and a free association of ideas and images determine the flow of her consciousness. The past, present and future intermingle in her egocentric consciousness. Later on, we move in space from the consciousness of Clarissa Dalloway to that of admirable effect in the Tenth Episode in Ulysses. He represents eighteen unrelated scenes taking place in various parts of Dublin at the same time.

To sum up: through *duree* (durational or psychological time), Bergson asserted a disbelief in the surface reality of life and stressed a time in which the clock is artificial and mental time is natural. In Bergson's "duration of time," one is in that stream of on-thinking impulse, which constitutes life. One is "inside, from a window, which is an intellectual and rational process. Bergson's idea of reality conceived the world as a flux of inters penetrated elements unseizable by the intellect. This anti-mechanical mode of thinking places all time – all the past, as well as the present moment – in what one critic has called "one concentrated now."

Bergson's theory of time was appealing for several reasons. Based, like modern physics, on the relativity of historical and philosophical truths, the time theory in literary terms, signifies the relative nature of human experience. Most modern novelists, but especially Proust, Conrad, Woolf, Joyce, and Faulker, deny absolutes in human relationships; and the structural formation of their work, in its emphasis on fluctuating time, mirrors this belief in the non-absolute quality of experience and history.

Technique

The revelation of the deepest recesses of consciousness requires a special technique. According to Robert Humphrey, "direct or indirect interior monologue, omniscient description and prose soliloquy have proved to be, in the hands of the most skilful writers, capable of carrying the strange and awkward load of human consciousness into the realms of legitimate prose fiction."

Edouard Dujardin, who first used the interior monologue in his novel *Les Lauriers Sort Coupe's*, defined it as "the speech of a character in a scene, having for its object to introduce us directly into the interior life of that character, without author's intervention through explanations or commentaries – and like every monologue it is a discourse without listener and a discourse unspoken. But it differs from the traditional monologue in that, as regards its substance, it expresses the most intimate thoughts, those closest to the unconscious, as regards its spirit; it is discourse before any logical organization, reproducing thought in its original state and as it comes into the mind, as far its form, it is expressed by means of direct phrases reduced to the minimum of syntax" Dujardin believed that the unspoken speech of a character expressing his inmost thoughts is akin to poetry. The description of the interior monologues as "a speech and poetry" is, of course, misleading. Robert Humphrey suggests a simpler definition: "Interior monologue

is the technique used in fiction for representing the psychic content of processes of character, partly or entirely unuttered, just as these processes exist at various levels of conscious central before they are formulated for deliberate speech.” It is a fine technique for representing the fluidity and freakishness of psychic processes at deeper levels of consciousness.

In the direct interior monologue, the author effaces himself almost completely and offers no guidance or explanatory comments. He puts himself inside the consciousness of his leading characters who reveal their streams of consciousness directly. Flaubert insisted that “the author ought to be in his work like God in His creation, invisible and all powerful. Let him be felt everywhere but seen nowhere. “Henry James similarly advised novelists ‘not to state but to render, not to narrate what is happening but to let it happen.’ James Joyce echoing Flaubert, described the artist as one who like God ‘remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.’ The direct interior monologue is a candid self-revelation and the appearance of the author is scarcely perceptible. Unlike the dramatic monologue, it is not conditioned by the presence of a listener or reader and is not bound by conventional syntax and diction.

The indirect interior monologue gives to the reader a sense of the author’s continuous presence. It is, in the words of Humphrey, “that type of interior monologue in which an omniscient author presents unspoken material as if directly from the consciousness of a character, with commentary and description to guide the reader through it.” “The use of the third person point of view permits the introduction of descriptive and expository material. The author interfuses directly between the character’s psychic and the reader.

Omniscient description and soliloquies have been used effectively by stream-of-consciousness writers. The author sometimes assumes the role of an omniscient narrator. Dorothy Richardson gives an impressionistic description of the depths of Miriam’s consciousness in *Pilgrimage*. Virginia Woolf and James Joyce also use conventional methods. The former, sometimes directly introduces us to her characters and then drops out of sight. In *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* there is a great deal of straightforward description or narration.

The soliloquy presents psychic processes directly without the intervention of the author. It is, according to Humphrey, ‘less candid and more limited in the depth of consciousness that it can represent than is the interior monologue The level of consciousness is usually close to the surface.’ It differs from reverie, which is a silent, unspoken soliloquy. The soliloquy is actually spoken or uttered, and a formal audience is assumed. Hence it is more stylized than the inchoate, unspoken material of the deeper levels of consciousness. The soliloquies of Hamlet and Othello are highly organized monologues. There are ‘the end-products’ of the stream of consciousness, not the stream itself, illogical and disordered. Lady Macbeth’s broken utterance in the sleep-walking scenes are closer to the real stream of consciousness. The former soliloquy is sometimes used in combination

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with the interior monologue in stream of consciousness fiction. The advice is used skillfully by William Faulkner in *As I Lay Dying* and by Virginia Woolf in *The Waves*.

Waldo Frank used verse to express psychic processes in *Rahab*. This medium is obviously unsuitable for the presentation of the formless and unorganized material of the hidden recesses of consciousness. The Flux of mental life is sometimes suggested by typographical aids. The use of italics and the absence of punctuation are used as signals for changes in time and focus. William Faulkner puts interior monologues in italics. Virginia Woolf uses parentheses to indicate shifts in the levels of consciousness. James Joyce dispenses with punctuation marks to suggest the fluidity of pre-speech levels of consciousness.

The flux of consciousness lacks form and coherence. It has no logical sequence and is apparently chaotic. It is necessary to impose order form on psychic contents and processes to make them significant and intelligible. This involves careful selection and organization and rigid artistic control of intractable material. Writers rely on the unities, musical structure, cycle schemes and symbolism to impose a formal pattern on their work.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf strikes a compromise between clarity of form and the formlessness which characterizes the stream of consciousness. She adheres to unities of time and place; the action does not exceed 24 hours and takes place in London. 'Virginia Woolf passes from one consciousness to another, from one group to another, exploring the significance of their reactions, following the course of their meditations, carefully arranging and patterning the images that rise up in their minds, bringing together with care economy, a select number of symbolic incidents, until a design has been achieved And experience is seen as something inexpressible yet significant.' The rise and fall of tides furnish a symbolic design to *The Waves*. In *Ulysses*, James Joyce provides a tangible pattern. The work is burlesque or *Odyssey* and employs the Homeric pattern, Symbols and motifs. The external action has a limited span Eighteen hours And takes place in Dublin. Professor Beach describes it as 'nothing more or less than a symphonic poem, characterized by a vigorous and insistent development of theme.' Ezra Pound describes it as musical sonata with a theme, counter-meeting, development and finale. Sometimes the leitmotiv is emphasized through a recurring image or symbol. Dorothy Richardson uses no complex formal devices and the presentation of a single consciousness gives sufficient unity and pattern to her work. Miriam's consciousness is of a single consciousness gives sufficient unity and pattern to her work. Miriam's consciousness is haunted by a vague symbol – 'a tiny little garden.' This image or motif runs throughout *Pilgrimage*.

Conclusion

The aggressive novelty of the stream-of-consciousness fiction has often baffled critical opinion. Wells detested its 'copious emptiness.' Herbert Read was distressed by the 'terrible fluidity' and the disintegration of form and structure in

the works of Joyce and Proust. Yeats looked at the genre with alarm and Wyndham Lewis felt that Joyce and the disciples of Bergson were menacing Western culture by abandoning themselves to flux and disintegration. I. W. Beach states that the stream-of-consciousness technique is applicable only to neurotics whose consciousness is given order to 'the chaotic May sensations and associations undirected by the normal will to rational conduct.' The new genre disregarded rational thought and the commonly accepted syntax and diction. It flouted the rules of grammatical construction and evolved a strange cryptic medium of expression. Hence the stream-of-consciousness fiction is sometimes dismissed as essentially morbid or unwholesome, altogether destitute of artistic beauty and merit.

However, it cannot be disputed that the psychological novel has added a new province to fiction. It has explored a new realm of experience and revealed the amazing depths and fluidity of human consciousness. It has thrown light on the deepest recesses of the mind and depicted psychic processes with remarkable art and skill.

Let Us Sum Up

The Modern Age saw development of the genre of novel as it has never been in the history of literature and the novel from the representation of the external world became a vehicle of outpouring of the inner consciousness of the human beings. The achievements of the modern novelists are such that still today we are being mesmerized by their creations.

Check Your Progress

7. What forms the reservoir tapped by Wells?
8. What does Dorothy Richardson's novel express?
9. What were Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce interested in?
10. Who coined the expression 'stream-of-consciousness'?
11. What is the range of psychic activity?
12. State the three factors that control association.
13. Define the term 'space montage'.

12.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Hardy's view of life has been variously described as "pessimism", "twilight view of life", "determinism", "fatalism", "atheism" and "evolutionary meliorism".

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2. Both the novels work within the tradition of adventure narrative dealing with shipwrecks and exotic settings, though the element of introspection for which Conrad's writing is so enigmatic finds its expressions even in these two novels.
3. Moore's significant works are *Esther Waters* (1894), *A Mummer's Wife* (1884), *Evelyn Inns* (1888) *Sister Teresa* (1901) and *The Brook Kerith* (1916).
4. Maugham received his education in King's School in Canterbury, Kent and then in Heidelberg University.
5. *Antic Hay* (1923) deals with the disillusionment with the post war generations which Huxley presented brilliantly in the novel.
6. Joyce's first major work was *Chamber Music* – a collection of thirty-six love poems which was later included in Imagist Anthology by Ezra Pound.
7. It is literally Wells' own mind, and the experience of his own mind, incessant and extraordinarily various, extraordinarily reflective, even with all sorts of conditions made, of whatever he may expose it so, that forms the reservoir tapped by him.
8. Dorothy Richardson's novel also expresses the insistence upon the immediate consciousness as reality. In her, this insistence is instinctive and somewhat irrational, and has a peculiar feminine touch.
9. Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce were interested in the flux and complexities of human consciousness and tried to render this internal reality in terms of art.
10. The expression 'stream-of-consciousness' was coined by William James and used in his *Principles of Psychology* published in 1890.
11. Psychic activity or awareness extends from the lowest level which is just above oblivion or unconsciousness right up to the highest level which is represented by formal or rational communication.
12. According to Robert Humphrey, three factors control association: first, *memory*, which is its basis; second, the *senses*, which guide it; and third, *imagination*, which determines its elasticity.
13. The concurrence of the past and present, or of scenes widely apart in space, within the consciousness, is known as time or space montage.

12.5 SUMMARY

- As an interpreter of nature, Hardy is not a transcendentalist like Wordsworth and Shelley, but in the concreteness and picturesqueness of his settings and landscape he reminds us of Keats.

- Whereas the novel, *Lord Jim*, explores the heroism of a white man who is not so heroic; *Heart of Darkness* represents the anxiety and despair of the colonial agents as they find themselves in the midst of perpetrators of violence on the natives of Africa.
- Today when one takes the name of Science Fiction, one cannot help but think in terms of H. G. Wells as a pioneering Science Fiction artist because of the volume and depth of his works.
- Forster's next major work is *A Passage to India* which was published in 1924. This novel examines the British colonial occupation of India, but rather than developing a political focus, explores the friendship between an Indian doctor and British schoolmaster during a trial against the doctor, based on a false charge.
- D. H. Lawrence is well known for his novel *Sons and Lovers* which is a representation of the mother fixation of its chief protagonist Paul Morel.
- In *Mrs. Dalloway*, like that of James Joyce in his novel *Ulysses*, Virginia Woolf confines her narrative to twenty-four hours and one city. In *Ulysses* it is Dublin, in *Mrs. Dalloway* it is London.
- The term "stream of consciousness" comes from psychology. It was coined by William James in 1886 and popularized in his *Principles of Psychology* in 1890.
- Dorothy Richardson's novel also expresses the insistence upon the immediate consciousness as reality. In her, this insistence is instinctive and somewhat irrational, and has a peculiar feminine touch.
- Henry James constantly puts the reader in contact with the mind of his characters. The recorded talks of James' characters are detailed and minute, yet it would be difficult to say how much of these are real in life. No moment in the brain of this or that character is fully transferred to paper.
- The close of the nineteenth century in England witnessed the rapid disintegration of Victorian life and values. "In a transitional state of civilization," according to David Daiches, "objectivity (i.e., community of belief) ceases to exist and in fiction of the subjectivity."
- The stream of consciousness novel admits the reader to the hidden recesses of consciousness and concentrates attention on what J.W. Beach calls 'passive states of mind', which are undirected by rational thought or a sense of practical need or conduct.
- Virginia Woolf believes that the tasks of the novelist is "to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little of the alien and external as possible."
- The process of association is strictly private or egocentric and is conditioned by memory, impressions sometimes bob up unexpectedly to the level of consciousness and break the continuity of the psychic process.

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- Another important characteristic of stream-of-consciousness fiction is its *freedom from rigid notions of Time and Space*. Modern novelists are preoccupied with the problem of Time and Space. David Daiches says that they are experimenting with the baffling problem.
- Memory recalls the past and disrupts the time sequence. The mind also swings away in space to distant scenes and thus the movement acquires a wide sweep. The concurrence of the past and present, or of scenes widely apart in space, within the consciousness, is known as time or space montage.
- Bergson's theory of time was appealing for several reasons. Based, like modern physics, on the relativity of historical and philosophical truths, the time theory in literary terms, signifies the relative nature of human experience.
- In the direct interior monologue, the author effaces himself almost completely and offers no guidance or explanatory comments. He puts himself inside the consciousness of his leading characters who reveal their streams of consciousness directly.
- Waldo Frank used verse to express psychic processes in *Rahab*. This medium is obviously unsuitable for the presentation of the formless and unorganized material of the hidden recesses of consciousness. The Flux of mental life is sometimes suggested by typographical aids.
- Herbert Read was distressed by the 'terrible fluidity' and the disintegration of form and structure in the works of Joyce and Proust. Yeats looked at the genre with alarm and Wyndham Lewis felt that Joyce and the disciples of Bergson were menacing Western culture by abandoning themselves to flux and disintegration.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- **Literary Modernism:** It is a movement that originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, mainly in Europe and North America, and is characterized by a self-conscious break with traditional ways of writing, in both poetry and prose fiction writing.
- **Determinism:** It is a doctrine that states that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes regarded as external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.
- **Meliorism:** It is an idea in metaphysical thinking holding that progress is a real concept leading to an improvement of the world.

- **Subjectivism:** It is the doctrine that knowledge is merely subjective and that there is no external or objective truth.
- **Idiosyncrasy:** It is a mode of behaviour or way of thought peculiar to an individual.

The Age of Hardy

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12.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What does *Heart of Darkness* represent?
2. What is *Howards End* centered on?
3. What attempt did E.M. Forster make in his first novel?
4. What did Henry James want his main concern to be?
5. How has the concept of the stream of consciousness added a new and significant dimension to the art of prose fiction?
6. How does Henry James elaborate upon his method of “revelation of the story”?
7. What has Professor Beach said about ‘The Novel’?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the depiction of nature in Hardy’s novels.
2. Analyze the life and works of any two twentieth century novelists.
3. Elaborate upon Virginia Woolf’s depiction of ‘stream of consciousness’ in her novels.
4. Discuss the experiences of the modern novelists.
5. Explain the concept of human consciousness and its description by various scholars.
6. Examine the varying degrees of depth.
7. Stream of Consciousness as a technique is a representation of the sensibilities of the modern age. Critically comment.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 13 MODERN AGE

Structure

- 13.0 Introduction
- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction to the Modern Age
- 13.3 Modern Poetry
- 13.4 Modern Prose
- 13.5 Modern Drama
- 13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 13.7 Summary
- 13.8 Key Words
- 13.9 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 13.10 Further Readings

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13.0 INTRODUCTION

The Modern Age marked a departure from the complacency of the Victorian Age. The new developments in psychology combined with the spiritual vacuum created in the early 20th century paved the way for new literary styles. The effects of World War, Imperialism, etc. were seen in the literary creations of the time. This unit will discuss in detail the developments in poetry, prose and drama in the Modern Age.

13.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Understand the characteristics of the Modern Age
- Discuss the major artistic movements in the 20th century
- Examine the major developments in poetry, prose and drama

13.2 INTRODUCTION TO THE MODERN AGE

Modernity and modernism are two different things – whereas ‘modernity’ refers to a set of philosophical, political, and ethical ideas which provide the basis for the aesthetic aspect of modernism; ‘modernism’ generally refers to the broad aesthetic movements of the twentieth century. In this unit, we will be focusing on Modernism as an aesthetic movement and how it is represented in the literary history of English language and literature. Usually, the first half of the twentieth century is considered to be the modern period in the history of English Literature. With the end of the Victorian Age with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, there was a change in the

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circumstances in England which produced certain changes in the literary output. It can be said that the modern period marks a sharp and clear departure from the self-complacency, compromise and stability of the Victorian period. The transition from the old to the new, from blind faith to rational thinking is very interesting to note.

Writers like James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, poets like W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Auden and others shaped the literary concerns of the age by portraying the spiritual and metaphysical vacuum created in the modern minds by various forces and events such as – industrialization, World War, etc. The age was also influenced by various thinkers and movements such as symbolism, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, Karl Marx, Frederick Nietzsche and others.

In this unit we will be discussing novelists, essayists, poets and dramatists who wrote in the first five decades in the twentieth century – that is till the World War II. But before going into any discussion into the individual authors, let us have a brief understanding of the chief characteristics of the Modern Age. Some of the prominent traits of the Modern Age are being discussed below:

- (a) The biggest change that we perceive in the literature of the first half of the twentieth century from that of the earlier Victorian Age is that the literature of the age was shifting from the exterior realism to the inner aspects of the humankind. The writers and poets of the age looked within the human consciousness and human mind and portrayed the anxieties that the modern mind suffered from.
- (b) Modern age is also called the Age of Interrogation and Anxiety as humankind was suffering from immense loss of faith in God and also the fellow human beings. The loss of faith in God was something that was the natural outcome of the Victorian Age. In Victorian Age, mankind suffered from the question of faith and doubt. By the time, we come to modern age, mankind had lost faith in God and in the absence of God, humankind suffered from an anxiety which is best represented by W. B. Yeats in the poem *The Second Coming* – ‘Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold.’
- (c) The World Wars and its effect had shaken the whole of the humankind and more so the whole of Europe. The effects of the World Wars were such that mankind lost faith in fellow human beings and therefore a sense of loneliness crept into the minds and consciousness of the modern man.
- (d) Modernist writers had a new ‘subject matter’ for literature as they believed that their new way of looking at life required a new form, a new way of thinking and writing. Consequently, writers were more experimental, innovative and very individualistic in their writing. Therefore, they tried to do something pioneering in their writing as they were influenced by new ideas from the emerging fields of

psychology (James Joyce in his novels *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young man*, *Ulysses*, and *Finnegan's Wake*; Virginia Woolf with her 'Stream of Consciousness Technique' novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway*; D. H. Lawrence with his novel dealing with the theme of 'Oedipus complex' – *Sons and Lovers*) and sociology (such as the working class background of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*, where the class background of the hero has much to do with his psychology and artistic temperament) One of the main focus of the modernist writers was to probe the 'unconscious' as the theories put forwards by Sigmund Freud had a huge impact on the everyday existence. Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900.

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- (e) The Modernist writers turned away from teleological ways of thinking about time to a sense of time as discontinuous, overlapping, non-chronological in the way we experience it; there was a shift from linear time to 'Duree' or psychological time. All the stream of consciousness novels, whether of Virginia Woolf or that of James Joyce, deals with the psychological time.
- (f) Anthropological studies of comparative religion became the subject matter of writing. There are numerous examples of such work, but one of the best known is that of T. S. Eliot's famous poem *The Waste Land*; Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* also talks about inner illumination or enlightenment and compares it to Buddha.
- (g) If the Victorian art was more inclined to portray the external reality (Realism) then the modernists attempted to reflect the inner turmoil, the inner reality of man. Therefore, there is less emphasis on art's reflection of external reality and a greater emphasis on art's reflection of the perceiving mind; it can be seen not only in fiction and poetry, but also in painting. There was a shift from 'representational' Victorian painting (painting that represents identifiable, often narrative, scenes in external reality) through Impressionism (e.g. Whistler's attempt to paint the quality of the sensations stimulated by the external scene) to Post-Impressionism (e.g. Matisse's painting the 'painterly' scene, the pure elements of colour and form – perhaps as a way of painting the perceiving mind, the aesthetic consciousness.)
- (h) There was a growing concern for feminist cause – females were no longer a passive consumer of the male literature but they came to the forefront with a literature of their own and moreover talked about the feminist causes and issues in details to create an awareness amongst people about the patriarchal victimization, oppression, suppression and silencing of the female voice. Virginia Woolf, not only in her fictional works, but also in her non-fictional writings such as *A Room of One's Own* or *Three Guineas* emphasizes on all these issues.

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- (i) Myth as 'collective unconscious' (Carl Jung) is one of the prime concerns of the modernist writing and the modernists were preoccupied with mythmaking (James Joyce, W.B. Yeats).
- (j) The effects of the World War, Imperialism and heavy industrialization on human psyche has been the subject matter of much of the modernist writing. (T. S. Eliot, Wilfred Owen, Virginia Woolf)
- (k) The drabness of everyday routine existence and metaphysical anxiety has been another significant concern of writers such as T. S. Eliot, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett and others.
- (l) There was a focus on epistemological concerns (how do we know what we know?) and linguistic concerns (how is the way we think inseparable from the forms in which we think?); there is a sense of the break-down of a shared linguistic community; a reaction against the dominance of rational, logical, 'patriarchal' discourse and its monopoly of power.

Some Significant Artistic Movements of the Modern Age

Some of the artistic movements that defined the Modern Age are as follows:

- (i) **Imagism:** Imagism is a movement in Anglo-American poetry in the twentieth century which started in 1912. The main characteristics of this movement are –

- Free verse
- Common Speech Patterns,
- Clarity of Expression
- Reaction against Victorian Sentimentalism

The major practitioners of the movement of Imagism are Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle, Richard Aldington and William Carlos Williams. The four Imagist anthologies that came in the early decades of the twentieth century are –

- *Des Imagists* (1914)
- *Some Imagist Poets* (1915, 1916, 1917)
- The magazine *Poetry* (1912)
- *The Egoist* (from 1914)

- (ii) **Dadaism:** The brutality and barbarism of the First World War created many changes in the artistic temperament of the age and one of the significant ones among them is Dadaism whose name 'Dada' (in French meaning 'hobby horse') was selected by some artists such as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Man Ray, so as to represent their artistic emphasis on the illogical and the irrational. In other words, it can be said that Dadaism wanted to negate the traditional artistic values and themes and wanted to consciously

eschew meaning of the work of art. The movement had a short life till 1923 but it led to a greater movement called Surrealism.

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- (iii) **Surrealism:** The anti-rational sensibilities of the Dadaism movement found expression in the surrealist tendencies in artistic temperament in the first half of the twentieth century. The movement started in Paris with the publication of Andre Breton's *Manifesto on Surrealism* where Surrealism was defined as a 'psychic automatism'. It is thought to be a philosophy which had its belief in the disinterested play of thought. Psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's explorations of the subconscious was something which the Surrealist artists valued and as they gave much significance to the irrational and the unconscious, they tried to revolutionize art by freeing it from the clutches of false rationality. The major figures of Surrealism are Louis Aragon, Salvador Dali, Paul Eluard and Pierre Reverdy.

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Check Your Progress

1. When was *The Interpretation of Dreams* published?
2. Who were the practitioners of the Imagist movement?
3. Who is the author of *Manifesto on Surrealism*?

13.3 MODERN POETRY

The poems of the first half of the twentieth century break away from the romantic tendencies of the earlier period and present the modernist anxieties and worries. Poets such as T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats mark the greatest heights that the modernist poetry could achieve which brings to the fore the anxieties of the age and tries to provide a just representation of the modern man. T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* is thought to be the greatest of the modernist poetry for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize. In the following section of this unit you will come across some of the significant characteristics of the modernist poems.

Modernist poetry can be talked about as an experiment in poetry. The poets reacted against the romantic tendencies of the earlier age and tried to write poetry in an objective fashion. For example, T. S. Eliot in many of his critical writings emphasized the role of 'impersonality of the poet' and how the Wordsworthian tradition of 'outpouring of emotions' recollected in tranquillity needs to be overthrown in order to write poems where objectivity is the main criteria. Moreover, T. S. Eliot in 'Tradition and Individual Talent' emphasized on the role of 'tradition' in writing poetry.

The Georgian Poets

Georgian Poets are poets such as Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson, Harold Monro and Edward Marsh. These poets were against the decadent

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transitional poetry of the earlier generations and paved path for the modernist poetry. Although they did not lead the movement of modernism, but they were distinct from the earlier poets. At the time when the Georgian Poets started writing poetry, the general opinion prevailing regarding poetry was not very high and these poets made a conscious choice and decision to bring out poetry so as to change this opinion. Edward Marsh suggested that they should publish an anthology of poems and consequently a volume entitled *Georgian Poetry (1911- 12)* was brought out. In the next few years, between 1912 and 1922, five such volumes of poems came out during the reign of George V after which this is named as Georgian Poetry.

Major Poets of the Modern Age

Some of the important poets of the Modern Age have been discussed below:

I. William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats, born near Dublin in 1865, was educated in London. However, he returned to Ireland in 1880. In Ireland, he began his literary career by writing poems which portrayed the modernist sensibilities in its purest form. ‘Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold’ from his poem *The Second Coming* is almost the credo of the modernist sensibilities. In 1891, W. B. Yeats became a member of Rhymers’ Club. Ernest Dowson (1867-1900) was also a member of this club. After 1890, Yeats started writing plays as it was significant in the revival of the Irish Drama and Irish National Movement. Yeats was an enthusiastic follower of Irish National Movement and he did his best to help in the establishment of the national theatre. In 1923, W. B. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his significant poetic and artistic contribution. He died in the South of France in 1939.

The significant works of Yeats’ early period of poetic activity are –

- *Wanderings of Oisín* (1889),
- *Poems* (1895),
- *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) and
- *The Shadowy Water*.

There was simplicity of expression as well as melodic quality in the early poems of W. B. Yeats and *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* is an important example of it. He was very much influenced by the Irish (Celtic) legends as well as Pre-Raphaelite poetry and therefore in his early poems we see a certain melodious quality which is of much significance. At the same time, the gross materialism of the age, as well as the Victorian ethos was something that he was tired of and therefore he took refuge in the fairy land as well as the Irish legends where the eternal impulses of man’s primitive nature finds its expression.

Though W. B. Yeats started his literary career with poetry, he soon abandoned writing poetry and started focusing on drama as well as philosophical essays. Yeats' poetic career between 1900 and 1910 is an example of that.

In 1910, he came up with *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* and *Responsibilities*. In these volumes, instead of the earlier lyrical and fairyland like quality, we see W. B. Yeats becoming more realistic as well as philosophical and mystical. The mystical element in Yeats' poems makes him one of the major poets of the early twentieth century. In *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919), Yeats showed more of his poetic maturity. Next comes *In the Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933) which represent the philosophical aspects of his poetry. His last two collections are *New Poems* (1938) and *Last Poems* (1939).

Significant Characteristics of Yeats' Poetry

The common features of Yeats' poetry are as follows:

- **Mysticism:** Mysticism is an essential attribute of Yeats' poetry as he was a mystic and visionary by temperament. In a world dominated by materialism industrialization, rationalism, science and technology, Yeats maintained his position of a mystic which is one of the most essential attributes of his Celticism.
- **Romanticism:** Often Yeats is also termed as 'The last of the Romantics' because of the visionary and mystic quality of his poems. He is a spokesperson of the modern sensibilities and yet had a kind of mysticism in his poems.
- **Symbolism:** Symbolism is an essential attribute of the modernist poetry and Yeats was one of the greatest of the symbolist poets of the modern age.

II. Thomas Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot has been a popular name in English poetry since the early 1920s. He had ruled the age in which he lived with absolute authority. The twentieth century cannot be signalled by a single voice or authority. Still, T.S. Eliot might be considered as its best spokesperson in English literature, probably more than any other literary figure. Amongst the post-war poets, playwrights as well as critics, who have enjoyed honour and prestige, Eliot can be seen as a towering celebrity. He alone could face and enjoy the life of austere and harsh realities. He would never sit back and ignore the complicated and confusing problems being faced by people of his time. He always wanted to come forward as one of us and give a first-hand report on the difficult issues of the age.

As a poet, Eliot drew from many different sources to gather his material. He was deeply influenced by some famous personalities of the past and of the modern scene. Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Ben Jonson, Arnold, etc. in general, and Donne and the metaphysical poets particularly added up in shaping Eliot's mind. Many French symbolists such as Laforgue and Gautier, German philosophers such

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as Hegel and Bradley and the Indian religions and philosophies also influenced him. By accepting the influences so wide and varied in nature, Eliot significantly increased his knowledge and augmented his susceptibility. This is also why he is a universal poet. Eliot was a versatile genius. He was a very talented man. His appeal was not just limited to the English or to the European tradition. Instead, he was a rather universal poet.

Therefore, it might be correct to say that Eliot was aware of a vastly rich tradition that was not just English or European but had a wider application. He derives knowledge not just from the best that is known and thought in the Bible, or Christian theology, but also from Buddhism and Hinduism and many other religions. That is the reason why Eliot's outlook was neither just catholic, nor insular and neither national; his outlook was international to all tribes and peoples. For him creed and caste did not matter; he was only concerned with the best. This also explains another stand taken by him, that of a classicist in literature.

T.S. Eliot was born in 1888 in St. Louis, Missouri (the USA). His family was of Devonshire origin, traditionally interested in trade and commerce and academics. He was an undergraduate at Harvard during 1906–1909. Here, he came under the influence of the symbolists and Laforgue. During 1909–1910 he was a graduate student at Harvard and completed his early poems, including *Portrait of a Lady* and began *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. In the years 1910 and 1911, he went to France and Germany and spent a year at Oxford reading Greek philosophy. Again, he was back to Harvard University as a graduate student. It is then that he started work on the philosophy of Francis Herbert Bradley, whose *Appearance and Reality* influenced him a lot. During 1914–1915, he resumed his study in Germany, which was cut off by the First World War. After this, he took his residence at Oxford, and worked on some short satiric poems.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock was published in Chicago in June 1915 and Eliot's marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood took place in July 1915. After a brief experience of teaching at Highgate School, Eliot entered business in 1916. He also completed his thesis in that year. Then he spent eight years as an employee of Lloyd's Bank. He took up various reviewing and editorial assignments. During 1917–1920, he wrote many poems in quatrains after the French fashion. *Gerontion* deserves special mention in this connection. He was an assistant editor of *The Egoist* (1917–1919) and also published a collection of poems and *The Sacred Wood* in 1920.

Eliot was the London correspondent for *The Deal* during 1921–1922 and *La-Nouvelle Revue Francaise* during 1922–1923. In October 1923, he began his career as an editor of *The Criterion*. His epoch-making poem, *The Waste Land*, appeared in public in 1922. It is a much-discussed poem with five movements. In it, the poet has displayed fears, doubts and distrust of the post-war generation. The poem won for him the Dial Award. In 1925, many of his poems including the *The Hollow Men* appeared. *The Hollow Men* was written in the spirit of *The Waste Land*.

During 1926–1927, satiric pieces *Fragment of a Prologue* and *Fragment of an Agon* came out. In 1927, Eliot declared himself to be an Anglo-Catholic and assumed British citizenship. The year 1934 saw a huge change in the poet's attitude. He had now sided with the poetic drama, which he renovated and energized during the later years of his life. Eliot's first work in this direction was *The Rock* (1934). Following this, a wave of publications flooded the dramatic field. *Murder in the Cathedral* appeared in 1935. *The Family Reunion* in 1939 was a stage failure, but the dramatist remained unshaken. During the years 1940–1942 appeared *East Coker*, *The Dry Salvages* and *Little Gidding*. These three and *Burnt Norton* were combined together to form *Four Quartets* (1943).

The year 1947 brought a disaster for Eliot. His first wife died after a long illness. In 1948 he wrote *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. T.S. Eliot wrote *The Cocktail Party* in 1950, *The Confidential Clerk* in 1955 and *The Elder Statesman* in 1959. After *Four Quartets* poetry was almost untouched by him, though poetic element was indisputably retained in all his dramas. Eliot's chaotic literary life came to an end on 4 January 1965, and the news of his death was received by the world with a sense of deep loss and sorrow.

III. The Oxford Poets

The poets such as W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, are popularly known as the Oxford Poets. Michael Roberts (1902-48) was the one who brought these poets under the same umbrella and later it was W.H. Auden who did the same. These poets were graduates from Oxford and they had been great friends and supported each other's writing and artistic skills. The common characteristics of these poets are the following:

- The themes of these poet's works were marked by certain kind of innovation and modernity which was experimental in nature.
- Their works had more intellectual appeal than emotional appeal.
- They had a political involvement with communism
- They were much influenced by the psychologist Sigmund Freud.
- Their works had a kind of cynicism and satire which came from a sense of rootlessness.

These features gave these poets a common identity as their works had not much emotional appeal and was meant to stimulate the readers intellectually. They were also influenced by Imagism and French Symbolist poetry.

W.H. Auden (1907-73)

W. H. Auden is the leader of the Oxford Poets and therefore he showed much awareness about the disintegrating war-torn civilization of the early twentieth century. He knew very well that the world around him is full of political and social evils apart from the metaphysical anguishes that marred the modern existence and therefore in his poetic art it found a manifestation. He had a leaning towards the

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left politics and therefore thought that leftist ideology is probably a solution to the political, social and cultural evils of the modern western society. In other words, it can be said that he was deeply influenced by the philosophy and writings of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. His early works include *Poems* and *The Orators* which makes social criticism and they were protests against the contemporary political, social and economic tensions that arose in the industrial cities of the modern civilization. W. H. Auden migrated to U.S.A. in 1939 and during this period he was disillusioned with the Marxist philosophy as the German and the Soviet came upon a pact. Therefore, in Auden's poetry there is a great shift that one can notice—a shift towards the metaphysical and religious. Auden's later collection of poetry consists of *The Shield of Achilles* (1949), *Homage to Clio* (1960), and *About the House* (1966).

Stephen Spender (1909 - 1995)

Stephen Harold Spender was an English poet, translator, literary critic and also an editor. Born in London and educated at the Oxford, he was associated to W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, C. Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice which made him come out with many significant literary pieces for which he is still known today. He wrote *The Thirties and After* in 1979. The social and the political realities of the society interested him and therefore in his works we see a direct representation of the societal concerns. He was a very reflective and intellectual poet and therefore throughout his poetic career he showed his interest towards left wing politics. In his early poems, he was very 'personal' but as he grew up his interest towards politics became stronger and he started writing political poetry. In his finest poems, Stephen Spender showed much of political concern as well as a deep empathy for basic human condition. His major works include *Poems* (1933, 1938), *Vienna* (1934), *The Still Centre* (1939), *Ruins and Vision* (1942), *Poems of Dedication* (1946), *The Edge of Being* (1949), and *World Within a World* (1951). In his poetry, Stephen Spender showed a commitment towards leftist ideology and also presented deep personal feelings. He is therefore considered as a poet who showed unusual concern as he modernized the sensibilities of the man from both the personal as well as the political ways.

Cecil Day Lewis (1904 - 1972)

Cecil Day-Lewis was an Irish poet who was the British Poet Laureate of England from 1968 until he died in 1972. He was not only a poet but also a novelist of great measure. During his lifetime, he wrote numerous poems, essays and detective stories and considered himself a voice of revolution in the field of poetry and politics. For writing novels, he used the pen name, Nicholas Blake.

Lewis was born on 27 April 1904 in Ballintubber, Queens County (now County Laois), Ireland to Reverend Frank Cecil Day-Lewis and Kathleen Squires. He received education at Sherborne School and then in 1923, got admission to Wadham College, Oxford. During his Oxford days, he devoted himself to poetry.

In 1925, his first collection titled *Beechen Vigil* was published. Lewis graduated in 1927. In 1946, Lewis became the lecturer at Cambridge University and published his lectures in *The Poetic Image* in 1947. Later, he was a professor of Poetry at Oxford where he taught from 1951 to 1956. Later, Lewis became the Norton Professor at Harvard University from 1962 to 1963.

Louis MacNeice (1907-1963)

Louis MacNeice, born on 12 September 1907, in Belfast, Ireland, and educated at Oxford, was a lecturer at the University of Birmingham, a position he held until 1936. Some of his best-known plays are *Christopher Columbus* (1944), and *The Dark Tower* (1946). Despite his association with young British poets Stephen Spender, W. H. Auden, writer Christopher Isherwood, and other left-wing poets, MacNeice was as mistrustful of political programs as he was of philosophical systems. Although he chose to live the majority of his adult life in London, MacNeice frequently returned to the landscapes of his childhood, and he took great pride in his Irish heritage.

Check Your Progress

4. Who were the Georgian Poets?
5. In which year did W.B. Yeats become part of the Rhymers' Club?
6. When was *The Waste Land* published?
7. Name the poets who are popularly known as the Oxford Poets.

13.4 MODERN PROSE

Modernism is also known for its prose writings as many of the writers of the modern age took up prose as their medium of expression. Apart from novels and short stories, in the twentieth century, essay as a genre also developed on its own under the patronage of able writers who developed the genre further. In this section, we will be focusing on the essayists on the first half of the twentieth century.

G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936)

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a man of versatile genius. He was not only an essayist, but also a novelist, critic, biographer, poet as well as a dramatist. He is well known for his series about the priest detective Father Brown who appeared in fifty of his stories. He was born in London into a middle-class family on 29 May 1874 and studied at University College. In 1900, appeared *Greybeards at Play*, which was Chesterton's first collection of poems. *Robert Browning* (1903) and *Charles Dickens* (1906) were literary biographies that Chesterton wrote. His first novel was *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904) which was a political fantasy. In *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908) Chesterton depicted fin-de-siecle decadence.

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Of his fiction the significant ones are *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905), *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), *Manalive* (1912) and the Father Brown series of detective short stories.

As a critic, he is well known for *The Victorian Age in Literature* and *Charles Dickens*. Chesterton ranks very high among modern essayists. His reputation as an essayist rests securely on *Heretics* (1905), *All Things Considered* (1908) and *Tremendous Trifles* (1909). His other significant works also include *Selected Essays*, *The Pleasure of Ignorance* and *The Little Angel*.

A. G. Gardiner (1865-1946)

Alfred George Gardiner was British journalist and essayist and was born in Chelmsford. From his childhood, he showed promising writing skills and as a boy, he worked with the *Chelmsford Chronicle* and the *Bournemouth Directory*. He joined the Northern Daily Telegraph in 1887. In 1899, he was appointed editor of the *Blackburn Weekly Telegraph*. In 1902, he became the editor of The Daily News and under his editorship The Daily News became one of the most read journals of the day. From 1915, Gardiner started contributing to *The Star* under the pseudonym of *Alpha of the Plough*. His essays are humorous, elegant, graceful and free flowing which made his readers like his style of writing and he became very popular during his day. His most distinguished calibre was his competence to speak about the basic truths of life in an easy and amusing manner. *The Pillars of Society*, *Pebbles on the Shore*, *Many Furrows* and *Leaves in the Wind* are some of his well-known writings.

Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953)

Hilaire Belloc is a multitalented prose writer of the twentieth century who was well known for his essays, novels, verse, travels, history, biography as well as criticism. His *Path to Rome* is a travelogue. *Marie Antoinette* and *History of England* are books on history. His reputation as an essayist rests on *On Nothing On Something and On Everything*. As an essayist, his range is very wide. He can be playful as in his essay 'On Cheese', and he can be tender, emotional and lyrical as in 'The Good Woman'.

E.V. Lucas (1868-1938)

E.V. Lucas is one of the most prominent and prolific essayists of the early twentieth century. He wrote travel books and essays. Some of his best essays are 'Over Bemerton's' and 'Listener's Lure'. Some of his finest essays are found in *Character and Comedy* (1907), *Old Lamps for New* (1911), *Lotterer's Harvest* (1913) and *Cloud and Silver* (1916).

Robert Lynd (1879-1949)

Robert Lynd was an essayist who primarily followed Charles Lamb and Stevenson. He wrote charming and delightful essays on a wide variety of moods and emotions.

Most of his essays are personal essays of which Charles Lamb was a master. Robert Lynd could easily write on any subject.

Modern Age

Max Beerbohm (1872-1956)

Max Beerbohm's significant works are *The Works of Max Beerbohm* (1896), *More* (1899), *Yet Again* (1949), *And Even Now* (1920).

NOTES

Check Your Progress

8. Name G.K Chesterton's first novel.
9. Which work of Hilaire Beloc is a travelogue?

13.5 MODERN DRAMA

The modern period saw the emergence of new themes and styles. Some of them are discussed below.

The Realistic Drama

The Realistic Drama, as the term itself suggests, deals with the real life situations and follows the patterns of the naturalistic theatre and often deals with the social problems (and hence named as the Problem Plays). The practitioners of this kind of theatre in the early twentieth century are J. M. Barrie, John Galsworthy, G. B. Shaw, James Birdie and many others. These dramatists have a great contribution in the development of theatre in the early twentieth century.

The Pioneers of English Drama

T.W. Robertson tried to write realistic comedy depicting the foibles of aristocratic society and satirizing the snobbery of all classes. Both his characters and settings are real. He introduced in his plays the idea of a serious theme underlying the humour, and characters and dialogue of a more natural kind.

Henry Arthur Jones' first play *The Silver King* is a melodrama. His second play *Saints and Sinners* is noticeable for realism. Characters are realistically portrayed and are presented into two classes representing meanness and idealism respectively. It deals with everyday problems as the hatred of petty shopkeeper at the larger cooperative stores, the meaninglessness of conventional puritanism, the rapacity and poverty of soul in middle-class provincial society.

A.W. Pinero (1851-1929) was a skilled craftsman and had a keen appreciation of stage effects. In his early dramatic farces as *The Squire*, *Sweet Lavender*, *The Magistrate*, *The Schoolmistress*, *The Dandy Dick*, *The Weaker Sex*, *The Profligate* and *The Second Mrs. Tranquary*, Pinero endeavoured to impart realism to both situation and character. In his serious plays *Trelawny of the Wells*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, *Iris* and *Midchannel*, he successfully delineates realistic characters and deftly creates realistic atmosphere.

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Even though these dramatists had started writing plays in the Victorian Period, they were more of the dramatists of the Modern Period.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933): John Galsworthy, the famous dramatist of the early twentieth century was known for his realist plays which were in the tradition of Jones and Pinero.

- His first play *The Silver Box* (1906) exposes the distinction which exists between the rich and the poor.
- *Strife* (1909) deals with the struggle between Capital and Labour, Justice, mismanagement in the prisons of England and the cruelty of solitary confinement.
- *The Skin Game* (1920) deals with the different values of the old aristocracy and the newly rich businessman.
- *Loyalties* (1922) deals with anti-Jewish feeling, discrimination against racial minority. His minor plays too deal with real social problems.
- *A Family Man* illustrates that too much authority in domestic life spells disaster.
- *Window* deals with the problem of illegitimate children.
- *The Eldest Son* expresses class prejudices.
- *The Pigeon* deals with the problem of reclaiming the outcasts.
- *The Mob* depicts the tragedy of idealism.
- *Foundation* teaches that a religion of kindness is the only corrective to caste feeling.
- *The Forest* presents a picture of modern financiers whose unscrupulous and speculative dealings have caused havoc in the economy.

Harley Granville Barker (1877-1946): Harley Granville Barker was a well-known Shakespearean critic who at the same time wrote a number of realistic and naturalistic plays. In his plays, he primarily deals with the social problems such as marriage, sex, inheritance as well as position of women. His approach is primarily intellectual and discards emotional things in his drama. His significant plays are *The Moving of Ann Leete* (1899), *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), *Waste* (1907), *The Madras House* (1910) and *The Secret Life* (1923).

Sir J. M. Barrie (1860-1937): J. M. Barrie was a Scottish novelist and playwright who was known for his sophisticated sentimentalism in his plays such as *What Every Woman Knows*. His sentimental romances like *The Professor's Love Story* (1894), *Quality Street* (1902), *Mary Rose* (1920) and *A Kiss for Cinderella* (1916) were been popular. His later well-known plays are *The Admirable Crichton* (1902), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), *The Will* (1913), *Dear Brutus* (1917), *Marie Rose* (1920) and *The Boy David* (1936).

John Millington Synge (1871-1909): John Millington Synge, popularly known as J. M. Synge, was one of the greatest dramatists who was instrumental in the rebirth of the Irish Theatre. *The Shadow of Glen* (1903), a comedy based on an old Irish folktale, presents a romantic picture of Irish peasant life which was necessary for the Irish National Revival Movement. His other plays such as *The Well of Saints* (1905) and *The Tinker's Wedding* (1907) are also considered as good comedies. *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) is a comedy which appeals to the readers even today and it deals with an old legend and presents an excellent but ironical picture of Irish character. *Riders to the Play* (1904) is a powerful, deeply moving tragedy in one Act; it is also considered as one of the greatest poetic drama written in the twentieth century. The One Act space of the play deals with the tragedy of its principal character Maurya who loses her husband and six sons to the sea. *Deirdre of Sorrow* (1910) is based also on a legend and in it the themes of love and death are tragically interwoven. J. M. Synge was against the notion of the realistic theatre and therefore he often fell back on the poetic element in drama as well as went back to Irish myths and legends.

Sean O. Casey (1884-1964): Sean O. Casey was an Irish playwright and was thought to be one of the greatest dramatists dealing with Irish/ Celtic Revivalism. His naturalistic tragicomedies are *The Shadow of A Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), *Within the Gates*, *The Stars Turn Red* (1940), *Purple Dust* (1941), *Red Roses For Me* (1946), *Oak Leaves and Lavender* (1946) and *Cockadoodle Dandy* (1949). The usual background of O. Casey's plays was the slums of Dublin, crowded, noisy tenements where women quarrelled and loafers drank, and the tragic violence of civil war was at hand. In his plays comedy and tragedy often commingle.

James Bridie (1888-1951): James Bridie is thought to be following George Bernard Shaw as far as his plays are concerned both in the thematic as well as the stylistic ways of writing plays. He is regarded to some extent as a disciple of Shaw. His best-known plays are *The Anatomist* (1931), *Jonah and the Whale* (1932), *A Sleeping Clergyman* (1933), *Mr. Bolfray* (1943), *Dr. Angelus* (1947) and *Daphne Laureola* (1949).

J. B. Priestley: J. B. Priestley was primarily a novelist but also wrote plays. His well-known comedies are *Laburnum Grove* (1933), *Eden End* (1934), and *When We Are Married*. The plays dealing with this theme are *Time and the Conways*, *I Have Been Before* and *Johnson Over Jordan*.

Sir Noel Coward (1899-1973): Noel Coward is another of the great dramatist of the twentieth century and his most significant play is *The Vortex* (1924). His other plays are *Easy Virtue* (1926), *This Year of Grace* (1928), *Bitter Sweet* (1929), *Private Lives* (1930), *Design For Living* (1933), *To - night at Eight Thirty* (1936), *Blithe Spirit* (1941), *Present Laughter* (1943) and *This Happy Breed* (1943). Coward's *Hay Fever* is a brilliant comedy.

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Sir Terence Rattigan (1911-77) is one of the most consistently successful of modern English playwrights. In his preface to his *Collected Plays* (1953) he expressed his outspoken hostility to the use of the drama as a means of disseminating ideas. His comedies include *Trench without Tears* (1936), *O Mistress Mine* (1944), *Flare Path* (1942), *The Winslow Boy* (1946), *The Browning Version* (1948), *Separate Tables* (1954), *Ross* (1960) and *Cause Celebre* (1977).

Denis Johnston wrote realistic and expressionistic drams like *Storm Song*. Some of his famous plays are *The Old Lady Says 'No'* (1929), *The Moon in the Yellow River* (1931), *A Bride for the Unicorn* (1933) and *Storm Song* (1934).

Poetic Drama

Poetic Drama is a distinct genre of theatre where the essence of the drama is such that it reaches the sublime beauty of poetry. Many Victorian poets attempted the poetic drama; but the Victorians fell short of creating any kind of dramatic excellence in their works except from the dramatic monologues of Robert Browning which are not drama in the real sense of the term. Tennyson wrote plays such as *Queen Mary, Harold* (1877) and *Becket* (1884). Robert Browning wrote *Strafford* (1837) *King Victor and King Charles* (1842), *The Return of the Druses* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846). Even though these two poets of the nineteenth century were writing plays but they could not achieve the greater heights of poetic drama in their plays. It is only in the twentieth century that we see that Poetic Drama reaches certain heights in the works of T. S. Eliot and others who made drama come up from its slumbering state to the forefront with their artistic efforts.

Some of the practitioners of poetic drama are –

- Stephen Philis (1864-1915): Stephen Philis wrote poetic dramas such as *Palao and Francesca* (1900), *Herod* (1901), *Ulysses* (1902), *The Son of David* (1904) and *Nero* (1906). Though he wrote extensively, yet his plays did not have the popular appeal.
- John Masefield (1878- 1967) John Masefield also did some experiments with the genre of the poetic drama and some of his plays were popular. He is well-known for his plays such as *The Tragedy of Man* (1909), *The Trial of Pompey*, *The Great* (1910), *Good Friday* (1917), *The Trial of Jesus* (1925) and *The Coming of Christ* (1928). Religious in their themes, his poetic plays have some appeal to the mass.
- Gordon Bottomley (1874-1948): Gordon Bottomley was another powerful dramatist who wrote many great poetic dramas such *The Crier by Night* (1902), *Midsummer Eve* (1905), *King Lear's Wife* (1915), *Grauch* (1921) and *Culbin Sands* (1932).
- James Elory Flecker (1884- 1915): James Elory Flecker's play *Hassan* (1922) had a great appeal as a poetic drama as it had for its setting a highly coloured, oriental play.

- Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938): Abercrombie was also one of the finest dramatists dealing with the genre of the poetic play and his plays include *Deborah* (1913), *The Adder* (1913), *The End of the World* (1914), *The Staircase* (1922), *The Derter* (1922), *Phoenix* (1923) and *The Sale of St. Thomas* (1930).
- John Drinkwater (1882-1937): Drinkwater started his career as a dramatist of poetic plays and his significant plays include *Rebellion* (1914), *The Storm* (1915), *The God of Quiet* (1916) *A Night of the Trojan War* (1917).
- W.B. Yeats (1865-1939): We have talked about Yeats in detail when we discussed Modernist Poetry. In this section we will merely be talking about Yeats' concern for Poetic Drama. In his essay *The Tragic Theatre*, he wrote: 'Our movement is a return to the people ... The play that is to give them a quite natural pleasure, should tell them either of their own life, or of that life of poetry where every man can see his own image, because there alone prompted to reconstruct contemporary life through the symbols of ancient folklore and the mythology of Ireland. In order to make the audience concentrate on poetry Yeats went back to the simplicity of Greek theatre and Shakespearean theatre.'
- T. S. Eliot (1885-1965): We have also discussed Eliot in detail in the Modern Poetry Section. In this section we will be only dealing with his plays. T.S. Eliot propounded the theory of the poetic drama in his essay *Rhetoric and Poetic Drama* (1919). T. S. Eliot can be said to be the foremost runner as far as the genre of the Poetic drama is concerned in the modern period. His play *The Murder in the Cathedral* (1935) is one of the greatest examples of the poetic drama which deals with the life of a mediaeval saint's legend and comic relief that takes the form of contemporary satire, treats of the conflict between the claims of the world and the claims of the soul. *The Family Reunion* (1939) is Eliot's one of the most powerful plays which deals contemporary people speaking contemporary language. In *The Cocktail Party* (1950), Eliot gave up even those rituals which had been retained in *The Family Reunion*. *The Confidential Clerk* (1953) deals with the importance of coming to grips with one's true self. *The Elder Statesman* (1958) treated Eliot's familiar theme of an old sin brought of light and acknowledged the consequent spiritual release.

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Check Your Progress

10. What does *The Silver Box* deal with?
11. Who wrote *The Playboy of the Western World*?
12. When was *Murder in the Cathedral* published?

13.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

NOTES

1. *The Interpretation of Dreams* was published in 1900.
2. The practitioners of the Imagist movement were Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle, Richard Aldington and William Carlos Williams.
3. Andre Breton is the author of *Manifesto on Surrealism*.
4. Georgian Poets are poets such as Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson, Harold Monro and Edward Marsh. These poets were against the decadent transitional poetry of the earlier generations and paved path for the modernist poetry.
5. In 1891, W. B. Yeats became a member of Rhymers' Club.
6. *The Waste Land* was published in 1922.
7. The poets such as W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, are popularly known as the Oxford Poets.
8. G.K Chesterton's first novel was *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904).
9. Hilaire Beloc's *Path to Rome* is a travelogue.
10. *The Silver Box* deals with the distinction which exists between the rich and the poor.
11. J.M Synge is the author of *The Playboy of the Western World*.
12. *Muder in the Cathedral* was published in 1935.

13.7 SUMMARY

- Modernity and modernism are two different things – whereas 'modernity' refers to a set of philosophical, political, and ethical ideas which provide the basis for the aesthetic aspect of modernism'; 'modernism' generally refers to the broad aesthetic movements of the twentieth century.
- With the end of the Victorian Age with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, there was a change in the circumstances in England which produced certain changes in the literary output.
- The biggest change that we perceive in the literature of the first half of the twentieth century from that of the earlier Victorian Age is that the literature of the age was shifting from the exterior realism to the inner aspects of the humankind.
- The effects of the World Wars were such that mankind lost faith in fellow human beings and therefore a sense of loneliness crept into the minds and consciousness of the modern man.

- Modernist writers had a new 'subject matter' for literature as they believed that their new way of looking at life required a new form, a new way of thinking and writing. Consequently, writers were more experimental, innovative and very individualistic in their writing.
- The Modernist writers shifted from linear time to 'Duree' or psychological time. All the stream of consciousness novels, whether of Virginia Woolf or that of James Joyce, deals with the psychological time. Anthropological studies of comparative religion became the subject matter of writing.
- Imagism is a movement in Anglo-American poetry in the twentieth century which started in 1912. The major practitioners of the movement of Imagism are Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell, Hilda Doolittle, Richard Aldington and William Carlos Williams.
- The brutality and barbarism of the First World War created many changes in the artistic temperament of the age and one of the significant ones among them is Dadaism whose name 'Dada' (in French meaning 'hobby horse') was selected by some artists such as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst and Man Ray, so as to represent their artistic emphasis on the illogical and the irrational.
- The anti-rational sensibilities of the Dadaism movement found expression in the surrealist tendencies in artistic temperament in the first half of the twentieth century. The movement started in Paris with the publication of Andre Breton's *Manifesto on Surrealism* where Surrealism was defined as a 'psychic automatism'. The major figures of Surrealism are Louis Aragon, Salvador Dali, Paul Eluard and Pierre Reverdy.
- Georgian Poets are poets such as Rupert Brooke, John Drinkwater, W.W. Gibson, Harold Monro and Edward Marsh. These poets were against the decadent transitional poetry of the earlier generations and paved path for the modernist poetry.
- William Butler Yeats, born near Dublin in 1865, was educated in London. However, he returned to Ireland in 1880. In 1891, W. B. Yeats became a member of Rhymers' Club. After 1890, Yeats started writing plays as it was significant in the revival of the Irish Drama and Irish National Movement.
- Yeats was an enthusiastic follower of Irish National Movement and he did his best to help in the establishment of the national theatre. In 1923, W. B. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature for his significant poetic and artistic contribution.
- In 1910, Yeats came up with *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* and *Responsibilities*. In these volumes, instead of the earlier lyrical and fairyland like quality, we see W. B. Yeats becoming more realistic as well as philosophical and mystical. The mystical element in Yeats' poems makes him one of the major poets of the early twentieth century.

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- Thomas Stearns Eliot has been a popular name in English poetry since the early 1920s. As a poet, Eliot drew from many different sources to gather his material. He was deeply influenced by some famous personalities of the past and of the modern scene. Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Ben Jonson, Arnold, Donne and the metaphysical poets particularly added up in shaping Eliot's mind. Many French symbolists such as Laforgue and Gautier, German philosophers such as Hegel and Bradley and the Indian religions and philosophies also influenced him.
- Eliot's epoch-making poem, *The Waste Land*, appeared in public in 1922. It is a much-discussed poem with five movements. In it, the poet has displayed fears, doubts and distrust of the post-war generation. The poem won for him the Dial Award. In 1925, many of his poems including the *The Hollow Men* appeared. *The Hollow Men* was written in the spirit of *The Waste Land*.
- The year 1934 saw a huge change in Eliot's attitude. He had now sided with the poetic drama, which he renovated and energized during the later years of his life. *Murder in the Cathedral* appeared in 1935. *The Family Reunion* in 1939 was a stage failure, but the dramatist remained unshaken. During the years 1940–1942 appeared *East Coker*, *The Dry Salvages* and *Little Gidding*. These three and *Burnt Norton* were combined together to form *Four Quartets* (1943).
- The poets such as W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice, are popularly known as the Oxford Poets. These poets were graduates from Oxford and they had been great friends and supported each other's writing and artistic skills.
- Modernism is also known for its prose writings as many of the writers of the modern age took up prose as their medium of expression. Apart from novels and short stories, in the twentieth century, essay as a genre also developed on its own under the patronage of able writers who developed the genre further.
- Gilbert Keith Chesterton was a man of versatile genius. He was not only an essayist, but also a novelist, critic, biographer, poet as well as a dramatist. *Robert Browning* (1903) and *Charles Dickens* (1906) were literary biographies that Chesterton wrote.
- Alfred George Gardiner was British journalist and essayist and was born in Chelmsford. His essays are humorous, elegant, graceful and free flowing which made his readers like his style of writing and he became very popular during his day. His most distinguished calibre was his competence to speak about the basic truths of life in an easy and amusing manner.
- Hilaire Belloc is a multitalented prose writer of the twentieth century who was well known for his essays, novels, verse, travels, history, biography as

well as criticism. His *Path to Rome* is a travelogue. *Marie Antoinette* and *History of England* are books on history. His reputation as an essayist rests on *On Nothing On Something and On Everything*.

- E. V. Lucas is one of the most prominent and prolific essayists of the early twentieth century. He wrote travel books and essays. Some of his best essays are 'Over Bemerton's' and 'Listener's Lure'. Some of his finest essays are found in *Character and Comedy* (1907), *Old Lamps for New* (1911), *Lotterer's Harvest* (1913) and *Cloud and Silver* (1916).
- The Realistic Drama, as the term itself suggests, deals with the real life situations and follows the patterns of the naturalistic theatre and often deals with the social problems (and hence named as the Problem Plays). The practitioners of this kind of theatre in the early twentieth century are J. M. Barrie, John Galsworthy, G. B. Shaw, James Birdie and many others.
- T. W. Robertson (1829-71), Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) and A. W. Pinero (1855-1934) had started writing plays in the Victorian Period, but they were more of the dramatists of the Modern Period.
- John Galsworthy, the famous dramatist of the early twentieth century was known for his realist plays which were in the tradition of Jones and Pinero.
- Harley Granville Barker was a well-known Shakespearean critic who at the same time wrote a number of realistic and naturalistic plays. In his plays, he primarily deals with the social problems such as marriage, sex, inheritance as well as position of women.
- J. M. Barrie was a Scottish novelist and playwright who was known for his sophisticated sentimentalism in his plays such as *What Every Woman Knows*. His later well-known plays are *The Admirable Crichton* (1902), *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), *The Will* (1913), *Dear Brutus* (1917), *Marie Rose* (1920) and *The Boy David* (1936).
- John Millington Synge, popularly known as J. M. Synge, was one of the greatest dramatists who was instrumental in the rebirth of the Irish Theatre. *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) is a comedy which appeals to the readers even today and it deals with an old legend and presents an excellent but ironical picture of Irish character. *Riders to the Play* (1904) is a powerful, deeply moving tragedy in one Act; it is also considered as one of the greatest poetic drama written in the twentieth century.
- Sean O. Casey was an Irish playwright and was thought to be one of the greatest dramatists dealing with Irish/ Celtic Revivalism. His naturalistic tragicomedies are *The Shadow of A Gunman* (1923), *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), *The Plough and the Stars* (1926), *Within the Gates*, *The Stars Turn Red* (1940), *Purple Dust* (1941), *Red Roses For Me* (1946), *Oak Leaves and Lavender* (1946) and *Cockadoodle Dandy* (1949).

NOTES

- Some of the practitioners of Poetic Drama are Stephen Philis, John Masfield, Gordon Bottomley, James Elory Flecker, Lascelles Abercrombie, John Drinkwater, W.B Yeats, and T.S. Eliot.

NOTES

13.8 KEY WORDS

- **Imagism:** It was a movement in early-20th-century Anglo-American poetry that favored precision of imagery and clear, sharp language.
- **Dadaism:** It was an art movement of the European avant-garde in the early 20th century, with early centres in Zürich, Switzerland
- **Surrealism:** It was a 20th-century avant-garde movement in art and literature which sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind, for example by the irrational juxtaposition of images.
- **Symbolism:** It is the use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities.

13.9 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What were some of the artistic movements in the 20th century?
2. Briefly mention the poetic creations of W.B. Yeats.
3. Write a short on the literary career of Thomas Eliot.
4. Who are the prominent prose writers of the Modern Age?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the common features of the Modern Age.
2. Examine the common characteristics in the works of Oxford Poets.
3. Discuss in detail the emergence of poetic drama in the 20th century.

13.10 FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 14 THE PRESENT AGE

Structure

- 14.0 Introduction
- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 The State of England During and after World War II
 - 14.2.1 Literary Developments Post World War II
 - 14.2.2 Globalization and its Relationship with Literature and Literary Studies
- 14.3 Post Modernism
 - 14.3.1 Post Modernism and Literature
- 14.4 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Key Words
- 14.7 Self Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 14.8 Further Readings

NOTES

14.0 INTRODUCTION

With the end of World War II, it was evident that the British Empire was losing its colonies and its powerful dominance in world politics. A nation which was proud of its powerful position in the world and used to proudly say that ‘the sun never sets in the British soil’ was deeply affected psychologically as it was reduced to a little island after the Second World War. This psychological and financial setback (because of the loss of colonies) found its expression in the then literature of England. The coming up of the New West (The United States of America) heralded a threat to the two century long dominance of England, and England knew that without the economic and military reinforcements from America it won’t be able to keep up its position in the world politics for long. The loss of empire after the World War II led to severe curbing of the cash inflow from colonies leading to an economic crisis in England. All these factors affected the people of England and it gets represented in the literature of the time.

This development, along with the emergence of the concept of post-modernism will be discussed in this unit.

14.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the socio-political and cultural state of England after World War II
- Examine the literature written after World War II
- Explain the concept of postmodernism and its impact on literature

14.2 THE STATE OF ENGLAND DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR II

NOTES

The history of the British Empire is a long one and it is the largest, longest-lived, and ethnically most complex empire in the history of the world. We have dealt with the growth of the British Empire in the previous units. In this unit, we will focus on its downfall, or the crisis it faced in the mid twentieth century. If one has to pinpoint the collapse of the British Imperial power, one can easily say that it happened by the mid-1960; historians usually trace the collapse of the empire directly to the World War II. The catastrophic defeat of England during the World War in Europe and Asia destroyed its financial and economic independence which was the foundation stone of the British imperial system. It is true that England survived the World Wars, but with the wars its wealth, prestige, hegemony was severely curbed. England was a part of the Victorious Allied Power, but the role it had in the victory of the Allied Powers was very limited. The defeat of Germany was primarily the work of American Power. Japan was primarily an American Triumph. Thus, there is not much that the Britain could proudly proclaim to be their victory. One can say that Britain somehow survived the World War II by luck, but it proclaimed a death knell for its empire, as the erstwhile colonies were already flexing muscles and England had no other way but to leave the colonies. One of the most significant indications of the weakness of the British Empire was signaled by the grant of freedom to India in 1947 and the consequent English withdrawal from Indian soil.

With the end of the World War, it was also clear that Britain does not anymore hold the supreme position in world politics. There were greater powers centres— The United States of America in one corner and The Soviet Union of the other. Moreover, the domestic economy of England was also weakened seriously by the expensive social reform programmes that the Labour Government had launched. Britain thought that at this moment of crisis, it could at least be the third great power (after America and Russia). To achieve it, they needed to do certain things such as plan its strategic defence against the Soviet threat. In the Middle East, in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and the Gulf, the British had to hang on to their treaties and bases, including the vast Suez Canal zone, leading to the Suez Canal Crisis. But the shameful defeat of England in the Suez Canal made it all clear that England was not anymore, a great military and economic force that it once was.

Day by day, England realised that they would not be able to hold on to their colonies and colonies like Ghana and Malaya were granted independence in 1957. By 1960s, England found it difficult to even be a semblance of the world power that used to say that ‘sun never sets in the British soil.’ The Franco-German alliance at this time made England’s position in the world politics much weaker and it was

understood that it could not bear the cost of protecting the remaining colonies it had. Therefore, in haste England backed out of the remaining colonies such as Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, etc. When Britain finally entered the European Community in 1973, the line had been drawn under Britain's imperial age.

14.2.1 Literary Developments Post World War II

Disillusioned England due to its loss of powerful position in the world politics produced literature at this point of time which did not have a definitive trend. Whereas before the world wars, writers like Rudyard Kipling were celebrating imperial England and justifying the civilizing mission of the colonial power, the end of World War II produced a series of writing which show the angst and despair that the British ego suffered from.

In Rudyard Kipling, we saw a pro-imperialistic tone which glorified the imperial greatness of England. In *The White Man's Burden*, Kipling commemorated the civilising mission of the British in their colonies and depicted the advantages of the British Empire and the positive side of imperialism. By writing phrases like 'fill full the mouth of famine' and asking to 'serve [their] captives' need(s)', Kipling points out the responsibility of England towards its colonies. If the writing before the World War II was about the celebration of the British Empire and glorifying imperialism and its connotations and implications, then the literature in the post-World War period was all about disillusionment and despair.

One of the immediate repercussions of the frustrations of the post-World Wars can be perceived in the notion of 'angry young man' that was championed in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of the traumatic stage of the British society. Novelists like Kingsley Amis in *Lucky Jim* or John Osborne in the play *Look Back in Anger* portrayed the frustrations and angst of the British of this generation. When they looked back, they saw a glorious past where everything was glowing with the money brought from the colonies and suddenly due to the cash crunch and the loss of dominating position in the international scenario, the British found themselves not being able to adjust to their new status, both domestically and internationally, leading to meaningless outburst. In the play *Look Back in Anger*, we see Jimmy Porter, (often considered as a mouth piece character of John Osborne) a rebellious educated young man, either shouting meaninglessly at his wife (Alison) or his friend (Cliff) or blowing his trumpet at the background when he is not on stage. His outburst is perceived by many as a result of the post war situation of England when English people had to make a painful adjustment to a more modest role in the world affairs. The economic depression, repetitive stereotyped work regime, sharper class distinctions, and foppiness of the middle-class morality led to anger and despair of the post war generation of England. Carter rightly points out that *Look Back in Anger* is not a play 'about anger', but 'it is about feelings about despair'. Through Jimmy, Osborne is voicing his own

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disillusionment with contemporary British Society and consequently he denounces everything – the Church, the royalty, the conservative government, the upper class, and traditional morality. Above all, Jimmy reflects Osborne's utter dislike of the English notion of detachment and apathy of the lack of enthusiasm. He complains, 'Nobody thinks, nobody cares, no beliefs, no convictions, and no enthusiasm'; like Osborne, he feels that there are no more brave causes left to fight for.

While plays like *Look Back in Anger* dealt with the theme of angst and disillusionment of the age, dramatists like Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker and others presented the absurd situation of modern existence in their plays. Pinter's plays like *The Birthday Party* or *The Homecoming* portray the breaking down of the traditional moral values of the society and how in light of the breakdown of the traditional structures, individuals and society try to come to terms grip with themselves. The falling apart of the traditional notion of a family due to the socio-political and cultural factors and violence as a part of the modern living made many writers and dramatists portray the anxiety of the age. For example, Pinter in his plays *The Birthday Party*, *The Home Coming*, etc. delved into the psyche of the modern existence to portray the essential dilemma of the age.

Another significant development in the field of literature is the evolution of thrillers and science fiction as a branch of Popular Fiction. The political setting of the cold war created the perfect atmosphere for the flowering of thrillers and science fiction. While Science Fiction used science and technology in a utopian way to make a critique of the socio-political system, thrillers reinstated notionally the idea of the supremacy of the British race; both the form of writing became very popular.

Anthony Powell, another significant writer of the age wrote primarily about the higher echelons of English society. His famous witty twelve volume series of novels, grouped under the title *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-1975), is an account of the intertwined lives and careers of people in the arts and politics from before World War II to many years afterward. His four-volume autobiography, *To Keep the Ball Rolling* (1977-1983), complements the fictionalized details that form the basis of his novels. Thus, Anthony Powell is significant writer of the age in terms of portraying the effect of the socio-political and cultural background on the people of the higher classes of society and on people concerned with art.

V. S. Pritchett is considered a master of the short story (*Complete Stories*, 1990) because of his easy and elegant, supple style. Doris Lessing, who moved from the early short stories collection titled as *African Stories* (1965) to novels, was very experimental in form and concerned herself with the role of women in contemporary society. The most famous of her work is *The Golden Notebook* (1962). The novel is about a woman writer coming to grips with life through her art. In 1983, she completed a series of five science-fiction novels under the collective title *Canopus in Argus: Archives*.

Iris Murdoch, another significant writer of the age, was a teacher of philosophy and a writer known for slyly comic analyses of contemporary lives in her novels *Under the Net* (1954) *A Severed Head* (1961), *The Black Prince* (1973), *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980), and *The Good Apprentice* (1986). Her extraordinariness in style lies in juxtaposing the eccentric characters against the underlying seriousness of her ideas.

Anthony Burgess was a novelist who was most popular for his mordant novel of teenage violence, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), which was made into a successful motion picture in 1971. Burgess's prolific literary writing came to an end with *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993), which vividly recreates the life and times of 16th century playwright Christopher Marlowe. William Golding displayed a wide inventive range in fiction that explores human evil: the allegorical *Lord of the Flies* (1954); *The Inheritors* (1955), about Neandertal life; *The Spire* (1964); and *The Paper Men* (1984), about an English novelist's cruel behavior to an American scholar. Golding won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1983.

John Fowles is another significant writer who produced several highly experimental novels, including *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), in which he brings the fictional nature of the novel to the foreground, and *A Maggot* (1985), a mystery set in the 18th century. Julian Barnes established his reputation with *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), which is about scholarship and obsession, and followed it with other experimental and satiric works, including *England, England* (1999).

If one talks of dark humor, then this age is known for the novels written by Muriel Spark, who is best known for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), about a schoolteacher who turns out not to be what she seems.

14.2.2 Globalization and its Relationship with Literature and Literary Studies

'... all literature is now global; all literature is a literature of globalization.'

- Susie O'Brien and Imre Szeman

Globalization has been a buzzword in academia for about two decades. Though globalization is mostly viewed from economic perspectives, but it has ramifications in all aspects of our life. Therefore, it is significant to understand the term and also its consequences as without it, it is impossible to fathom some aspects of our life. Globalisation has had its effect on art and literature. As the world became a smaller place with the advent of better technologies for faster communication and faster means of transport, the import and export of culture and cultural artefacts became much easier and faster. The communication between people across the world became easier and today we see the multinational companies trying to modify culture in a way so that they can make profits by moulding the culture of the world in a single mould; that is, of Capitalism and consequent consumerism. Today

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everything is mass produced – meant for mass consumption; even cultural artefacts are constructed in a way which would promote mass consumption as culture industry would make profit that way.

English literature has been increasingly broadening its horizon. Earlier British literature was generally considered to be English literature, but as we moved into the mid half of the twentieth century we saw major changes happening in terms of defining English literature, as popular fiction not only got a place beside the mainstream literature, but literatures across the globe, written and translated into English came under the purview of English literature. As days progressed, the English literature departments metamorphosed into department of cultural studies and different cultural texts found itself worthy of academic study. Today, writers like Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, Derek Walcott, Patrick White, Michael Ondaatje, Nadine Gordimer, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh and host of other lesser known writers from the third world or from the diasporic communities around the world have become the part of the syllabi. Again, literature translated into English from other languages has also found space in English literary studies. With these changes the perspective of studying literature has changed as we do not limit ourselves to the erstwhile notion of English literature.

Check Your Progress

1. Who is the author of *Look Back in Anger*?
2. Name the dramatists who presented the absurd situation of modern existence in their plays.
3. In which year was *The Golden Notebook* published?
4. Who is the author of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*?

14.3 POST MODERNISM

Post modernism is a complicated concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study, including art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, technology, etc. Dick Hebdige gives a list of the ways in which the term postmodernism is used – ‘when it becomes possible for people to describe as “postmodern” the décor of a room, the design of a building, the diegesis of a film, the construction of a record, or a “scratch” video, a television commercial, or an arts documentary, or the “intertextual” relations between them, the layout of a page in a fashion magazine or critical journal, an anti-teleological tendency within epistemology, the attack on the “metaphysics of presence”, a general attenuation of feeling, the collective chagrin and morbid projections of a post-War generation of baby boomers confronting disillusioned

middle age, the “predicament” of reflexivity, a group of rhetorical tropes, a proliferation of surfaces, a new phase in commodity fetishism, a fascination for images, codes and styles, a process of cultural, political and existential fragmentation and /or crisis, the “de-centering” of the subject, an “incredulity towards metanarratives”, the replacement of unitary power axes by a plurality of power/discourse formations, the “implosion of meaning”, the collapse of cultural hierarchies, the dread generated by the threat of nuclear self-destruction, the decline of universality, the functioning and effects of the new miniaturized technologies, broad societal and economic shifts into a “media”, “consumer” or “multinational” phase, a sense (depending on who you read) of “placelessness” or the abandonment of placelessness (“critical regionalism”) or (even) a general substitution of spatial for temporal coordinates – when it becomes possible to describe all these things as “postmodern” then it’s clear we are in the presence of a buzzword.’ Because of the multi-faceted nature and multiple use of the term in different arenas of life and its representation, the term ‘post modernism’ has gained immense currency not only in the academic world but everywhere else. Yet it remains a term which is least understood by its users.

Moreover, it is hard to locate postmodernism historically as it is unclear exactly when postmodernism begins, though many believe it to have started in the 1960s. Frederic Jameson argues that postmodernism was born in the 1960s out of ‘the shift from an oppositional to a hegemonic position of the classics of modernism, the latter’s conquest of the university, the museum, the art gallery network and the foundations, the assimilation ... of the various high modernisms, into the “canon” and the subsequent attenuation of everything in them felt by our grandparents to be shocking, scandalous, ugly, dissonant, immoral and antisocial.’ However, the term gained popularity in the 1980s and became subject of many academic and non-academic debates and discussions.

Modernism versus Postmodernism: Grand Narrative and Lyotard

The easiest way to start pondering over postmodernism is by comparing it with modernism, the movement from which postmodernism seems to grow or emerge. Scholars vary in their opinion whether Post modernism is a continuation or a radical break from Modernism. Modernism is usually thought to be an aesthetic movement of the early twentieth century in visual arts, music, literature, and drama which rejected the old Victorian standards of how art should be constructed, consumed, and what it should signify. In the period from around 1910 to 1930, which is generally known as the era of High Modernism, the major figures of modernism (Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marcel Proust, Mallarme, Franz Kafka, Rilke and others) literature radically redefined what poetry and fiction could be.

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Though modernism refers to the aesthetic movement in the first half of the twentieth century, yet when we talk about modernity, it is usually thought that modern era started with the European Enlightenment, which began in the eighteenth century. In that sense, Modernity is about order, rationality, and totality. Jean Francois Lyotard, the postmodern scholar in his famous book *The Post-Modern Condition* (1979) argues that modern societies maintained or tried to maintain the supposed order, rationality and totality by means of 'grand narratives.' According to Lyotard, grand narratives or meta narrative operate through marshaling heterogeneity into order, and thereby silencing, suppressing and excluding other discourses to derive at a Universalist approach. Thus, from eighteenth century, Enlightenment associated science or scientific discourse and knowledge with the role of emancipating the mankind from darkness, leading to supposed Progress. Science/Rationality assumed the status of grand narrative which became or is championed by the modernists as the only valid means of attaining knowledge, thereby suppressing and obliterating all others means of knowledge formation. Even the grand narrative of Marxism is being critiqued by Lyotard by advocating an alternative philosophy of desire, following Nietzsche. According to Lyotard, Marxism, like other metanarratives, devoid history of its materiality and becomes a totalizing narrative. But Lyotard claims that since the end of the Second World War, the status of Meta narratives was waning out. For Lyotard, Postmodernism is expressed in terms of western societies' 'incredulity towards meta narratives'. In the process, the Meta narrative or grand narratives are rejected and the Postmodern societies favoured mini narratives or local narratives which neither claimed universality, not absolute truth as the enlightenment science did.

Another aspect of enlightenment was scientificity of language which meant that the signifier (sound pattern) always refers to the signified (concept) and that reality can be represented through signifiers. But with the questioning of science and the breaking down of the Meta narratives, the signifying process also started falling apart. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the modernist poet, W. B. Yeats writes in the poem *The Second Coming* – 'things fall apart, centre cannot hold'. If modernists are anxious about the falling apart of the signifying process(es) then post modernism celebrates this falling apart. This is because the postmodern societies does not lament fragmentation, provisionality and incoherence. In other words, Post Modern art celebrates the 'decentering' of the subject and instead of going into the depth, it is merely about surfaces, that is, about the signifiers with no signified. Basing his argument of Nietzsche's critique of the totalizing claims of reason, Lyotard argues that the 'truth claims of knowledge' is not possible anymore and that when a writer writes he is primarily playing a 'language game' (dealing only with the signifier(s) and not the signified) where there is no absolute standard or rules. In the phase of modernity, whereas Meta narratives provided legitimacy to the narratives and in the process achieved their own legitimacy; in Post

Modernism, art or literature celebrates difference and heterogeneity and explores the 'unsayable' and the 'invisible'. Thus, whereas for Baudrillard and Jameson, Post Modernism is a decisive break from Modernism, but for Lyotard, 'the Post Modern is undoubtedly a part of the modern; it would be that which in the modern puts forward as the unrepresentable in presentation itself.'

Simulacrum – Baudrillard

For Jean Baudrillard, postmodern is not about the 'sign; but about the 'simulacrum'. While Walter Benjamin claimed that mechanical production destroyed the 'aura' of the work of art, Baudrillard feels that the distinction between the original and the copy itself is destroyed in today's world and he calls this process 'simulation' – 'the generation by models of a real without origins or reality; a hyperreal.' In this realm of the hyperreal (which Baudrillard thinks to be the most important characteristics of post modernism) the distinction between the hyperreal and the real is imploded – where simulations are often regarded and experienced as more real than the real itself. Therefore, Baudrillard sees post modernity in terms of disappearance of meaning, of inertia, exhaustion, whether of history or subjectivity.

To explain the idea of simulacrum or hyper real, Baudrillard gives the example of the hyperrealism of the Disneyland, which Baudrillard calls 'a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation' as Disneyland is not merely an arena of fantastic escape for the Americans, but is somehow an experience of the real America – 'Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland. Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real.' Thus, Baudrillard's thesis about the hyperreal is in tune with Lyotard's arguments that post modernism is all about the collapse of certainty, about the dissolution of the metanarrative.

Late Capitalism – Frederic Jameson

For American Marxist cultural scholar Frederic Jameson (most famous work, *Post Modernism and Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*), Post Modernism is a 'periodizing concept.' Jameson talks about three phases of capitalism – (i) Market Capitalism (ii) Monopoly capitalism and (iii) Late or Multinational Capitalism. These three phases of Capitalism dictate the cultural practices, in terms of what kind of art and literature would be produced in these different stages of capitalism. Whereas market Capitalism which happened in the eighteenth century and carried on even in the nineteenth century is characterized by technological advancements which gave birth to particular kind of literary genre which we know as Realism. Monopoly capitalism which started, according to Jameson sometime around the late nineteenth

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century and carried on till the Second World War is synonymous with the era of Modernism. The third phase, multinational capitalism or consumer capitalism or late capitalism is the phase that is the most interesting phase for Jameson, as it is the age when 'the purest form of capital entered into hitherto uncommodified areas' and the resultant impact is that of Post modernism. Having said that Jameson goes into the discussion of the constitutive features of postmodernism – (i) Post Modernism celebrates the culture of Pastiche (ii) it is a culture of depthlessness, of superficiality in the literal sense.

14.3.1 Post Modernism and Literature

Different theorists have tried to approach post modernism from different perspectives and provided newer ways of looking at things. The decentering of the subject, the decentering of language, the incredulity towards meta-narratives has produced playful, self-reflective and self-parodying fiction which is being referred by many as post-modernist literature. Jorge Luis Borges, John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Ishmael Reed, Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Salman Rushdie, John Fowles and others are thought to be post-modernist writers as their writings are self-reflexive where the traditional orders and conventional boundaries of discourse are broken down and a self-parodying narrative is constructed where the distinction between fiction and history or autobiography, between realism and fantasy is probed. Linda Hutcheon is of the opinion that one of the important characteristic features of post-modernist fiction is a productive intertextuality which neither simply repudiates the past does not do it reproduce the past as nostalgia. In the process it raises questions about the ideological construction of the past and the 'truth' of the narratives in terms of whose truth it is.

Check Your Progress

5. Who wrote *The Post-Modern Condition* (1979)?
6. Mention the example used by Baudrillard to explain the concept of Simulacrum.
7. What, according to Jameson, are the three phases of capitalism?

14.4 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. John Osborne is the author of *Look Back in Anger*.
2. Dramatists like Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker and others presented the absurd situation of modern existence in their plays.

3. *The Golden Notebook* was published in 1962.
4. John Fowles is the author of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.
5. Jean Francois Lyotard wrote *The Post-Modern Condition* (1979).
6. To explain the idea of simulacrum or hyper real, Baudrillard gives the example of the hyperrealism of the Disneyland, which Baudrillard calls 'a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation' as Disneyland is not merely an arena of fantastic escape for the Americans, but is somehow an experience of the real America
7. Jameson talks about three phases of capitalism – (i) Market Capitalism (ii) Monopoly capitalism and (iii) Late or Multinational Capitalism.

The Present Age

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14.5 SUMMARY

- The catastrophic defeat of England during the World War in Europe and Asia destroyed its financial and economic independence which was the foundation stone of the British imperial system. It is true that England survived the World Wars, but with the wars its wealth, prestige, hegemony was severely curbed.
- One of the immediate repercussions of the frustrations of the post-World Wars can be perceived in the notion of 'angry young man' that was championed in the second half of the twentieth century as a result of the traumatic stage of the British society. Novelists like Kingsley Amis in *Lucky Jim* or John Osborne in the play *Look Back in Anger* portrayed the frustrations and angst of the British of this generation.
- While plays like *Look Bank in Anger* dealt with the theme of angst and disillusionment of the age, dramatists like Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker and others presented the absurd situation of modern existence in their plays.
- Pinter's plays like *The Birthday Party* or *The Homecoming* portray the breaking down of the traditional moral values of the society and how in light of the breakdown of the traditional structures, individuals and society try to come to terms grip with themselves.
- Another significant development in the field of literature is the evolution of thrillers and science fiction as a branch of Popular Fiction. The political setting of the cold war created the perfect atmosphere for the flowering of thrillers and science fiction.

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- Anthony Powell, another significant writer of the age wrote primarily about the higher echelons of English society. His famous works include *A Dance to the Music of Time* and his four-volume autobiography, *To Keep the Ball Rolling*.
- Iris Murdoch, another significant writer of the age, was a teacher of philosophy and a writer known for slyly comic analyses of contemporary lives in her novels *Under the Net* (1954) *A Severed Head* (1961), *The Black Prince* (1973), *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980), and *The Good Apprentice* (1986).
- Anthony Burgess was a novelist who was most popular for his mordant novel of teenage violence, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962), which was made into a successful motion picture in 1971.
- John Fowles is another significant writer who produced several highly experimental novels, including *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), in which he brings the fictional nature of the novel to the foreground, and *Maggot* (1985), a mystery set in the 18th century.
- It is hard to locate postmodernism historically as it is unclear exactly when postmodernism begins, though many believe it to have started in the 1960s. However, the term gained popularity in the 1980s and became subject of many academic and non-academic debates and discussions.
- According to Lyotard, grand narratives or meta narrative operate through marshaling heterogeneity into order, and thereby silencing, suppressing and excluding other discourses to derive at a Universalist approach.
- For Lyotard, Postmodernism is expressed in terms of western societies' 'incredulity towards meta narratives'. In the process, the Meta narrative or grand narratives are rejected and the Postmodern societies favoured mini narratives or local narratives which neither claimed universality, not absolute truth as the enlightenment science did.
- For Jean Baudrillard, postmodern is not about the 'sign; but about the 'simulacrum'. While Walter Benjamin claimed that mechanical production destroyed the 'aura' of the work of art, Baudrillard feels that the distinction between the original and the copy itself is destroyed in today's world and he calls this process 'simulation' – 'the generation by models of a real without origins or reality; a hyperreal.'
- To explain the idea of simulacrum or hyper real, Baudrillard gives the example of the hyperrealism of the Disneyland, which Baudrillard calls 'a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation' as Disneyland is not merely an arena of fantastic escape for the Americans, but is somehow an experience of the real America.

- For American Marxist cultural scholar Frederic Jameson (most famous work, *Post Modernism and Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*), Post Modernism is a 'periodizing concept.' Jameson talks about three phases of capitalism – (i) Market Capitalism (ii) Monopoly capitalism and (iii) Late or Multinational Capitalism.

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14.6 KEY WORDS

- **Globalization:** It is the process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments worldwide due to advances in transportation and communication technology.
- **Consumerism:** It is a social and economic order that encourages the acquisition of goods and services in ever-increasing amounts.
- **Capitalism:** It is an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- **Marxism:** It is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx. It examines the effect of capitalism on labour, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker revolution to overturn capitalism in favour of communism.

14.7 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the imperialistic tone of Rudyard Kipling in his writings.
2. What are the important works of Anthony Burgess?
3. How did globalization impact literature and literary studies?
4. How did post-modernism mark a departure from modernism?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss in detail the literary developments that took place after the World War II.
2. Examine the anxieties that the post war generation of England suffered from and its effect on literature.
3. Explain the theories put forward by Lyotard, Baudrillard and Fredrick Jameson.

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